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THE CLERGY AND SOCIAL MORALS.

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“They have a zeal of God, but not according to knowledge.”—ROMANS 10 : 2.

IN a recent issue of one of our city journals—a journal of the very highest character and most wholesome influence—there appeared a sermon ; though the deliverances of the pulpit very seldom find entrance into the columns of the paper I refer to. But the editor deemed this sermon of such consequence to the public weal that he not only gave it newspaper currency, but advised that it should be printed and disseminated widely in the community. What could have been the burden of the sermon ? This : The preacher had felt constrained to warn rich men that they could not buy their way into the kingdom of God, on earth or in heaven, by giving a few thousands of their financial substance to a church or a charity ; one of our notably wealthy men having just about that time given ten or twenty thousand dollars to Christian missionary work, I think ; the gift having furnished the occasion, it would seem, for the preacher's solemn warning, which the editor emphasized with equal solemnity.

Now, the circumstance—for it is little more—has suggested to my own mind several reflections pertinent to the subject I have in hand this morning.

The preacher in question being credited with a rare courage, as he was, in having so admonished our wealthy men, involves, as I look at the matter, a reflection upon the preaching fraternity generally ; which reflection, I venture to say, is almost wholly undeserved. I myself, at least, don't know a man of the order so wanting in moral courage, or so void of a just sense of what his office requires of him, as that he would shrink from declaring, if fit occasion should call, just what St. Peter once declared to one Simon : “ *Thy money perish with thee ; because thou hast thought that the gift of God might be purchased with money.* ” But

I am quite sure that few or none of our rich men to-day are seriously under the delusion Simon was under. Doubly sure am I that the man toward whom I directed a surmise just now as having been the benefactor in the case I am recalling, would harbor the notion for a moment that Almighty God would accept money, or that churches or charities would accept money, in substitution for personal righteousness, or as a cloak for unrighteousness. I, for one, would give the millionaire credit for common sense as to these things ; the money in the instance I am alluding to having been meant, I feel confident, simply to serve one of the ordinary uses of money and nothing more. I hold no brief to plead the cause of rich men ; but we may as well be rational and fair in our judgments of them, and even in our animadversions, whenever they may be called for.

Incidentally, while the missionary gift was being commented upon in the public prints, or, later, when the sermon came out, a singular moral proviso was hinted at as something which it might be well to adopt, to save vestries and trustees from becoming parties to dishonorable doings in receiving money from men who might be under suspicion of not having come at it worthily. *Investigation* should be made by churches and charities, it was suggested, or by those acting for them, as to whether offerings were wholly free from moral taint before turning them into their treasuries !—which is all impracticable nonsense, of course. If a man's antecedents and moral standing in society should be really subject to grave suspicion, it might be well to let such a man know that his offering would not be welcome ; but as to formal investigation—who should conduct it ? and how would you go about it ? Where, and how,

“Is it not a scandal,” he asked, “that men now-a-days should name that the ‘Court of Rome,’ which used formerly to be named the ‘Church of Rome?’” Even St. Bernard, who had no means of examining the claims of the Papacy by historical criticism, and who believed that it was in the power of the Pope, and indeed his proper function, to be the Reformer of the Church, was startled and alarmed at the too evident and visible change of an Apostle and Bishop into a King and Emperor. “Do you not perceive,” said he in the *De Consideratione (ad Eugenium Papam)*, “that St. Peter never appeared in public vested in silk and gold, and mounted on a white horse, with a tumultuous following of officers and soldiers. Lo, you have succeeded Constantine, and not St. Peter.” St. Bernard, ascetic as he was, was not a Puritan, and confessed it to be reasonable that the Pope should “accommodate himself to his times,” but only in such a degree as not altogether “to forget his pastoral duties,” and neglect “the oversight of his own proper clergy,” that is, the Roman diocese, “who ought to be the models for all others.”

The Saint, who had so much in him of the prophet, was thus unconsciously repeating and justifying the old accusations of the Orthodox East against the actual results of the perversion of the Roman Primacy into an Imperial Roman Papacy. When Lothar was in Italy he gave audience to an embassy from Constantinople, an account of which is recorded by Baronius. One of the Eastern deputies declaimed in the presence of the Western Cæsar against the worldliness of the Western clergy, and extending his sharp criticism to their highest member, the Pope, he declared—what was fast becoming a fact, little as it was realised in the West—“The man is an Emperor, and not a Bishop.”

That which the primitive conscience of Christianity regarded as a scandal, that which the word of God readable in the processes of history so evidently declares to be an apostacy and a corruption, Mr. W. S. Lilly asks all the nations of Christianity to establish. The Papacy cannot again establish itself, as it did in those ages when it was imagined that the Roman Empire was a permanent and central institution of Humanity and Christianity. Some kind of Papal kingdom, half spiritual and half secular, is now an absolute “necessity,” as Mr. Lilly confesses, to the adequate maintenance of the Vaticanist claims. The Pope’s “political independence, his financial independence”—which the lately deprived Monsignore Folchi has almost brought to bank-

ruptcy—“is as necessary as ever it was. *Aut Cæsar, aut nullus!*” Monsignore Capel, of unpleasant memory, “Domestic Prelate of his Holiness Leo XIII.” appealed to the States of Europe to establish and endow the Pope as a bulwark for themselves against Socialism, and urged the Queen to begin by instituting “diplomatic relations with the Sovereign Pontiff.” The late turning of Leo XIII. from the Monarchists to the Republicans in France, the present threat of his Belgian Bishops to raise a cry for the Republic in Belgium, the increasing inclination amongst the Vaticanist leaders in all Continental states to some degree of alliance with the Socialist, must prohibit Mr. Lilly in 1892 from adopting the form of Monsignore Capel’s policy of ten years ago. But while the form differs, the matter is the same. The Vaticanists desire, just as our domestic Liberationists desire, that that State shall do for them what they have not the spiritual nor intellectual power to do for themselves: that is, secularly establish their religion, or give to their own particular religious hypothesis the force and the awe of law. There is indeed this difference, that while Liberationism asks only for a national establishment of its theory of any number of “Free Churches,” Vaticanism asks for an international establishment of its theory of the one and only Papal Church, which cannot be permanently maintained unless its head is recognised by the Kingdoms and Republics of the world as a King, or rather as an Emperor, and not merely as a Bishop. “The Great Powers,” Mr. Lilly thinks, “ought to provide an effective guarantee of the Pope’s sovereignty and independence,” if only “even within the narrow limits of the Vatican.” The plea of the Vaticanist to all the great States is exactly the same as the plea of the Liberationist to the English State: “Do what we ask, and then you and we will have political peace, or a *modus vivendi*.” But the Vatican conscience, like its fellow and co-worker, the “Nonconformist conscience,” has never yet owned any finality, but uses whatever it gets only as a stepping-stone from which to demand more.

THE RIGHTS OF CRITICISM AND OF THE CHURCH.

BY BENJAMIN B. WARFIELD, D.D.

From *The Presbyterian*, Philadelphia, Pa., April 20, 1892.

THE RIGHT OF CRITICISM UNASSAILABLE.

WE hear a great deal nowadays of the right of Criticism, spoken with a certain air of conscious heroism, as if Criticism (with

a big C, doubtless because it is "Higher"). were being dreadfully oppressed by somebody. But we know no one who denies the right of Criticism. Everybody uses it; and everybody honors it. It is the instrument by which we test truth. And in proportion as the truth is important or the claims which it makes on us are supreme, is not only the right of Criticism allowed, but its duty insisted upon. The indifference with which we allow the claim of a book to be a romance of impossible life by Mr. Rider Haggard, or a romance of impossible Canon-building by Mr. Herbert E. Ryle, passes, for the student of historical politics at least, into interested alertness to the evidence when it claims to be the lost work of Aristotle on the Constitution of Athens, and for all of us into something more than interest when it claims to be the Constitution of the land in which we live, with its declaration of our rights and its safeguarding of our liberties. It ought to, and it does, rise into the keenest and the most searching critical inquiry, when the book claims, or is claimed, to be the Law of God binding on all our souls, and the discovery of the only way of salvation for lost sinners. So far from the Bible being less subject to criticism than other books, we are bound to submit its unique claims to a criticism of unique rigor. Criticism is the mode of procedure by which we assure ourselves that it is what it claims to be. Who will cast his soul's eternal welfare on an un-criticised way of life? It is because we believe in criticism, and practice it with unflinching severity, that we reject the revelations of Mohammed, the book of Mormon, and the religion of Israel according to Kuenen and his fellows, and accept and rest upon the religion of Israel according to Moses and the Prophets and the Gospel of Christ according to the evangelists and the apostles. When such concerns are at stake, we wish to know the pure facts; and every one of us exercises all the faculties God has given him and exhausts all the tests at his command to assure himself of the facts. Criticism consists in careful scrutiny of the facts, and is good or bad in proportion to the accuracy and completeness with which the facts are apprehended and collected, and the skill and soundness with which they are marshaled and their meaning read. Deny the validity of criticism of the Bible! Nobody dreams of it. Abate the earnestness of our practice of it! At our soul's peril, we dare not. In proportion as we are awake to what the Bible means for man, will we search the Scriptures to see whether these things are so.

Whence, then, arises the plaint which we hear about us, that the right of Criticism is impugned and the rights of Criticism denied? From the ineradicable tendency of man to confound the right of Criticism with the rightness of his own criticism. We may safely recognize this to be a common human tendency; for, as all of us doubtless know by this time, "humanum est errare." But as soon as our attention is directed to it, the way seems to be opened to remind ourselves of a few distinctions, which it will be well for the Presbyterian Church to attend to in the crisis which is at present impending over her—a crisis the gravity of which cannot be over-estimated for a church of Christ, to which has been committed the function of being the pillar and ground of the truth.

I.

MISLEADING METHODS OF CRITICISM.

It is not to impugn the right or the duty of Criticism to declare that an untrustworthy and misleading method of criticism is not right but wrong. Criticism, we are justly told, is only a method. So is mathematics only a method. But this does not vindicate the correctness of every mathematical calculation, by every hand. Neither figures nor criticism will lie; but the men that use them may manage to reach very false conclusions through them despite their incorruptible veracity. And we soon discover, as there is mathematics and mathematics, so there is criticism and criticism. Because we believe in mathematics, we do not care to trust our weight on a bridge the strain of which has been calculated by a misleading method. An eminent professor of mathematics tells me that he can prove by an unexceptionable process that one is equal to two. Some of the critics seem to have learned his method. Am I impugning the right of Criticism when I politely decline to believe that their criticism is right?

What is the present situation with regard to the criticism of the Old Testament? On the credit of a method of criticism which is discredited wherever it can be tested, we are being asked to believe that a large number of the books in the Old Testament are not the product of their apparent ages or their reputed authors, but the stratified deposits of the sea of time. On this evidence, at least, we respectfully decline. We point out the inconsequence of this method of criticism elsewhere. We recall the weary shadow-dance of similar methods in the sphere of the New Testament literature,

and the recession of their boasted results into the realm of shadows whenever the light is fully turned on. We point to that admirable "jeu d'esprit" of the ingenuous Mr. McRealsam by which the very same methods applied satirically to the Epistle to the Romans, are shown to yield parallel results—and lo! that logically compacted epistle falls apart into four underlying documents, discriminated from one another with a sharpness and a breadth which must make the Pentateuchal critic turn green from envy. Or, if we must have a real case, which is no "jeu d'esprit" but solemn earnest, we point to Scherer's brilliant analysis of the Prologue of Faust, which distributed its parts to their proper periods of Goethe's life, on the ground of deep-reaching differences of style and internal inconsistencies, such as were thought inexplicable save on the supposition of composition at different times and subsequent combination. But Ehrich Schmidt publishes the oldest manuscript of the poem, and lo! "it is the 'young Goethe' who wrote the prologue essentially as it now stands, in a single gush; it is the same 'young Goethe' who assumes the style at the same time of an effervescent youngster and of a cynical grey-beard." We point to the thorough refutation of this method in principle and in results by such Old Testament critics as possess independence enough of scholarship and judgment not to be swayed beyond their centre of gravity by the reigning faction. Or if we glance at the method itself we are led to commend the insight of one of its founders, Graf, who already pointed out the danger of its degenerating into an argument in a circle, as we perceive that it first creates the documents it finds by distributing all the elements of one kind to each, and then proves their reality by the fact of this constant difference. We decline to be caught in this circle and whirled around until we mistake our giddiness for superior wisdom. It is not denying the right of Criticism to assert that this criticism is not right, and cannot lead to right, but only to wrong conclusions.

II.

BIBLIOLAUSTIC CRITICISM.

It is not to impugn the right of Criticism to declare that such a misleading criticism, when used as an engine to undermine the divine authority of the Scriptures, vindicated as that authority abundantly is by overwhelming evidence thoroughly tested by a sound and truth-eliciting criticism, is

not only wrong but a serious wrong. That the effects of the current type of Old Testament criticism are of the nature of a disillusionment as over against the Bible, lies in the nature of the case, and has been illustrated lately by Mr. Horton—whose thoroughly disillusioned (and disillusioning) book on "Inspiration" Professor Cheyne recommends as the best he knows for these times of distress—from an old-fashioned clock which in youth he deemed to be of massive black marble with golden face, but which his wiser years have discovered to be only wood and gilt. Let any reader note the number of portions of the Old Testament which Dr. Driver in his recent sober "Introduction to the Literature of the Old Testament" adjudges to be "scarcely historical;" and then ask whether the authority of a historical revelation can be maintained when so large a portion of its historical record is "unhistorical." Then let him remember that the critical analysis which is the chief result of this method turns largely upon the discovery of disagreements and inconsistencies in the present texts. No wonder it has become common to speak of the authority of the Scriptures as belonging to, and their inspiration as residing in, not the form but the substance, not the husk but the kernel. It is a prophet of our own whose language runs: "The divine substance has been given in human forms, and no one will truly understand the Bible until he has learned to distinguish between the temporal, circumstantial and variable form, and the eternal, essential and permanent substance." We seem to have heard something like this before. But whether in the mouth of the old German Rationalist, or the new American "Critic," it is a position which must ultimate in the denial of inspiration properly so-called altogether; since inspiration as distinguished from revelation necessarily concerns the form, or, as it is now commonly spoken of (not without an undesirable purpose), "the record of the revelation," not the "revelation itself." Accordingly, Professor Stapfer says frankly: "The doctrine of an Inspiration distinct from Revelation and legitimating it, is an error." And Dr. Washington Gladden, who desires us to note that he follows the leadership of "conservative criticism" only, with equal frankness says: "Evidently neither the theory of verbal inspiration, nor the theory of plenary inspiration can be made to fit the facts which a careful study of the writings themselves bring before us. These writings are not inspired in the sense which we have com-

monly given to that word." When we remember the strong tendency of these same "conservative critics" to reduce Revelation itself to what they call "historical revelation," to ACTS not WORDS, or as Dr. Gladstone expresses it again, to the "superintending care" of God over the progress of history, "his moral leadership in history,"—we may estimate how nearly to a minimum the supernatural element has been reduced in a Bible a large portion of the historical record of which is "unhistorical."

Nor are we to be soothed by the assurance that though the authority of the Scriptures is gone for all else, it remains to it as a religious guide. In the nature of the case this can hardly be. Nor does this critical school find it possible so to conceive of it. We observe Dr. Samuel Ives Curtis writing: "We find in the theology of ancient Israel the divine revelation not only contained in earthen vessels, but also, on account of its temporal and educational character, containing incomplete and EVEN ERRONEOUS STATEMENTS AS TO CERTAIN FORMS OF RELIGIOUS THOUGHT. That is, the revelation which has come from God is allowed to stand in juxtaposition with some forms of human error." Criticism must, therefore, discriminate among the distinctively religious teachings of the Bible, accepting some and rejecting others. We must thank a recent English writer, Mr. J. J. Lias, for permitting us to see with equal frankness whereto this must logically grow. "Even for matters of religion themselves," he tells us, the Bible has lost its authority, and we cannot "command assent to the contents of a volume which contains an infinity of propositions" further than "to require the acceptance of a few simple statements embodying all the essentials for salvation." We are not surprised to find on reading further that these "simple essential truths" are not according to the Gospels of either Matthew, Mark, Luke or John, nor yet of Paul or Peter,—but according to the Gospel of Schleiermacher. Is it denying the right of Criticism to assert that this criticism is not only wrong, but is committing a serious wrong against the Church and the whole world lying in wickedness, in undermining confidence in the one charter of salvation?

III.

ANTICHRISTIC CRITICISM.

It is not to impugn the right of Criticism to declare that such a misleading criticism, when so far pressing beyond its mark as to

curtail the trustworthiness of the witness of the Truth Himself as a teacher of truth, is not only a wrong but an intolerable wrong to every Christian heart. Yet the current form of Old Testament criticism trembles on the verge of this gulf. The findings of its misleading method run athwart the implications of the words of him who spake as never man spake; and instead of adjusting its theories to accord with his teachings, it thinks of adjusting the God-man to its theories. Thus we have curious sustained efforts to minimize the amount and decisiveness of his teaching; new discussions of the propriety of "accommodation" in his teaching; and a whole new crop of studies on the limitations of our Lord's knowledge as man. When such a ball is once started rolling downwards, who knows to what it may grow? Not merely as a "critic" and as an "exegete," but also as a moralist and as a religious teacher, we shall find we have lost our Lord; if we cannot trust him as to the revelation of God (of which he, the Logos, was the revealer) of the past, how can we trust him as the revealer of God for the future? Are we indeed to say with one "critic" that "interpretation is essentially a scientific function, and one conditioned by the existence of scientific means, which in relation to the Old Testament were but imperfectly at the command of Jesus," and so rid ourselves of his authority in interpreting the Old Testament? Are we to say with another "critic" that as a logician or critic he belongs to his times, and as such had "a definite, restricted outfit and outlook, which could be only those of his own day and generation?" But let us go at once to the bottom. Mr. W. Hay M. H. Aitken is reported to have permitted himself recently to use such words as these: "Literary criticism is a science, and one that requires as much exercise of mind as the pursuit of mathematics. You are not surprised that Christ, in his manhood, was not the equal of Newton in mathematical knowledge; why should you be surprised if he prove not to have been the equal of Wellhausen in literary criticism? The case may be put thus: In the truth of his manhood, Christ would naturally accept the views of his contemporaries as to the authorship of the Old Testament Scripture, just as one of us would naturally accept the common view of the authorship of Shakspeare's plays in spite of recent Transatlantic theories on that subject. The only thing that would induce on his part a view that was something more than the popular opinion of the period in which he lived would be an ex-

press revelation. Of course, if God specifically revealed to Christ that the Pentateuch was written by Moses, 'cedit quaestio,' let God be true, and every critic, if not a liar, at any rate mistaken."

But is not Christ himself, God? Is it true that we could not expect him to be a "critic," because criticism requires so much exercise of mind? Are we rushing down to the pit of a new and crasser Unitarianism? What Christ is this that Mr. Aitken pictures before us? Not the Christ of the Bible, who is our Prophet and our Guide; who is the Truth itself incarnated; who is dramatized before our eyes in the length and breadth of the Gospels, not as a child of his times, limited by the mental outlook of his day, but as a teacher to his and to all times, sent from God as not more the power of God than the wisdom of God; and whose own witness to himself was, "Verily, verily I say unto you, we speak that we do know, and testify that we have seen; and ye receive not our witness. If I have told you of earthly things and ye believed not, how shall ye believe, if I tell you heavenly things?" Is it to deny the right of Criticism, to declare that a criticism which, starting on a wrong path, rushes headlong into the very face of the Truth himself, is an intolerable wrong which no Christian heart can calmly bear?

IV.

THE CHURCH'S RIGHT TO CRITICISM.

It is not to impugn the right of Criticism to declare that those who adopt a misleading criticism as their guide to truth; and draw from it conclusions inconsistent with what is held as precious truth by the Church with which they are connected; and teach these conclusions in opposition to the public Confession of the Church; may not rightly continue to receive the endorsement of that Church as sound teachers of religion. The refusal of the Church to remain responsible before the world for their teaching is no blow at the right of Criticism in the abstract, or even at the freedom of these "critics" to teach their special form of criticism. It is, on the one hand, only the assertion by the Church of HER right to teach only what she believes, without infringing in the least upon the right of others to teach what they please on their own responsibility and in their own names; and on the other hand the liberation of the new thinkers from whatever trammels to their thought and speech they may recognize as growing out of the pledges they may

have taken to believe and teach the doctrines of the Church. Or is the Critic only to be free and the Church bound? Let him exercise freely his right to criticize; and let the Church also be free to test not only the truth of the Scriptures as he does, but also the truth of his theories of the Scriptures, and to act accordingly. What Democrat would feel that his liberty of thought and speech were infringed by the refusal of a Republican club to become or remain sponsor for his political teachings? But, you say, no Democrat would desire to become or remain a member of a Republican club. This is the strangeness of the situation. One wonders that a new Criticism involving, as we are told, a wholly reconstructed theology should find so much attraction in a "traditionalist" Church of an "outworn" creed; or should care to do business under its trademark.

Hear the parable of the Thistles. Thistles certainly have beauties of their own, and many virtues, which nobody would care to deny. But they do seem out of place in a garden designed for roses, even though they proclaim themselves more beautiful than any roses in the garden. And the husbandman seems to have a duty toward Thistles growing in the garden, which even their irritable "noli me tangere" ought not to deter him from executing, with all due kindness indeed, but with that firmness of touch which becomes one in dealing with Thistles. Otherwise, what will he say to the Lord of the garden, whom even the more luxuriant growth of the Thistles may not please, when they are tossing their bold heads in the bed intended for roses?

THE PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH NORTH.

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From *The Congregationalist*, Boston, April 21, 1892.

THE geographic term in this denominational title would mislead if it were understood to imply that the denomination itself is anything less than *continental*. The fact is that the Church so designated has planted itself substantially in every Territory and in all but two of the States of our Union. While its main field of development during the last twenty years has been the far West and Northwest and along the Pacific coast, its five synods, twenty presbyteries, 460 churches and 48,700 communicants in the older South, east of the Mississippi, show