

# THE HOMILETIC REVIEW.

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## REVIEW SECTION.

### I.—CLERICAL CONSERVATISM AND SCIENTIFIC RADICALISM.

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ALL conservatism is not clerical, and all radicalism is not scientific. We have here to speak of Conservatism as limited by the epithet clerical, and of Radicalism as modified by the epithet scientific. The relation of the clerical mind to conservatism and of the scientific mind to radicalism is the topic which comes before us in this paper. Moreover, the province which we have in view is the religious, the theological, the biblical, not the political or the philosophical. The conservative and the radical types of mind might be expected always to reveal themselves impartially in the various regions of thought or action in which each individual is concerned ; yet we often find it otherwise. Quite frequently conservatism in politics is associated with radicalism in religion, while the political radical or progressist is a religious conservative. The relations of philosophy and theology are such that the same tendencies will generally prevail in both ; though here, too, there are many instances of a contrary kind. What is the explanation of the fact referred to we need not inquire ; as to the fact itself there is no doubt.

Speaking, then, of conservatism in religion or theology, it is obvious to say that all the clergy have not been conservative. It may even be affirmed that radical ideas and movements in religion have very generally been originated and largely promoted by ministers of religion and professional theologians. The doctrinal deviations and the schisms of the early Church were nearly all headed by ecclesiastics. Arius, Nestorius, and Eutyches were theologians ; and though Pelagius remained a layman he adhered to the monastic discipline. Many causes and events prepared the way for the Reformation, and several princes and literary men bore a conspicuous part in promoting it, but the real leaders of that great movement—which, though conservative of scriptural truth, was very radical in relation to the Church and the theology of the time—were ministers of the Gospel. There are really no names of laymen to be placed in the same

yield our claim for Him and surrender Him as our Exemplar. Reading the accounts of His life, we fail to find any proof that in His body He did not "bear our stripes." "Surely He hath borne our griefs, and carried our sorrows." "He was wounded for our transgressions, He was bruised for our iniquities; the chastisement of our peace was upon Him," etc. Looking at the human aspect of His sufferings we are compelled, with the poet, to exclaim:

O, Lamb of God!  
Was ever pain, was ever love like thine?

Secondly. Let us consider his *mental* sufferings.

In what did they consist? How were they expressed? We answer: by being homeless; by being friendless; by being the subject of constant and unreasonable censure; by the most heartless and relentless persecution; by having His words perverted and His motives impugned; by being classed with the vilest impostors and denounced as a hypocrite; by being charged with consorting with harlots, publicans, and sinners; by being accused of being in league with Beelzebub, the prince of devils; by being arrested at the instance of a mob as a common thief and highwayman; by being tried without due process of law; by being accused of crimes of which He was absolutely innocent, and the truth of which they could not get a single witness that would not have been pronounced unworthy of belief in any court; by insult and indignity without number, and passing description; by a trial whose every form was a caricature on the semblance of justice; by the shameful insults offered Him during those five awful hours He was a prisoner; by the mockery of His sentence after thrice being pronounced innocent by the only competent authority to adjudge in such matters; by His betrayal at the hands of one of His trusted disciples; by the denial of Peter, another chosen disciple; and, finally, by His desertion on the part of every friend, leaving Him

helpless and unpitied in the hands of an unreasonable mob.

The higher realm of mental distress may have been touched by Him in the garden of Gethsemane when He said, "My soul is exceeding sorrowful, even unto death." Again He seems to have experienced an extraordinary degree of agony when on the cross He cried out, "My God, My God, why hast Thou forsaken Me?"

"Thus it is written and thus it behoved Christ to suffer."

The Captain of our salvation was "made perfect through suffering." "Wherefore in all things it behoved Him to be made like unto His brethren, that He might be a merciful and faithful High-priest in things pertaining to God, to make reconciliation for the sins of the people." In Christ, therefore, we have the fulfilment of "all things which were written in the law of Moses, and in the prophets, and in the Psalms." He is our *Exemplar*.

What excuse can be framed for those who reject Him? Need we look for another? If we desire salvation will we likely find it in any other? "For there is none other name under heaven given among men, whereby we must be saved." He that rejects our Christ is truly "without God and without hope in the world."

Accept Him and make Him your model. Amen.

#### THE BEST OF ALL LEGACIES.

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*And Elisha said, I pray thee let a double portion of thy spirit be upon me.—2 Kings ii. 9.*

Two men are ascending one of the rugged slopes that leads up from the Jordan valley to the high table-lands of Gilead. The practical eye and steady step of the one in front tell of experience gained in his boyhood amid these rough hills. The younger man who follows, unaccustomed to such hard

climbing, would long since have yielded to the considerate entreaty of the elder, and have gone back, had not prophetic voices declared that his master should be "taken away from his head" that day. As we gather about the bedside from which one of our loved ones is about to be translated, and watch and linger, counting every moment of these last hours of intercourse more precious than rubies, so Elisha presses on with the "As the Lord liveth, and thy soul liveth, I will not leave thee," until the wind-cloud comes down and, unfolding, reveals the chariot, and Elijah is borne away. It is in that hallowed interval, on the borderland betwixt earth and heaven, that Elijah turns to his beloved disciple and says, "Ask what I shall do for thee before I be taken away from thee?" Elijah is the man who has power with God. What shall his last great prayer for the young disciple be? Could any choice be more appropriate? As ever and anon we see the chariot descending to take some Elijah from among us, what prayer can come more appropriately to our lips? When we think of the generation of men and women who laid the foundations of Church and State in this country, and then of the present generation coming into their room, hard pressed, like Elisha, to keep pace with their hardy virtues, shall we not ask a double portion of their spirit? Notice that in Elisha's case, where the prayer was answered, Elisha was not transformed into another Elijah. The two men were cast in different moulds. Each had his own work to do. Each needed just the qualities he had. Elijah was a stern, rugged man, fitted for the clearing of forests and the opening of furrows. Elisha's was a mild nature, fitted for the gentler process of harrowing in the grain. A slavish copying of Elijah's methods would have been fatal to Elisha's work. It was not for the forms or methods, but for the spirit of Elijah that Elisha prayed.

I. The spirit of Elijah was one of imperturbable faith in God and in revealed

truth. The age in which he lived was one of religious vacillation. The multitude halted between the claims of Jehovah and those of Baal. They were not certain in which they believed. They were not certain of anything. Elijah's faith was clear, sharp cut, well defined. There was no doubt as to his position, no ambiguity as to his utterance. He was a firm and fast believer, a man of undoubting and unquestioning faith. So were the noble men who preceded us in high places of Church and State. They were men who believed in God and in revelation. They had no doubts about inspiration and no squeamishness about future punishment. But we are fallen upon times when it is fashionable to doubt, when the popular fad is to play the rôle of the agnostic, when it is a mark of independence and intellectual manhood to cavil at creeds and disavow orthodoxy. We need a double portion of the Elijah spirit that expresses itself in the words "As the Lord liveth before whom I stand."

II. It was a spirit not only of settled convictions, but of courage to avow and maintain them. Not Ahab, with all his power and insolence, can intimidate him. Single-handed he enters the lists against the four hundred and fifty priests of Baal, with all their princely retinue and prestige at the royal court. He builds his altar over against theirs. It is nothing to him that he is on the unpopular side. He is right—that is enough for him. This was also a characteristic of the great men into whose inheritance in Church and State we have come. If they had convictions, they were ready to avow them, to defend them, to suffer for them, to go through fire and sword in vindication of them. They were no trimmers, no timeservers, no weathervanes, showing ever the direction of the popular current. Great-souled men they were, just such as we need now—men who, if convinced that they are right, will stand up in the face of the whole world and glory in their convictions.

III. A spirit of incorruptible integrity and regard for the principles of honor. Elijah not only could not be intimidated, but he could not be bought. The highest honors and greatest emoluments of the kingdom would have been at his disposal, if he had been willing to sacrifice convictions and join in the orgies of the Baal-worship. The fascination and flattery of the modern Baal-worship are far more to be dreaded than the whip of its sarcasm or the crucifixion of its scorn. The men into whose places we have come had a jealous care of their reputation and a high sense of personal honor. They put character above all price. Honest in all their commercial relations, clean in all their business transactions, just and impartial in the administration of all public trusts, they were like Elijah at the court of Ahab, representatives of principle that is above price. Of such a spirit may a double portion descend upon us in this age when embezzlement and defalcations are about us on every hand.

IV. The spirit which underlay the two last named and gave them power was that of whole-hearted consecration. Elijah was a consecrated man. He had a work for God. He had come to do it. Everything was subordinate to it. How significant his oft-repeated adjuration, "As the Lord God liveth, before whom I stand!" His attitude was that of a servant standing to receive and execute God's command. His time, his talents, his labor, his influence—everything he recognized as in the service of God. Such were in large measure the men whose inheritance of civil and religious liberty we enjoy to-day. The times demand a double portion of this spirit of consecration. Our opportunities are greatly enlarged, our facilities wondrously increased. We want a host of consecrated men in every department of life and of labor. The pulpit needs them—men who will go forth in the spirit of Elijah, content with camel's-hair raiment, and willing to set up an altar over against that of every Baal-

worshipper, even though he be of Ahab's court. We need them in the pews—these consecrated men who will give freely of their time, their labor, their money, their influence to the Lord. We want consecrated men in our business houses, in our great moneyed corporations, in our halls of State and national legislation. As the gray-headed men and the venerable women pass from among us, and go up through the parted waters of the Jordan to the chariots of fire that await them on the other shore, may the Lord God of Elijah cause their mantles to fall upon the Elishas who are following them, and striving to keep close to their dear persons until the chariot descends. May a double portion of their spirit rest upon those to whom the great interests of Church and State are for all coming time to be committed.

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### THE SPIRIT OF YOUTH.

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*The child shall die a hundred years old.*  
—Isa. lxx. 20.

THIS declaration forms a part of the description of that happy period when God's people shall enjoy the work of their hands and each one dwell under his own fig-tree in peace. There is promised a practical annihilation of the line which divides youth and age. Youth shall be wise and age shall be ardent. The young will not regard the aged as fossils, and the aged will not look down on the young as heedless and unwise, but there will be mutual appreciation and regard. We are to study the spirit of youth in history and in the Church. But I do not forget the achievements of age; that the greatest preachers of to-day are over fifty years; that the greatest rulers are over sixty; that men like Ruskin and Gladstone have borne fruit in old age; that Bryant wrote his "Flood of Years" at eighty-two, and Longfellow his "Moriturus" near the end of his long and beautiful