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sin, righteousness, union with Christ, the fight with self, and the law; the references to "Abraham our father," and the touching personal mention of Israel and his brethren according to the flesh. When thus considered, we can the more readily understand the fulness and depth of meaning of the Apostle's significant phrase, "My Gospel," for Romans then reveals to us what the Apostle himself had received, what he was proclaiming, and what he wished to commend to Jew and Gentile everywhere as "the power of God unto salvation to every one that believeth."



## A Seventeenth-Century Irreconcilable.

BY THE REV. G. S. STREATFEILD, M.A.,  
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A RECENT number of THE CHURCHMAN contained an interesting sketch of the character and career of the saintly Archbishop Leighton. A short account of the Archbishop's father, though less edifying, may be no less interesting to the readers of the magazine.

In Alexander Leighton, the writer of "Sion's Plea against the Prelacy," we have a notable specimen of the Puritan controversialist. A Scotchman by birth, a Presbyterian by education and conviction, he was a man of one idea; his energy was directed towards one supreme object. Wholly persuaded that episcopal government is contrary to the Divine will, he set himself to convince his fellow-citizens that the State must inevitably suffer shipwreck, and sink beneath the waters of Divine judgment, unless episcopacy were seized by the strong hand of the law and thrown overboard.

A glance at Leighton's portrait will show to some extent the man he was. Stern, implacable, morose, is the countenance that looks out upon you from a rare print. A massive lower jaw may remind of his great contemporary, the Earl of Strafford, and is suggestive of drastic measures pursued with no unnecessary scruples. A high and narrow forehead, set off by

strongly-curved eyebrows placed rather high above the eye, prepares you for bigotry, while deep wrinkles tell of the patient toil with which the literature of Christendom, reformed and unreformed, has been ransacked for his controversy. In a contemporary document he is described as a man of low stature, with fair complexion and yellowish beard.

It must not be supposed that Alexander Leighton represented in his own day the spirit of the Liberation Society or had any leaning towards religious equality. Toleration in any shape or form was to him an object of scorn. According to his reading of the New Testament, the Presbyterian form of government had received the Divine sanction, and the first duty of the State, therefore, was to establish and uphold it. Had he presided over a High Commission Court, it would have been with a severity more merciless than that of Laud. In our estimate of the man, however, we must bear in mind that he represented no inconsiderable a section of the English people. Fifty years earlier Thomas Cartwright had vehemently, even savagely, upheld the cause of Presbyterianism, and in fifteen years from the appearance of "Sion's Plea" the cause for which Leighton contended was, for a brief space, enthroned in a Parliament that decreed death to those who should deny the fundamental truths of the Christian religion, and imprisonment to those who should question the obligation of Infant Baptism, the strict observance of the Sabbath, or the doctrine of election. It is but fair also to Leighton's memory to recall the fact that he was trained in the school of Knox, and came from a land where even such a loving spirit as that of Samuel Rutherford had accepted the belief that "Prelacy and popery wither as in a land of drought, except they be planted beside rivers of blood."

In Leighton's attack upon the Bishops, moreover, we cannot deny that, as a conscientious objector to their office, he was not without provocation. Time-serving, covetousness, arrogance, were far from uncommon in the episcopate of that period. The system of persecution, inaugurated by Whitgift in the Court of High Commission, was becoming intolerable under Laud. Moreover, the Puritanical sentiment of the country was wounded

by the introduction of practices regarded with good reason as un-Anglican, and by the discouragement given to exposition of Scripture. Even moderate Churchmen ventilated their grievances on this score. Thomas Fuller, for example, who could truly say of himself that he was "not bred on Mount Ebal," complains somewhat bitterly of the infrequency of preaching, the desecration of the Lord's Day, the multiplication of ceremonies, and the Romeward bias of thought.

Leighton's first published work, "*Speculum Belli Sacri*," was issued in 1624. This was a loud and violent plea for declaring war against Spain. In 1628 he entered on a still more congenial task by undertaking to be spokesman of his friends and fellow-thinkers in their hatred of prelacy. Parliament was to be petitioned on the subject, and to Leighton was entrusted the work of drawing up the indictment against the Church of England. The petitioners, five hundred in number, included members of Parliament. Having obtained the signatures, Leighton withdrew to Holland, that he might print without interruption. So assiduously did he toil that in a few months his work issued from the press a volume of three hundred and forty-four pages, and in the form of a long controversial treatise rather than that of a Parliamentary petition. It was entitled, "An Appeal to Parliament; or, Sion's Plea against the Prelacy."

No sooner did a copy come into the hands of Laud, then Bishop of London, than steps were taken for the apprehension of the author, and on February 17, 1630, he was seized, hurried to Newgate, and thrown into a cell, which he describes as a "nasty dog-hole full of rats and mice." In the following June the Star Chamber pronounced sentence, which, whatever it may have been to contemporary thought, must appear to us inhuman in the last degree. He was condemned to be degraded from his Orders, to pay a fine of £10,000,<sup>1</sup> to be set in the pillory and whipped at Westminster, to have one of his ears cut off and his

<sup>1</sup> This, like many of the fines imposed, was nominal, the amount merely serving to mark the degree of the offence.

nose slit, and to be branded with S.S. (sower of sedition). At some future time he was to be taken to Cheapside to be whipped again, to lose the other ear, and then to be imprisoned for life, or during His Majesty's pleasure.<sup>1</sup> On November 26 Leighton underwent his terrible punishment with indomitable courage, though not without some self-glorification. From Westminster he was conveyed back to Newgate, where he was destined to spend the next ten years of life. Leaving poor Leighton for the present, we turn to the book which brought him into such a plight.

On the title-page are quoted the words recorded in Luke xix. 27: "Those mine enemies which would not that I should raigne over them, bring them hither and slay them before Me." The title-page is followed by a double frontispiece, which, to some extent, prepares the reader for what is coming. Omitting details, we only give the prominent features. On the Bible, as its base, stands a massive candlestick with lighted candle. Clutching at the upper part of it, with intent to remove it, are two hands, one from either side, branded with the mark of infamy, implied in the words *scelerata manus*. Beneath is a third hand that keeps the candlestick in its place, in spite of Bishops and High Commission Court. The power of Parliament is represented by two citizens holding drawn swords, and from whose lips proceed the two mottoes, *Manet ultio* and *Manet insuperabile verbum*. On the opposite page the author gives way to his fancy, and visualizes the desire of his heart. Head-long from a ruined tower half-a-dozen Bishops are being hurled to the ground, and their fate is celebrated in the following couplet:

"The tottering Prelats with their trumpery all  
Shall moulder down like elder from the wall."

In an "Introductory Epistle" the House of Commons is exhorted to be of good courage and undertake the removal of the "master-plague" of England—"the domineering national

<sup>1</sup> The second part of the sentence was not carried out. In 1640 Leighton was released by the Long Parliament, and received a grant of £6,000 as compensation for the treatment he had received.

sin" of episcopacy. Should not everyone bring some water to quench the fire? "Behold, Right Honourable, wee bring one Bucketfull taken out of the Christalline sea." They must not be deterred from the work by unworthy fears. "'Fear not, have not I commanded you?' saith our King. Let the righteous be bold as Lyons, and the wicked will flye when none persueth them." No wonder the task appeared difficult and dangerous: "They are the sonnes of Anack for strength (and so are they indeed the sonnes of that monstrous giant the man of sinne); they are deeply rooted and strongly guarded with Amalekites, Hittites, Jebusites, etc.—that is, Atheists, Papists, Arminians, carnall gospellers, Protestants at large, the openlie prophane, and with all the enemies of the Church and Commonwealth, and with all the bellie-serving crew that depend upon them." They have further with them "the counsell of Achitophel, the courting of Shebna, the roaring and braving of Goliah, the cruel pride and vanitie of Haman, the flatterie of Amaziah, the falshood of Shemaiah, the bloody cunning of Doeg, and if, in this height and might they be incountered, they will rage like the roaring of the sea and teare like a bear robbed of her whelps." He fairly warns the country that "the Lord will never leave smiting us, till we smite that which smiteth His honour." They are to strike neither at small nor great, but at these troublers of Israel: "Smite that Hazaell in the fifth rib; yea, if Father or Mother stand in the way, away with them."

Addressing himself to the main argument—What business, he begins by asking, have Bishops in the Church of Christ? where is their *locus standi* in the Word of God? Directions are given as to the minutest details of tabernacle and temple; shall He not have a word to say of bishops and Archbishops? "Would He remember the barrs of the Ark, and pass by the Pillers of the Church? Would He appoint the least Pins of the house, and forget the maister-builders? Would He mention the snuffers of the Lights, and passe by the great Lights themselves? or would He there remember the besoms and ashpans, and here not once mention Bishoppes and Archbishoppes?" Such function-

aries are, to begin with, superfluous: "It cannot be said of those Bishops as our Lord said of the asse, 'The Lord hath need of them.'"

But graver charges than that of mere superfluity must be brought against the prelacy. Popery and episcopacy are almost identical. The primacy of Abbot at Canterbury is little better than "the perheminence of Peter" at Rome; an Archbishop, equally with the Pope, is an embodiment of Antichrist. Indeed, prelacy, as anterior to the papacy, must be regarded as the root-mischief; and prelacy is the life and strength, as it was the original source, of popery. His deliberate conclusion is that prelates have grown worse as time went on, and that those of his own age were more corrupt than any before them. Comparing Augustine, the first Archbishop of Canterbury, with the primates of his own acquaintance, he declares that "neither was his pompe so gorgious, his attendance so great, nor his furniture so glorious, neither his servants such roarers, his traine so carried, nor his lettany so stuffed, both for matter and manner with Popish devices, nor the ordinances of God so overlaide with the rubbish of Romish ceremonies. . . . For civil combustions, for bloody braules among themselves, for tyranny over kings and people, for destruction of the state, for vexing, pinige and bloody bouchering of the saints, for letts and impediments of all good in Church and Commonwealth," Leighton's contemporaries had no equals in the past.

There is no crime that may not be laid to the charge of the Bishops. These "bloodie beasts" are guilty of "swelling pride, averice, sweareing, forswearing, and simonie, of prophanenesse and atheisme;" while, to crown the list of indictments brought against this "trumpery of Antichrist," a Bishop's cook avers that all the noblemen's houses that ever he had lived in were "ranke Puritanes to his master's house." It is impossible to touch pitch without being defiled. As a consequence, every office of the Church must be abolished. Chancellors, Archdeacons, churchwardens, sidesmen are one and all "chips of that ould block Antichrist," while the eminently respectable parish clerk, so

indispensable to our grandfathers, is summarily dismissed as "a holy-water dish-clout."<sup>1</sup> It is all very well to say of the Bishops that "some be quiet and harmlesse men—give them ease and bellie-timber, and they will do no hurt. . . . How can you gather grapes of thorns? Indeed, they might prove cedars and palmes if they were transplanted, but so long as they remain in that cursed field, as a reverend man said well, the best proves but a bramble."

Against the revival of pre-Reformation ceremonial Leighton inveighs, it is needless to say, with extreme violence. But his wrath is equally kindled against things accepted by the most moderate section of the Church. The sign of the Cross is without shadow of doubt the "mark of the beast"; Confirmation is nothing less. Kneeling to receive the Sacrament is the "revived spawn of the beast"; the churching of women is "an unholy ceremony"; the practice of retiring into the chancel for part of the service is an apish imitation of the Levitical priesthood, while the eastward position is grimly suggestive of dissension between minister and people. The Thirty-nine Articles, the Books of Homilies, and the Liturgy are "stuffed with gross, absurd (if we say not) blasphemous untruths," especially the service-book, which is "raked out of three Romish channels."

Corrupt to the very core themselves, they corrupt and endanger the State. Taking a brief review of English history, Leighton traces every reverse and disaster to the influence of the Bishops. To punish the superstition of Saxon Kings in maintaining episcopacy, the Danes were let loose on the land. The "intolerable tyrannie" of the Normans was the Divine judgment on Edward the Confessor's partiality for the clergy. In the Wars of the Roses, God was avenging the persecution of the Lollards. Glancing at his own times, he makes out his indictment in similar terms. "Decimating sickness, plaguey sores" do their deadly work, not because insanitary conditions

<sup>1</sup> The allusion is to the fact that one of the chief duties of the pre-Reformation parish clerk was to convey the holy water from house to house on Sunday. On this account he was known as *aqua bajularius* (water-bearer).



reign supreme, but because Bishops flourish and Arminianism is in the ascendant. And why do children fail to fulfil the hopes of their parents, but that "they come forth from the womb to be crossed in their baptism and bishopped in their confirmation," and are thus sent forth into the world bearing the mark of the beast. Drought and flood and murrain alike are judgments on a land that supports episcopacy, and has thus entered "an unholy league with the beast of Rome." Leighton fairly warns the Parliament of England that backwardness and inaction on their part will provoke still sterner vengeance. Let them take the matter in hand without more delay, lest (in the grossly anthropomorphic language of the time) "God go back to fetch a greater blowe."

One serious cause of offence was the great wealth of the episcopal body. The use that Leighton would have made of it is scarcely to the credit of so root-and-branch a reformer; for it is deliberately suggested that these princely revenues might be profitably removed into His Majesty's keeping. Still more astounding is the hint given to the nobility, that as the "Bishops possess too much of that whereof they have too little," they may well take something for themselves. We can only infer that the uncompromising but inconsistent Radical was thus making a bid to the Crown and to the Upper House for support to his revolutionary schemes.

Leighton settled in London, having taken the degree of M.D. at Leyden, but was interdicted from practice by the College of Physicians as being insufficiently qualified. The powers that be might rob him of his practice, but he has his revenge with the pen, using such knowledge of medicine as he has to expose the iniquity of prelatical government, and demonstrate the proper method for its treatment. With the confidence of superior wisdom he can liken the Bishops to the king's evil, leprosy, small-pox, and plaguey sores. They are not mere surface-boils, that yield to "maturing cataplasms"; they are "knobs and wens and bonchie popish flesh," which demand the free use of the knife. On the other hand, Presby-

terian discipline is the panacea for every evil: "This is the only best physitian for the purging out of peccant and pertinacious humours, the only chirurgian for wounds and festered sores, and an exquisite bone-setter for fractures or luxations. This is Christ's own key that shutteth out enemies and entertaineth freinds."

Leighton, as we have seen, was a man of one idea. In all literature it would be difficult to find a treatise in which reason and argument play so small a part; but there can be no question as to the vigour with which he could express his thoughts. There is a raciness in the language, a grotesqueness of illustration, a freshness of personal conviction, which prevent our author from being dull, even when his matter is most devoid of life and interest. Grave as is the subject that he takes in hand, he adopts the most unconventional style, and talks of "the pickle that the clergy had put the state into," complains that the Bishops are "haile-fellow-well-mette" with the Jesuits, brands the whole episcopal bench as "the halting Tom of the state," and when he has to translate *domini fac totum* into English, does it in the three syllables, "don-do-all."

If Leighton thirsted for revenge it came in the significant fact that in the very year—1640—of his release from Newgate, Archbishop Laud, his persecutor, was committed to the Tower; nor could it have added to the comfort of the Archbishop to hear that (by a master-stroke of irony, shall we think?) his palace at Lambeth had been turned into a gaol for Royalist prisoners, with Leighton himself as their custodian. The irony of history was further illustrated in the fact that this uncompromising Presbyterian's eldest son, the amiable and learned Robert Leighton, eventually took Anglican Orders, and became an Archbishop in the very land where his father had imbibed so ill-starred and disastrous a prejudice against episcopal government.<sup>1</sup> This humiliation Alexander Leighton did not live to see. He died

<sup>1</sup> Having received deacon's and priest's orders in 1661, he was appointed forthwith to the See of Dunblane, being translated to the Archbishopric of Glasgow in 1670. His experience of the episcopal office, as is well known, was not a happy one.

insane at the age of seventy-six in the year 1644, the very year that witnessed the execution of Laud.

The book which has been the principal subject of this paper, "Sion's Plea against the Prelacy," is the chief monument that this sturdy Puritan left to posterity. That it is a monument of sectarian rancour in its bitterest mood has been shown in the preceding pages. On the other hand, it should not be forgotten that it attests a lofty resolution, a singleness of aim, and unflinching courage, worthy of a better cause. It should further be recorded that in private life Leighton was amiable and courteous; nor, so it is said, was he ever heard to speak of his persecutors save in terms of compassion and forgiveness.



### The Missionary World.

THE Universal Races Congress, held in London from July 26 to 29, has been an occasion of great interest, and will probably bear useful fruit. Fifty countries were represented, and no less than twenty Governments officially recognized the Congress. The active membership reached the high total of 1,200, whilst some 900 persons further subscribed for all the papers issued in connection with the proceedings. The large volume of papers on inter-racial problems, written by experts from every land, and issued privately to active members, contains a good deal of valuable information and opinion based upon it. Probably this volume will have more permanent value than the discussion at the Congress itself. The papers cover a wide range, dealing with conditions of progress, problems in inter-racial economics, peaceful contact between civilizations, the modern conscience in relation to racial questions (especially the negro and the American Indian), and positive suggestions for promoting inter-racial friendliness. Papers upon the Jewish race and upon the negro race in the United States of America are specially worthy of attention, and, though in many of the