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I.—Literary.

AN AIM OF THE MINISTERIAL STUDENT.

Faculty Address delivered by Prof. T. C. JOHNSON in the Seminary Chapel, Richmond, Va., October 6th, 1898.

II Timothy, 2:15.

“Study to show thyself approved unto God, a workman that needeth not to be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth.”

These words, my young brethren of the Seminary, were originally addressed to a young man who looked on life very much as you are supposed to do.

True, he was already in the active ministry. He was in no formal theological training school, but out doing the work of an evangelist, preaching and organizing churches in the regions beyond; and Paul addressed the exhortation of our text to him while so employed. He wrote to Timothy in the field: “Give diligence to present thyself approved unto God, a workman that needeth not to be ashamed, handling aright the word of Truth.” But if Paul had had such a body of students as sit here to-day—a body of young men looking forward to months, and some of them to years, of study before entering the active ministry—he might have addressed the very same words to them.

You, young brethren, have reached a point where your life is dominated by a conscious sense of unity. You think

A PLEA FOR JUSTER VIEWS OF PURITANISM.

Rev. T. H. RICE, Central Presbyterian Church, Atlanta, Ga.

The word Puritan originated probably as a term of contempt, and the odium associated with the name in the popular mind of to-day is even greater, we believe, than that which gathered around its birth. The modern conception of Puritanism and the modern feeling towards it, as thus conceived of, are to a large extent created and manifested in the literature our people read. This literature is, we fear, principally fiction. Now not only by the cheap novels with which our presses teem, but sometimes by a great genius like George Eliot, in a great masterpiece like "Middlemarch," and by Sir Walter Scott almost *passim* the Puritans and their Puritanism are held up to ridicule and reproach. Probably the most popular historian of our English literature is the Frenchman Taine. In his remarks upon poor Cowper's malady this writer refers to Puritanism as one of the results of an awful nervous disease.

Such impressions fill the minds of the multitude, especially of the young, to-day, concerning that great thing which Carlyle has called "the last of the heroisms," and which a recent and vigorous student of church history has pronounced "in its original development one of the noblest movements in the English Church." It is distressing to see such injustice done to a cause than which very few deserve better at the hands of good men. And believing that a great deal of the present day antipathy to Puritanism is prejudice, growing rather out of a misapprehension of the real nature of the thing in question than out of a hatred of the truth, we venture a suggestion or two which we hope will put some thoughtful young mind on the right track and set him investigating for himself. If any such person is induced to read widely the history of the Puritan spirit and principles we predict that his conception of Puritanism will alter and his antagonism give place to sym-

pathy. He will come to discriminate between the essentials of the thing and its exaggerations, excrescences, and hypocritical counterfeits. Upon the latter he may expend his disapprobation or contempt, but the former he must admire.

1. Our first suggestion is this, *that the Puritans are a very large family and a very noble one.* Everybody knows that the religion of Jesus is not congenial to the natural man. The simple terms upon which it offers salvation seem foolishness to the wisdom of men; the purely spiritual worship which it enjoins seems bare and cold to the carnal imagination, and the absolute holiness which it demands seems severe to flesh which hankers after this world. So that in the course of its progress among men apostolic Christianity has had to battle with the most obstinate efforts to corrupt its heavenly character—efforts to accommodate it in first one respect and then another to the cravings of the carnal mind. Against such efforts it has not been uniformly victorious. There have been periods in which the “faith once delivered to the saints” has been so distorted by perversions of the truth, so overgrown with the traditions of men, so travestied by the foul lives of its professors, that it could scarcely be recognized at all. But in the darkest ages God has watched over his own. At divers times in the history of the Church there has been called out by the circumstances and manifested by earnest men a spirit of revolt against insincerity, formalism, corruption in religion—a spirit aiming at and striving for sincerity, simplicity, spirituality, purity in doctrine, worship and life. The direction which this revolt has taken at any given crisis has been determined by the particular abuse it was encountering at the time, or the ideal which it was striving to realize in the life of the Church of God. But whatever the form assumed or the phase under which it has manifested itself, the essence has been the same and easily recognized by the thoughtful observer under its varying guise.

The name “Puritanism” came to be applied to this thing we speak of in England during Elizabeth’s reign, and the term “Puritans” was then first used to designate that party of the English Church in whom this spirit breathed. The

contention of these English Puritans was that the Reformation in England had been left in an imperfect state, many abuses both in worship and discipline being retained; that the Church of England was corrupted with the remains of Popery, and that she needed and should have a "PURE" system of doctrine and polity. At first, of course, all who contended thus were members of the one English Church. And to the last some, holding fast to the Puritan principles, remained in the English Establishment and uttered there the protest of Puritanism. These Church Puritans were known as Non-Conformists, and their descendants to-day are the Low-Churchmen or Evangelical party—the strength and glory of the modern Anglican Communion. But if some of the Puritans remained in the bosom of the State Church there were others who on Puritan principles separated from that Church. These separated Puritans soon divided into sects—Independents, Presbyterians, Baptists, Brownists, Dissenters, etc., and the names of these various denominations superseded for them the more general term Puritans, while yet, though differently named, these various divisions retained the great common character of the Puritan body and were one in their protest against the opponents of Puritanism. In reading the history of the 16th and 17th centuries in England we are constantly encountering the names of these separate sects; and if we are to gather a true conception of the greatness of the Puritan party in those momentous times we must bear in mind that all these names represent just so many different households of the great Puritan clan.

And more than this—the beginnings of an English Puritan party may be seen two centuries before the word was coined. The Lollardry of Wyclif and his followers was incipient Puritanism. The former was, of course, a pre-reformation party, the latter a post-reformation party. The one pleaded that a purification of the church be begun, the other urged that the purification be thorough and complete. And it is easy to understand how the party which plead and struggled for a thorough reformation when the church was finally going about the work, was in principle the same party which, before the church had set about reforming at all, sought so earnestly that a reformation be begun. If

the Puritans were what Dr. Hetherington calls them, "the real Reformers" of England, Wyclif was certainly "the Morning Star" of the English Reformation. The following enumeration of the things contended for by the Lollards after Wyclif's death exhibits their Puritan kinship. "The Supreme Authority of the Scriptures in religious matters, the rejection of trans-substantiation, the futile nature of pilgrimages, auricular confession, etc., the impiety of image worship, the identification of the papal hierarchy with Anti-Christ, the entire sufficiency of Christ as a Saviour without the need of priestly offices in the mass or any elaborate ceremonial. Such were the points on which they were pronounced heretical, and as such persecuted and condemned." So that Lollardry was incipient Puritanism.

Thus far of the Spirit in England. But outside of England, and outside the centuries in which it flourished there, we may find men and movements essentially Puritan. Montanism, which grew up about the middle of the Second Christian century, is characterized by Dr. Schaff as, "Excessive Puritanism against Catholic laxity." And we may say briefly that the Novatians,* Albigenes, Waldenses, Calvinists, Huguenots, Scotch Covenanters, the later Scotch Presbyterians† (particularly the Free Church at the Disruption time), and our own Southern Presbyterian Church are all essentially Puritan in their fundamental principles. This being true, the terms Puritan and Puritanism, instead of suggesting, as they do to many minds, a small body of witch-burning religionists occupying a very insignificant place in the history of the world, ought to call up and array before our eyes, that vast and noble company in all ages of the church's life who have been most valiant for, most tenacious of, and most obedient to, the pure truth of God. Let a man study one at a time those families in

*Bishop Lightfoot, Com. on Colossians and Philemon, p. 96 note 3, speaks of "the rigid puritanism of the Novationist."

†Puritan was an English nick-name rather than a Scottish. But our Scots Presbyterians were Puritans at bottom like their English brethren, both in their statesmanship and in their churchmanship as well as in their family religion.—Alexander Whyte, D. D., in Samuel Rutherford and Some of his Correspondents.

whose spiritual constitution flows the blood of the Puritan race. Let him see how each of them in its measure has toiled to know and suffered to maintain the mind and will of Christ. Then let him put their histories together. Detraction will die on his lips and he will take off his hat with reverence or throw it into the air with a cheer.*

2. Puritanism is commonly represented as a hard, stern-unhappy spirit, repressing in itself and others every cheerful and genial impulse, counting all mirth and glee a sinful thing, and with every form of amusement at unpromising war. In so far as this charge seems to be supported by facts, we shall speak to it a little later. But just here we throw out our second suggestion, namely, *that the gloom of true Puritanism is often exaggerated by its foes*. The representations of these enemies are frequently gross caricatures of the facts. In support of this statement we ask our readers to study for themselves the life of the English Puritan homes in Cromwell's time or thereabouts; meanwhile we beg leave to quote at length a delightful passage from the English historian Green. 'We must not, indeed, picture the early Puritan as a gloomy fanatic. The figure of Col. Hutchinson, one of the Regicides, stands out from his wife's canvas with the grace and tenderness of a portrait by Vandyck. She dwells on the personal beauty which distinguished his youth, on "his teeth, even and white as the purest ivory," "his hair of brown, very thick set in his youth, softer than the finest silk, curling with loose great rings at the ends." Serious as was his temper in graver matters, the young squire of Owthorpe was fond of hawking, and piqued himself on his

*Speaking of the Puritan Discipline through which England and America have passed, Matthew Arnold (certainly no fond votary of Puritan principles) says: "Certainly I am not blind to the faults of that discipline. Certainly I do not wish it to remain in possession of the field forever or too long. But as a stage and as a discipline, and as means for enabling that poor, inattentive, immoral creature, man, to love and appropriate, and make part of his being divine ideas on which he could not otherwise have laid hold or kept hold, the discipline of Puritanism has been invaluable; and the more I read history, the more I see of mankind, the more I recognize its value."

skill in dancing* and fence. His artistic taste showed itself in a critical love of "paintings, sculpture, and all liberal arts," as well as in the pleasure he took in his gardens, "in the improvement of his grounds, in planting groves and walks and forest trees. If he was "diligent in his examination of the Scriptures," "he had a great love for music, and often diverted himself with a viol, on which he played masterly." We miss, indeed, the passion of the Elizabethan time, its caprice, its largeness of feeling and sympathy, its quick pulse of delight; but, on the other hand, life gained in moral grandeur, in a sense of the dignity of manhood, in orderliness and equable force. The temper of the Puritan gentleman was just, noble, and self-controlled. The larger geniality of the age that had passed away was replaced by an intense tenderness within the narrower circle of the home. "He was as kind a father," says Mrs. Hutchinson of her husband, "as dear a brother, as good a master, as faithful a friend as the world had." The wilful and lawless passion of the Renaissance made way for a manly purity. "Neither in youth nor in riper years could the most fair or enticing woman ever draw him into unnecessary familiarity or dalliance. Wise and virtuous women he loved, and delighted in all pure and holy and unblamable conversation with them, but so as never to excite scandal or temptation. Scurrilous discourse, even among men he abhorred; and though he sometimes took pleasure in wit and mirth, yet that which was mixed with impurity he never could endure." To the Puritan the wilfulness of life, in which the men of the Renaissance had revelled, seemed unworthy of life's character and end. His aim was to attain self-command, to be master of himself, of his thought and speech and acts. A certain gravity and reflectiveness gave its tone to the lightest detail of his converse with the world about him. His temper, quick as it might naturally be, was kept under strict control. In discourse he was ever on his guard against talkiness or frivolity, striving to be deliberate in speech and "ranking the words beforehand."

*We may be sure it was not the objectionable "round dance" of modern society. The "square" household dances, our fathers' stately minuets, etc., were his recreations, doubtless.

His life was orderly and methodical, sparing of diet and of self-indulgence; he rose early, "he never was at any time idle, and hated to see any one else so." The new sobriety and self-restraint marked itself even in his change of dress. The gorgeous colors and jewels of the Renaissance disappeared. Col. Hutchinson "left off very early the wearing of anything that was costly, yet even in his plainest, negligent habit appeared very much a gentleman." The loss of color and variety in costume reflected no doubt a certain loss of color and variety in life itself; but it was a loss compensated by solid gain. 'Nobody can gaze upon a portrait like this, or the picture of that virtuous London housewife, the mother of Nehemiah Wallington, the turner in Eastcheap, or "the still, calm beauty" of John Milton's youth as he grew up so pure and strong in his Puritan home, and continue to believe that there is any necessary connection between genuine Puritanism and unhappy, unwholesome views of life.*

3. But while we defend Puritanism against such misrepresentations we would not even seem to apologize for what is one of its noblest traits. Without question Puritanism is characterized by an intense moral earnestness. The Puritan saw himself an immortal spirit "wrested by no common deliverer from the grasp of no common foe. He had been ransomed by the sweat of no vulgar agony, by the blood of no earthly sacrifice. It was for him that the

*You will hear cheap, shallow, vinous speeches at public dinners and such like resorts about the Puritans and about how they denounced so much of the literature and the art of that day, when if those who so find fault had but the intelligence and honesty to look an inch beneath the surface of things, they would see that it was not the Puritans, but their persecutors, who took away from the serious-minded people of Scotland and England both the dance and the drama, as well as so many far more important things in that day. Had the Puritans and their fathers always had their own way, especially in England, those sources of public and private enjoyment would never have been poisoned to the people as they were and are, and that cleft would never have been cut between the conscience and some kinds of culture and delight which still exists for so many of the best of our people—Alexander Whyte, D. D., in Samuel Rutherford and Some of his Correspondents.

sun had been darkened, that the rocks had been rent, that the dead had risen, that nature had shuddered at the sufferings of her expiring God." In their worship these men "rejected" with contempt the ceremonious homage which other sects substituted for the pure worship of the soul. Instead of catching occasional glimpses of the Deity through an obscuring veil, they aspired to gaze full on his intolerable brightness, and to commune with him face to face." "To know him, to serve him, to enjoy him, was with them the great end of existence"* No wonder that "to the Puritan" (as Green tells us) "the wilfulness of life, in which the men of the Renaissance had revelled, seemed unworthy of life's character and end."† No wonder that to such men life became "intense." And what if in the Puritan temper "the very height of its aim, the intensity of its moral concentration, brought with them a loss of the genial delight in all that was human, which distinguished the men of the Renaissance"; what if the Puritan's "passionate love of virtue and of moral beauty," which "gave such strength to human conduct," "narrowed human sympathy and human intelligence; will any spiritual christian sorrow long over the specified losses in full view of the glorious gains? Sometimes its thorough hatred of the things contrary to itself has driven this fine spirit into an extreme and therefore false position. Sometimes it has been so troubled and cast down by the greatness of its opposite abuses—the colossal proportions of the shams and corruptions it stood out against—that its visage has been indeed serious unto sadness, and so it has been charged with gloom. And there have been, doubtless, multitudes of earnest Puritans who, losing sight of the hopefulness of the gospel and looking too exclusively upon the evil and threatening aspects of our earthly lot, have erred in the direction of too great sorrowfulness. But to all this we reply with our final suggestion, *that in so far as the sorrow of the Puritan's heart is wrought there by his Puritan principles it is a noble sorrow—if there be a shadow on the Puritan's brow it is a shadow cast by the truth.* For to these men the Bible is the very word of

*T. B. Macaulay's Essay on Milton.

†Ibid.

God. It is impossible for them to understand how a man can know what God's book reveals to him and still go dancing, chattering, frolicking through a world filled, as ours is, with all "the misery of that estate whereunto man fell." For instance, the Puritan aims himself at perfect holiness, yet he finds a law in his members warring against the law of his mind and bringing him into captivity to the law of sin that is in his members. Under his daily struggle with indwelling sin every lapse into which grieves the Lord whom he loves and throws him into poignant contrition, discovering every day deeper depths of corruption in his nature, experiencing again and again fresh proofs of the deceitfulness of his "desperately wicked" heart, is it strange that he cries out with the Apostle Paul, "Oh, wretched man that I am!"? The Puritan has his conversation in heaven and his treasure there. He is a pilgrim and a stranger on the earth. In one way or another the world hates and persecutes him because he is Christ's. Is it wonderful that, away from his Father's house, in the midst of his Savior's enemies, breathing the cold, poisonous air of a foreign clime; his feet sore, his heart breaking, he should often be lonesome and sick for home? The Puritan longs to see souls saved. But there are few who will listen to his pleadings. The many rush on to an undone eternity—an endless hell. Is it altogether unnatural that the man who sees through the eyes of Scripture the unspeakable horrors of the lost should sometimes weep as the Son of Man wept over impenitent Jerusalem? Even if they could prove this Puritanism an altogether gloomy thing we should still honor the sadness of its countenance above the levity of its foes.

It is the general opinion that Puritanism is dead and will never rise again to vex the world with its too earnest notions of religious things. Certainly that phase of it manifested in England two hundred and fifty years ago can never re-appear. But the Spirit of English Puritanism we hope is with us yet, not dead but sleeping. And it seems to us that when the deep and widespread revival shall come, for which the faithful are praying, it will be just a great Puritan movement—an uprising of the spirituality against the worldliness of the church—a movement which shall

sweep all that is sham and feebleness in our modern Christianity before the rising tide of genuine, consistent, robust piety. At that day we shall see multiplied pulpits preaching in powerful Puritan fashion the Bible's great doctrines of sin and grace, churches casting off their "ceremonious homage" and substituting, on Puritan principles, "the pure worship of the soul," and Puritan homes with their family altars sanctifying the relationships and routine of every day life, breathing out their potent influences to heal and bless the world. Then shall the reproach of Puritanism be taken away and wisdom shall be justified of her children.