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but our spiritual face, the face of our new birth (παλιγγενεσία), in which our freedom consists, and which shall ever be patiently uplifted to the *parousia* of the Lord (v. 7).

Robert Leighton, Archbishop and Saint.

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THE seventeenth century produced few characters so attractive as that of Robert Leighton, Archbishop of Glasgow, and still fewer whose lives are so instructive. In days when departure from the beaten track was looked upon with suspicion, and originality was dangerous to life itself, this great man never sacrificed his right to form his own conclusions, and to claim perfect freedom in using all the data at hand to form those conclusions.

Robert Leighton was born in 1611, in the city of Edinburgh. There is some uncertainty about both these statements, but the bulk of evidence points this way. He came from an old and much respected Scotch family. His father was Dr. Alexander Leighton, a Presbyterian minister of most unhappy celebrity. Of a naturally sour disposition, Alexander Leighton was unable to prevent his native bitterness from asserting itself in his religion. In Charles I.'s reign he published a scurrilous and inflammatory work entitled "Zion's Plea against Prelacy." For this he was apprehended and sentenced by the Star Chamber to be whipped and pilloried, and to have his ears cropped, his nose slit, and his cheeks branded. This abominable sentence was duly carried out.

One does not expect sweet fruit from the sour stock, but, nevertheless, the son of Alexander Leighton was a man of irresistibly attractive character, and of a peculiarly sweet and winning nature. From his earliest days to the ripe old age of seventy-four, at which he died, he wore the "white flower of a

blameless life," and exhibited a tolerance and breadth of mind which would be conspicuous in any age, and was especially so in the dark days in which he lived.

Bishop Burnet's estimate of Leighton's character demands attention: "He had the greatest command of the purest Latin I ever knew in any man. He was a master both of Greek and Hebrew, and of the whole compass of theological learning, chiefly in the study of the Scriptures. But that which excelled all the rest was, he was possessed of the highest and noblest sense of Divine things that I ever saw in any man. . . . He had so subdued the natural heat of his temper that in a great variety of accidents, and in a course of twenty-two years' intimate conversation with him, I never observed the least sign of passion but upon one single occasion. . . . I bear the greatest veneration for the memory of that man that I do for any person, and reckon my early knowledge of him . . . and my long and intimate conversation with him, that continued to his death, for twenty-three years, among the greatest blessings of my life, and for which I know I must give an account to God in the great day in a most particular manner."[1]

The subject of our paper believed greatly in the value of travel and intercourse with men of other ways of thinking for the expansion of the mind. During his stay abroad he visited the Seminary of Douai, and his open mind was much impressed by the austerity of life prevailing there. He was willing to learn even from the Roman Church, and at Douai he learnt what he never forgot, but faithfully carried out—strict piety of life and self-sacrifice and self-control.

Leighton was full of quaint sayings, and his epigrams were not superficial, but the fruit of thought and experience. "Some men preach too soon, and some too long," he used to say; and, acting upon this, it was not till the age of thirty that he became the minister of Newbottle, in Midlothian. In this inconspicuous sphere he was anxious to shine as a fixed and not a wandering star. There he laboured, not to win proselytes to a party, but

[1] Burnet's "History of His Own Time," pp. 89, 91, 1838 edition.

converts to Jesus Christ. To those who objected to his non-topical preaching, he replied: "You may surely allow one poor brother to preach up Christ Jesus and eternity!"

It was, indeed, this political character of Presbyterianism which produced in Leighton a recoil which issued eventually in his forsaking Presbyterianism for Episcopacy. In days when the Divine right of Episcopacy was voiced on one side, and the Divine right of Presbyterianism as strongly asserted on the other, it was only a man of independence who could take up the intermediate position. Slowly Leighton's mind swung round to Episcopacy as the best form of Church government, and in 1653 he severed his connection with Newbottle, but for some years still he remained outwardly a Presbyterian, but no longer with a cure of souls. In this year he was elected Principal of the University of Edinburgh, and there he laboured zealously to raise the tone of scholarship as well as morality among the students. In 1662 came the great parting of the ways in his life, but fully to appreciate this a brief digression must be made.

With very good reason, the Scotch always associated Episcopacy with Rome and Presbyterianism with Protestantism, for when the Reformation began to make itself felt in Scotland, the Bishops withstood it. This was enough in itself to make the wary Scotch mind afraid. But that mind has another prominent trait—a doggedness which refuses to be driven. Twice already had attempts been made to force Episcopacy on the Scotch; both had failed, and the only purpose achieved was to make prelacy positively loathsome in Scotch eyes. Charles II., possessed with the same ideas as his father and grandfather, saw in Episcopacy the bulwark of the monarchy. He would have echoed James I.'s words, "No Bishop, no King!"

It is more than doubtful whether by any means Episcopacy could have ever regained the hearts of the Scotch at this time. One thing is certain: whatever hope there may have been was killed for many a generation by the men chosen by Charles. He chose as Royal Commissioner the "Earl of Middleton, a

man of base origin and baser manners, obstinate, choleric, licentious, and cruel," and Dr. James Sharp, who became Archbishop, a man detested by those who differed from him, and of whom even his friends found it hard to speak well. The others were mere place-hunters, with the bright exception of Robert Leighton. Much against his will, he was chosen. He would have preferred obscurity, but his wishes were not consulted. A private letter to a Mr. James Aird discloses his feelings upon the matter: "As there has been nothing of my choice in the thing, so I undergo it, if it must be, as a mortification, and that greater than a cell or hair-cloth; and whether any will believe this or no, I am not careful."

On December 12, 1661, he was consecrated Bishop of Dunblane, for his plea to have this small and poorly paid see had been granted.

To Scotland went Leighton, full of hope that he might be able to heal the breach between Presbyterian and Episcopalian. No man could be better suited to the work than this tolerant, scholarly, and wise prelate. But circumstances were too strong for him. Let us note what these were.

First, there was the unfortunate fact that before consecration to the Episcopate, Sheldon (Bishop of London) had insisted that he should be ordained first deacon and then priest. Leighton gave way. This was fatal. The Presbyterians, despite Leighton's protests and explanations, insisted that he had cast aspersions upon his previous ordination, and it is not easy to disagree with them. The new Bishop of Dunblane protested that "the re-ordaining a priest ordained in another Church imported no more but that they received him into Orders according to their rules; and did not infer the annulling the Orders he had formerly received." James I. had been wise enough to avoid this blunder when he tried his experiments on Scotland in 1610. Then the candidates were consecrated Bishops without any preliminary ordination. (This we can explain only in two ways: either it was a consecration *per saltum*, for which, I believe, there is no precedent in the

English Church, or else it was a tacit acknowledgment of Presbyterian Orders). This false step was never forgotten by Leighton's enemies.

The second circumstance which made reconciliation impossible was the character of the Scotch clergy. "Sir Robert Murray," writes Burnet, "went through the West Coast of Scotland. When he came back he told me the clergy were such a set of men, so ignorant and so scandalous, that it was not possible to support them, unless the greatest part of them could be turned out and better men found to be put in their places." But instead of doing this, in 1662, 300 Presbyterian ministers were turned out to make room for as many Episcopalians. The selected Episcopalians were "the poorest creatures ever known as clergy in Scotland—illiterate, juvenile, drunken, unchaste. This evil of unfitness in character and training was increased by their subserviency and cruelty in generally acting as spies and informers on their own parishioners who were Presbyterians, guiding the savages who marched about the country under the name of soldiers" (Rankin, "Church of Scotland," p. 207).

But the worst thing of all to be overcome was the utter folly of Archbishop Sharp and Bishop Fairfowl. Swelling with his new dignity, the Archbishop could not coax, but was burning to show his power. His distressing end is sufficient evidence of the measure of success he achieved. So greatly did the clumsiness and foolishness of his fellow Bishops distress Leighton that he journeyed to London to complain to the King, anxiously hoping he might be allowed to resign his see. But quite the reverse happened, for soon he was to be advanced to the Archbishopric of Glasgow. The days were gone when Presbyterianism could be crushed, and the abortive attempt to do so made all Leighton's efforts to conciliate ring false. These, however, must not be noted now, for while in the inconspicuous See of Dunblane he had not the authority to move effectively in this direction.

He was a true father in God to his people. Unlike his

fellow prelates, who were mostly sycophants at the Court, he resided amongst his flock. He preached, he taught, but especially occupied himself in raising the standard of life and spirituality among his clergy. He rightly emphasized the importance of preaching, and strongly disapproved of read sermons. The Holy Communion was in many parishes not administered even annually. This greatly grieved the Bishop, and he laboured to rectify it. To promote family worship was one of the great duties, he considered, of the clergy.

The higher dignity of Archbishop was only accepted by Leighton because he saw in it the opportunity of more probable success in his scheme for "accommodation," as it was called, between the two opposing elements in the Church. He found an able champion in the person of Gilbert Burnet, Professor of Divinity at Glasgow, afterwards Bishop of Salisbury. Side by side these two great men pleaded and fought, coaxed and argued. Conferences were arranged again and again, when both sides urged their causes. But, as we noted, the stern measures which had been tried and failed, as force in such matters always must, had convinced the Covenanters that the gentle measures now being tried were a proof of weakness. The Archbishop's policy only succeeded in strengthening opposition, for it had come too late. Concessions seldom please either party; they did not in this case. It will be instructive to note Leighton's views concerning Episcopacy.

Episcopacy had from Scripture at least as much support as any other method of ecclesiastical polity, and considerably more than any other from the history of the primitive Church. Let the Presbyterians regard the Bishop as only a permanent Moderator, and it would suffice. In the Church judicatory the Bishop should preside and the Presbyters vote with him. The latter might even, as a further concession, declare that they only sat under the Bishop for peace' sake, and be allowed a mental reservation as to episcopal superiority. The Bishop should not be allowed to claim a veto. Ordinations should be by the Bishop, with the concurrence of the Presbyters, and candidates

should be allowed to declare, if they wished, their belief that the Bishop was only the head of the Presbyters.

But the Covenanters declared in the words of their oath that they forbade "a hoof or so much as a hair of the Scottish model to be altered."

The situation was impossible and intolerable to the gentle nature of Leighton. He had failed to make peace, and, to his unutterable relief, he was allowed to resign in 1674, and to retire into private life.

For ten years he lived in useful retirement at Broadhurst, in Sussex, with Mr. Lightmaker, his brother-in-law, who was so deeply impressed with his sanctity of life that he retired from business to give himself more thoroughly to prayer and meditation. Leighton's ideal of the married life was of the highest. In answer to his sister he once said: "I know not how it would be" (if he had a wife and children), "but I know how it should be. 'Enoch walked with God, and begat sons and daughters.'" Another anecdote illustrates his breadth of mind. A friend called one day to see him, but, finding him out, learnt that he had gone to visit a sick Presbyterian minister, and borrowed a horse to do so from the Roman Catholic priest.

He had often said he would like to die in an inn, as the place most properly suggestive of the Christian's life of pilgrimage. God granted this curious request. Lord Perth was feeling the reproach of his evil life, and Leighton journeyed to London to discourse on sacred things with the convicted nobleman. On reaching London, Leighton fell ill and died at the Bell Inn, Warwick Lane, on June 25, 1684, in the arms of his greatest friend, Gilbert Burnet.