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"Glory to God in the highest, and on Earth peace, good will toward men."

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### BIOGRAPHY.

#### MR. RICHMOND—CONTINUED.

While Mr. Richmond was thus fulfilling the duties of an active and laborious parish priest, he committed his work, which justly entitles him to the gratitude of present and succeeding generations. We allude to the 'Fathers of the English Church,' a publication containing copious and impartial selections from the writings of our Reformers, and comprising a valuable mass of theological knowledge, illustrative of the doctrines of the Reformation. Nothing of the kind had ever been attempted, and perhaps, few modern divines possessed the requisite means of information.

The circumstances to which Mr. Richmond was indebted for his superiority on this subject, is singular and deserves insertion. While he resided in the Isle of Wight, and shortly after his removal to Wilberforce's Practical View, which had effected so striking a change in his own sentiments and character, a grocer at Newport sent him some trifling article wrapped up in a leaf of Bishop Jewell's Apology. His attention was directed to the wrapper by one of his family, who jocosely remarked, "this looks as if it would suit you, Legh." He read the leaf, and instantly set off for Newport, to inquire after the remaining pages. The grocer, smiling at the anxiety of his clerical customer, replied, "O yes, Sir, here they are, and I have a whole hog-head of these worthies; they are much at your service, for two-pence a pound." The treasure was speedily and joyfully secured; and to this incident, trivial as it may appear, Mr. Richmond owed his extensive and profound acquaintance with the authors of the Reformation.

It is, indeed, a humiliating consideration, that works like these should lose the veneration of posterity; and be treated with contempt due only to the meanest productions of the day. It was an honour reserved for Mr. Richmond, to draw from obscurity the writings of those eminent men, who had shaken empires by their discussions, overthrown systems which centuries had struggled to uphold, and sealing their testimony with their blood, bequeathed a sacred legacy of pure doctrine to the Protestant church.

At the urgent and repeated entreaties of a large body of the clergy, Mr. Richmond consented to lay before the public a prospectus of his plan, about the year 1806; and shortly after, he published the work itself in numbers, which was completed in eight volumes. It was favourably received, and is allowed to be executed with much judgment and impartiality. On the whole, the selection is rich and appropriate—presenting a perfect uniformity of sentiment in the greatest essentials of Christianity; and if compared with the writings of many modern divines, detecting in those writings a mournful departure from the truth. Some parts of the selection might, perhaps, have been omitted, without injury to the cause of vital religion; and other extracts added, which would have increased the value of the publication. The candid reader will allow for these defects, and duly appreciate what has been accomplished. It is only wonderful, that amidst incessant parochial labour, when it was difficult to find moments unemployed or spirits unexhausted, Mr. Richmond should have been able to bring together so much valuable material with credit to himself and advantage to the church of God. A man less devoted would have shrunk from the task, or have failed in its execution. But the apostle's command was Legh Richmond's motto through life; "give thyself wholly to them." His heart was in his work; he turned for relaxation to his employment, and found refreshment in its variety.

From this brief mention of the 'Fathers of the English Church,' we are naturally led to the consideration of the doctrines in that work, to which Mr. Richmond attached so much importance, and which furnished the leading topics of his ministry.

He has often been heard to declare, "that two great subjects pervaded the Bible—*sin, and salvation*

from sin; and that these ought to form the basis of the Christian ministry."

In his addresses from the pulpit he never failed to point out, distinctly and forcibly, *man's ruin by the fall—his condemnation under the law, and his moral inability to deliver himself by any power or strength of his own—Free and full justification, through faith in the atoning blood and righteousness of the Redeemer—the nature of that faith, and its fruits and evidences, the agency of the Holy Spirit, in the regeneration and sanctification of believers; and the necessity of personal righteousness, or a conformity of heart and life with the will of God—not as the title to heaven, but as a meetness for its enjoyment.* These are fundamental doctrines, in which all true Christians, without distinction of sect or party, cordially unite. They have been the food of the church of God in all ages—the manna which has sustained her children in the many and diversified scenes of human trial and infirmity; they have been the song of their pilgrimage; their joy in tribulation, their light in darkness; and their guide to life and immortality.

In addition to the above mentioned doctrines, Mr. Richmond adopted the views which are commonly called Calvinistic; but not in that offensive sense in which they are frequently, though most erroneously imputed. It is not the intention of the editor to enter here on the Calvinistic controversy: this is neither the time nor the place for such a discussion. He may offer a still better reason for his silence—the conviction which he has long entertained, that the real question at issue, and the one in which the interests of true religion are most concerned, is not, whether the Articles of our Church, and the sentiments of the Reformers, be more or less Calvinistic; but whether we *spiritually understand, and cordially embrace those fundamental principles, the belief of which is indispensable to salvation, and the well-being of every Christian community.*

These principles are stated, with admirable precision, and strict adherence both to the letter and spirit of the Scriptures, in the 9th, 10th, 11th, 12th and 13th Articles of the Church of England; and must ever entitle her to rank among the purest of the reformed churches. Satisfied with the principles there laid down, we may safely allow a latitude of interpretation on points which, though deemed important by some, are not maintained by any to be essential to salvation.

The following analysis of Mr. Richmond's mode of preaching, is submitted to the candid consideration of those persons who have fostered prejudices founded on error and misrepresentation;—prejudices not wholly unaccompanied by a very culpable ignorance, and which charity and truth must alike lament and condemn.

As a preacher, he was *scriptural—experimental—practical—comprehensive—powerful in his appeals to the conscience, and addresses to the heart—full of pathos and interest.*

1. *He was scriptural.* A rich vein of divine truth was diffused through his sermons, arising from a frequent perusal of the Bible, and a familiar acquaintance with every part of it. No man can become a sound and enlightened divine, who does not give his days and nights to the study of the Word of God, accompanied by prayer and meditation. The conjunction of solid piety with an intimate knowledge of the Scriptures, is indissoluble. This forms, indeed, the manual of every Christian, but belongs in a more especial manner to the minister of the sanctuary. It is the armoury whence he must draw all his weapons; it is the treasury whence he is to be supplied with every motive and every argument which, through the grace and power of the Holy Spirit, can fix conviction on the mind, rouse the torpid conscience, excite the affections of the heart, and elevate the soul to God. It is the sceptre of righteousness, by which he rules and guides the flock; the rod and staff of their support, in the dark valley and shadow of death; and by it they are taught the new song, which will animate their praises in the land of their inheritance—"Worthy is the Lamb that

was slain, to receive power, and riches, and wisdom, and strength, and honour, and glory, and blessing, for ever and ever. Amen."

Such was the model on which Mr. Richmond formed his ministry. He did not, like the polished but flimsy essayist in divinity, select a motto to head a discourse, vague and unappreciated; nor did he encumber his expositions with an unnecessary parade of human learning; nor seek to attract admiration by ingenious subtleties, or wrest the Scripture to subservient a system. He regarded his office as being that of an interpreter; and his aim was, with simplicity and plainness, to unfold the mind of God in his word; "rightly dividing the word of truth, and giving to each their portion of meat in due season."

2. *He was experimental.* Divine truth, from his lips, was not a cold, speculative statement. He declared, "that which he had seen, and heard, and tasted, of the word of life." From the heart he preached to the heart, and seemed to enter into all its secret recesses. He detected the illusions by which it is beguiled—he traced human action to its hidden springs—he accompanied the soul in the alternations of doubt and hope, of fear and joy, in its conflicts with despair and unbelief; till, led to the foot of the cross, it found peace with God.

3. *He was practical.* He did not preach doctrine without practice, nor practice without doctrine; but both in due proportion, in their mutual dependence, connexion and use. He connected precept with promise, and privilege with duty. As a spiritual workman, he considered the doctrines, to be his tools, and practice the effect to be wrought out by them; adopting the sentiment of one of his favourite Reformers—"truly it is said, 'without holiness, no man shall see the Lord;' but this I know, without the Lord, no man shall see holiness."

4. *He was comprehensive.* Christianity, in his mode of exhibiting it, was a grand and comprehensive whole; while the symmetry of the several parts was faithfully preserved. All the doctrines and all the precepts, all the promises, and all the characters to whom they are made—all the privileges and all the duties, were, in turn, the theme of his discourses. Of the doctrines, even the highest, he would say, "I dare not omit what God has revealed to his church; nor call that useless or dangerous, which he requires me to believe and teach." Of the privileges and promises—"Human weakness needs encouragement; it can stand no longer than it is supported—it can only climb by clinging." Of the duties and precepts—"While the apostle charges me constantly to affirm, that those who have believed be care to maintain good works, my good people must allow me to stir up their pure minds in the way of remembrance."

The well informed reader will easily discern the old divine in these sentiments. The highest Calvinist, in former days, took in the whole range of Christian faith and practice. Usher, and others of the supralapsarian school, are as minute and particular in explaining and enforcing the law, in all its ramifications, as they were full and glowing in setting forth the grace of the Gospel; and insisted as strenuously on the necessity and importance of good works, as the lowest Arminian.

5. *He was impressive in his appeals to the heart and conscience.* No man better understood that part of a discourse which consists in the application. Some preachers are very deficient in this respect; either wholly omitting to apply their subject, or for the most part failing in discrimination. A discourse to be profitable, must come home to our own case.

Mr. Richmond, in appealing to his hearers, was faithful, searching, forcible, and impressive. "He reproved, rebuked, exhorted, with all long-suffering and doctrine;" but his exhortations were accompanied by the most affecting displays of the mercy, power, and grace of God in the Gospel; and while his own experience of the truths he uttered, gave an authority and efficacy to his words, God put his seal to the testimony, and crowned his labours with success.