

rank with those of Luther, Zwingle, Calvin, Cranmer, and Knox. The rationalistic movement of last century and this is mainly the work of clergymen; for though in Germany and elsewhere a few prominent theologians who figure as leaders of rationalism had not received ordination, the chief promoters were nearly all in orders. Any person who consults the Church histories or takes note of the liberal or radical movement in theology in our own day has abundant evidence that all clerics are not conservative;—if, indeed, he does not reach the conclusion that nearly all heresies, corruptions of Christianity through philosophy, and novel opinions in doctrine are due to those who were specially appointed to teach and defend religious truth. We do not intend by these statements to bring any charge against the ministers of religion nor, on the other hand, to claim credit for them, seeing that it cannot be affirmed of either conservatism or radicalism that it is wholly good or wholly evil. Any broad and general declaration to this effect would overlook distinctions and discriminations, which are of the utmost importance. A well-balanced mind is at once conservative and progressive;—conservative of everything good which has come down to us, while it seeks by careful investigation to enlarge the boundaries of ascertained truth and to purge away errors and mistakes. Above all things, we should seek to know what is true, and to have all doctrines, institutions, and modes of action brought into harmony with the truth. Pelagianism was a pernicious innovation, the Reformation a most benign one.

That the clerical mind is, on the whole, conservative in religion and theology may, however, be freely admitted. The existing doctrinal and Church systems have found their chief defenders among the clergy, who, as a body or class of men, have shown aversion to radical change. While the Apologetics of Christianity has been mainly the work of its ministers, we cannot deny that errors and abuses which had come to be regarded as part of the Church, which had obtained prescriptive authority, have, as a rule, been defended by the clergy. Any attempted changes in the doctrine, polity, or discipline of the Church, whether for corruption or renovation, have had to reckon upon the opposition of the ecclesiastical body. Various causes of this clerical conservatism, some of them entirely honorable, others not so, may be specified.

1. The piety, the faith of the clergy has been an element in determining their resistance to radical change. Even those who judge Christian ministers most severely will hardly deny that many of them have really loved the doctrine and the Church of which they were the zealous defenders; while those who, under the influence of Christian sympathies, think more favorably of ministers, though they mourn the decay which, in many times and places, has affected the piety of both pastors and people, gratefully acknowledge that a large proportion of the clergy have, according to their lights, been true servants of Christ. That some of them have led scandalous lives, and that many have been self-seeking and unholy is con-