

not in sympathy with their so-called progressive spirit as "conservative," and think that thereby they have effectually branded these unworthy the consideration of intelligent men. The word is thus often appropriately used, but all unbeknown to the user—his [conception of the idea is so slight as to be worthless. The words "fossilized," "antiquated," "foggyish," "behind-the-times," and "conservative" have to him one meaning. While each of these words has, to be sure, its meaning and its legitimate use, they are by no means synonymous.

The more liberal-minded champions of radicalism are ready enough to admit the need of a conservative force, and its use in the development of thought and civilization. Yet even in them we often detect a strange inconsistency; for they declaim loudly against the evil of an unreasonable resistance to change, which they call conservatism, yet tell us that they recognize a need of conserving forces proportionate to the aggressiveness of radicalism. My plea is for a proper definition of terms, and a candid recognition of good wherever found.

Conservatism we have heard unqualifiedly defined as as opposition to change—the most extreme meaning that can be attached to it; while radicalism is, we are told, a belief that many things in the past are wrong, with unbounded confidence in the future—the most liberal view possible to take it. I shall endeavor to use universally accepted interpretations of these terms. This I could not do if my definitions were constructed to suit an idea of my own, or if they contained or implied an assumption to be used in my argument.

Conservatism extreme may properly be spoken of as opposition to any change whatever, or a disposition to cling to existing institutions for no better reason than that they exist, but this is a very unjust general definition. The fair-minded conservative is he who is reverential; who has respect for experience and for tried customs and institutions; who remembers that wise men have lived, and reasons that an institution which has received the support of wise and good men must contain somewhat at least, of good, and deserves his consideration. The intelligent radical says, "The fact that a thing has existed is not *prima facie* evidence of its worth. I am not bound to follow the customs of my ancestors. There ought to be improvements. The future must have better things in store than the past has produced." And may not these two individuals be one and the same? Need it be paradoxical to speak of a conservative radical? Is it because human nature is not strong enough, nor the mind sufficiently broad—or liberal if you will—to combine these necessary elements that we have separate forces, at war with each other.

Naturally, the extremes of both ideas have arisen. Upon the extreme of one, the radical, as I have said often dwells, and calls it conservatism. The extreme of the other is that fanaticism, that madness, which assails every time-honored idea, custom and institution for no other reason than that it is old; and which makes the grievous error of considering—whether intentionally or not—novelty a guarantee of excellence. Here I find myself in danger of falling into an error similar to that with which I have charged the anti conservative, and assailing this madness under the title of radicalism. It is not radicalism. But what shall we call it? Suppose we name it *rantism* for convenience' sake. It is rantism, and its advocates are ranters.

It shows itself most plainly in matters of religion and education. The ranters are commonly young men that are very anxious to be thought intellectual and progressive. Sometimes its signs appear as early as the age of sixteen years. At this age we are not surprised at it. We regard it the last of the children's diseases, and hope for a speedy recovery. This, in ordinary cases, and with proper care, is brought about in from two to four years. Sometimes, however, it becomes chronic, and clings to the sufferer during life, occasionally assuming a very malignant type. At first appearance it is not so severe as to warrant the name we have adopted, but the common expression for it is "smartness." Under this title may be included such premonitory symptoms, as contempt for parents, and unwillingness to receive advice. Soon a disposition appears to make light of sacred things, and e'er long our youth tells you, of certain matters of faith—that he "don't know about these things;" he "used to believe them, but cannot now." He may not say, but he means, that his intelligence has so increased that these conservative and superstitious ideas of his parents can no longer be accepted by him. From this he rapidly develops into a regular ranter. He gets hold of the word "liberal," and thinks to be liberal is to denounce the Bible, deny faith in the church, and to be liberal is to be liberal as far as possible, and claim to be governed wholly by reason. He also at this stage makes frequent use of the word "conservative." He imagines that to be conservative means to stand still, to grow rusty, to cease to think, except in certain fixed channels, to be stupid and without influence. So, while a conservative faith is spreading, a conservative gospel is converting the world; conservative workers are elevating the morals and purifying the minds of men, and many of his conservative fellows are outstripping him in the race for knowledge, our ranter, but would be reformer is cutting loose from the faith of his fathers, and fancies himself free as he sails an unguided mariner upon a trackless sea.

What then, is my point? Why this while we would be progressive, let us not suppose that to be so, we must needs discard everything our fathers have said and done before us. Let us remember that the really wise man tries to understand why others think as they do, instead of treating them with contempt because all their ideas do not accord with his, and in seeking for light, let us be careful that we do not chase a will-o'-the-wisp in the distance.

I have said that the effects of rantism are most plainly seen in matters of education and religion. To be more definite—for two thousand years there has been a force at work in the world, bringing light out of darkness order out of chaos, holiness out of sin. Bad men have been made good, individual lives have been voluntarily sacrificed for the universal weal, charitable institutions have been founded, the sum of human misery perceptibly diminished. Of all this, conservative, radical and ranter alike approve, and to it they all love to refer. But the conservative is the only one that draws conclusions from it. Along with this progress and development, there has been a co-existent faith. The ranter attempts to separate the two, and calls the faith foolishness. Now if we look candidly at this whole matter, we shall find it to be true that faith and progress have gone hand in hand. Whether one is the cause and one the effect and if so, which is which; or whether they might as