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HISTORIC PRESBYTERIAN CHAR- ACTERS.

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WALKING along the shores of Profile lake in the White mountains, the eye instinctively turns toward the great granite mass that, scarred and rugged, towers above the Western shore. A few more steps and what was an irregular-scarped cliff, the monument of prehistoric storms begins to give the rude semblance of a human face. A turn in the path, and the outline of "The Old Man of the Mountain" is full upon your vision, every feature cut clear against the sunset. The road of the centuries brings character into view. We do not need to describe a great man. We need only to get away from him. History sublimates character. The ages give perspective in which all littleness disappears and only true greatness remains. And what is history at last but the biography of greatness? "It is all to be explained from individual experience."

From this crest of the century let us look back upon the faces illumined by our position. Let us look along the cliffs of great events and see the men, who to their own age were an offense—to following ages, a mystery—but to us appear clear cut and beautiful, the incarnation of great ideas, and the exponents of historic epochs. We will travel to-night, not to see the Alps, the Pyrenees, or the Grampians, but the souls that look out from their stormy heights. An hour's walk through the Gallery of Battles, in Versailles, carries you through the romantic and thrilling ages of French history. A half hour among Presbyterian characters will imply three centuries of Presbyterian history, say rather of world-history; for in this period this world has sprung to its most splendid career.

Remembering that the centuries of time are to be explained by the hours of human life, let us find in men the origin and significance of our history. Presbyterianism stands for a definite whole of life and doctrine. We rejoice in its sunlight.

We have dwelt on the religious and civil liberty it fosters, on the systematic truth it holds, and the vital relations it sustains to all that is best in human progress. But these general ideas have men back of them. Shall there be a deliverance from Egypt? Then Moses must come. A protest against idolatry? Let Elijah spring like an apparition from the wilderness. An expectation of the Messiah? Let John the Baptist utter its voice. So, back of these last centuries, when humanity has taken a new direction, I am sure some men are standing whose vital force is with us yet. American Presbyterianism has a far and profound origin. Our sun had elsewhere its rising. That "lane of beams athwart the sea," that lit the *Mayflower's* path through the wintry ocean, traced back to Europe, reveals sunrise in many lands. Not alone does it gladden the dull Holland marshes; it plays on the Alpine range, shimmers over the Black Forest and transfigures the mists of Scotland.

It is an accepted philosophic fact that the combination of diverse elements in nature and life is the condition of the best and strongest forms. That combination has made the Anglo-Saxon the dominant race of modern history; it promises to make the American Republic the most vital part of Anglo-Saxon life. So our Presbyterianism is the last resultant of many forces. As the life of a nation has its prophet in the ideas and principles at the heart of it, so the past of our Church may somewhat forecast its future. To what conquests are the ideas which fashioned its childhood adapted to carry its manhood? What truths in their harmony and potency stand sponsors for its destiny? In the lives of men, in the iron of their blood, we will find the answer.

Studying the philosophy of our times and casting about for the shaping ideas of modern thinking, I perceive that chief among them all is the personal authority of God. It stands between a vapid spiritism on the one hand and a cold materialism on the other. It is the nerve of our best thinking, the force within all true heroisms, the conservator of our philosophy, the strength of our theology, and the tonic generally of modern civilization. Specially were the early centuries of our history times in which God's rule among men was cut sharp and deep into the popular consciousness. To that more than to any other one idea may be traced the robust and sinewy character of colonial life and the solemn earnestness of colonial struggles for independence. That truth, more than any other in the subsequent times of skeptical challenge of the throne of God, has been the tense and sufficient cable to hold both Church and State loyal to our historic antecedents and to enable us to keep our faith sternly with our fathers and our God. Perhaps the historic position of Israel is to be

repeated with us, to maintain as they did against despotisms on the one hand and effete civilizations on the other divine personality and human accountability.

When now we trace this nerve, that made us sensitive in our successes and courageous in our trials, back to its genesis through the perspective of three centuries, against the background of the snowy Alps there stands the colossal figure of John Calvin, the man who incarnates at once for the Church and the State the humbling, stimulating, and sustaining doctrine of the sovereignty of God. The great reformer was first a great student. The tiny gleam of a candle in an attic room often attracted the attention of people in the neighborhood of the College of La Marche. It burned on far toward the morning. Did ever one little candle send such beams? It went not out till the Reformation morning broke full on France. It will always be the supreme honor of Martin Luther that he laid the foundations of the Reformation. Many hands wrought upon the rising walls. But John Calvin sprung its arch from land to land, lifted its dome, the cynosure of awakening Europe, and gathered under it in compact organization the letters, laws and liberties of Switzerland, Holland, France, and Great Britain. At twenty-six, the profoundest scholar of his age, he wrote his "Institutes," in a Latin as pure as that of Livy or Tacitus. They became at once the fountain of a new theology in France, a text-book at Geneva and Heidelberg, and the standard at Oxford and Cambridge. For twenty-eight years only were his labors on earth continued, carried on in feeble and failing health; but he gave to the world scores of exegetical and doctrinal volumes, which remain as the monuments of an incomparable scholarship and an amazing industry.

Their first influence was felt in France; but from the beautiful hill above the "arrowy Rhone," the light went abroad among the nations. Geneva at once became the mother of Reformation and Liberty. For he who, once expelled from her gates, was afterward recalled to save the city, recast there the theological and largely the political thinking of the world. Great, not only in scholarship, he was the master organizer of Reformation times. The spirit which Luther evoked was a spirit of agitation through Christendom. All the elements, civil and religious, were in ferment. There was needed a catholic genius great enough to adjust, on divine principles, the relations of Church and State, to maintain liberty without license, authority without despotism, and a religion, true at once to the sovereignty of God and the brotherhood of man. Calvin reformed Geneva on principles which have made that city the "seed-plot of democracy" for two continents. The

man, sometimes called narrow, built so broadly that Bancroft says of him, "More truly benevolent to the human race than Solon, more self-denying than Lysurgus, the genius of Calvin infused enduring elements into the institutions of Geneva and made it for the modern world the impregnable fortress of popular liberty." It is not, then, saying too much to affirm that the principles of this Reformer built the dykes that kept the waves of oppression from Holland and the bulwarks that flung backward the persecuting fury of the Guises in France; that they were the inspiration of Cromwell at Marston Moor, of Bruce at Bannockburn, and of Americans at Valley Forge and Bunker Hill. It is not the partial pride of a Presbyterian, but the impartial judgment of our national historian, which says, "He who will not honor the memory and respect the influence of Calvin, knows but little of the origin of American liberty." Our history emphasizes this statement, for Calvinism was the doctrine that prevailed among the Huguenots of South Carolina, the early settlers of Pennsylvania, the Dutch on Manhattan Island, and the Pilgrims around Massachusetts Bay.

Equally is the influence of Calvin felt in the educational history of the country. We point, with commendable pride, to the public schools that dot every commonwealth and secure universal education, and to the colleges that, from ocean to ocean, plead for scholarship as the most eminent sign of national distinction. Calvin was the author of our system of free schools, opening them first in his own city, and his mark on higher education is manifest in the fact that most of the great colleges of our country have a distinctly Calvinistic origin.

But it is as a theologian that Calvin will live to the end of time. His system, starting from his conception of God and branching out into the entire domain of religious thought, at once gave order and force to the newly awakened thought of his own age, and has remained the nerve of every phase of reformatory theology to the present time. The despised Vaudois lived again in France when she accepted the Protestantism of Geneva. English bishops put Calvinism into thirty-nine articles. Scotland put it into her "Solemn League and Covenant," and Northern Ireland, to which we are indebted for much of our most vigorous Presbyterianism, and most decided Americanism, had her blood enriched by the doctrines of Geneva filtered through the heart of Scotland.

Thus through various lands the theology of Calvin came to the United States. We would expect then to find the sovereignty of God stamped on our national beginnings. Though often denied, the records of it are abundant and explicit. We read it not only in the prayers on the *Mayflower* and the

religion of the Jamestown colonists, but emphatically in public documents and addresses in early colonial history. John Adams, when the fate of the Declaration of Independence hung in the balance of debate, declared "It is the will of Heaven that Britain and America should be sundered forever." Jefferson wrote the Declaration with no book at hand, but with the example of Swiss and Netherlands full in mind, he traced American destiny direct to "the laws of nature and nature's God," and the pledge of "life, fortune and sacred honor," is made sacred by "firm reliance on the protection of Divine Providence." More distinctly still, the Constitutions of the thirteen States make the idea of God the corner-stone, the Constitution of this noble commonwealth, as if taught from Geneva itself, declaring essential a "belief in God, the Creator and Governor of the universe, the rewarder of the good and punisher of the wicked." Thus the polity of Calvin, which combined authority with popular rights, finds noblest expression in the form and history of our government. If ever the time shall come when the idea of God shall be dim in our popular thought, when the tonic of it shall disappear from our theology and the reason for it seem to fade from our philosophy, we will only need to uncover colonial history to see it shine again in its brightness, as it shone in the theology of the reformer—Mt. Blanc among the snowy Alps.

In deference to the will of Calvin, there is at Geneva no monument to his memory. It is well. Even that noble elevation were too provincial. To American Presbyterians, surrounded by a heritage throned amid oceans, liberty's last best hope among men, it may profoundly be said—"*Si monumentum quæris, circumspice.*"

If the idea of God held a central place in our national beginnings, its correlate of a refined, self-reliant, and heroic manhood was equally pronounced. Indeed, they are the hemispheres of being. When Calvin organized the Reformation, he put the true conception of God at work among the forces of human nature. The result was a manly spirit, fitted to cope with the physical, civil and religious problems of a new nation. That heroism came out in the first settlements from New England to Florida, in the first debates in Congress and Synods, and in the battles of the Revolution to the surrender of Cornwallis. Tracing now its historic roots, we find them most conspicuously in the Huguenots of France, among whom the theology of Calvin had its earliest incarnation. And the man who stands for the loftiest spirit of the Huguenots is the Admiral Coligny. His heroism is the European type of every modern struggle for civil and religious liberty.

The core of his character was a deep religiousness. He was

in this the Cromwell of the French people. The will of God was his pole-star. While yet a Romanist, a prisoner in a Flemish castle, the true light just beginning to break on the soldier's mind, he found his only solace in deference to the will of God. And when near the end, wounded by an assassin, he calmed the turbulence of his friends with the same sublime submission—"The will of the Lord be done." Reserved and cautious, it required the consecrated enthusiasm of his noble wife to rouse him to arms. He hesitated not from cowardice, but from conscience; not from timidity, but tenderness. Shrinking from the sorrows which would come upon her, he offered her eight days to consider whether he should plunge to the rescue of Protestantism. With Spartan spirit she cried, "The eight days are past already." This parted the last strand that held him to Rome. Distinctly renouncing every human ambition, exclaiming, "In the name of Jehovah we will set up our banners," he advanced to the conflict, not, indeed, with the dash of a Condé, but with the resolute earnestness of a man who could "reach a hand through time" to measure far results. Through the alternations of battle he held his army to the loftiest convictions. After his first victory he drew his soldiers into line to sign a solemn "League and Covenant." In his army, as with the English Puritans, the voice of prayer and the singing of psalms blended with the roar of battle. In intellectual qualities more like Grant than any other captain, strict in discipline, reticent, stubbornly courageous, clinging to the main issue, not elated by victory nor depressed by defeat, terrific in assault, and still more masterly in retreat; in his moral qualities more unselfish than Cromwell, as true as Washington, as devout as Adolphus, he held his way through open assault and secret plot, sleepless, tireless, undaunted, the very ideal of Christian heroism. And when the night of his martyrdom came—came because his heart was too confiding to believe in the colossal perfidy of Catherine de Medici—it found him asleep as if in the arms of God. The cry of the assassin, bursting his chamber door, only composed him to prayer. His serenity did not leave him then. The majesty that had marked his life sublimated his death. Its spirit passed on into the lives of the Huguenots everywhere. When Louis, that small great man who was "little in war, little in government, little in everything but the art of simulating greatness," revoked the Edict of Nantes, a half million of the best sons of France were driven from their native land to sow the seeds of valor along the Rhine, the Maas, the Thames, and the Hudson. Their mark is to-day on all our greatness. Their heroism lived again in the Revolution. The hall in Boston first consecrated to liberty was the

gift of a Huguenot. Our easternmost college bears their name. In Florida and South Carolina the exiles from Languedoc, men of whom it has been said that they had the virtues of English Puritans without their bigotry, found a refuge from oppression and a temple for worship. Thus, long before the chivalric devotion of LaFayette, we were bound to the land of arts, romance, and heroisms by the immigrants who, from the Penobscot to the Santee, avowed the simple faith they had received from Geneva and translated into martial valor on the fields of St. Denis and Orleans. Our Statue of Liberty in the New York harbor shines East and West. There is in it a ray of French Protestantism which, East and West, has kept loyal faith with the kingship of God and the rights of man.

Another phase of Calvinism has come to us through Scotland and Ireland. If Calvin represented the sovereignty of God and Coligny the dignity of man, it was reserved for Scotland to wage war with princes for the Kingship of Christ and the Lordship of Truth. John Knox was the ruling spirit of the storm. Called from the people, it was his destiny to confront kings and queens, not in smooth phrases of the court, but in the stern severity of the truth. He had a various fitting for his work. Now a student, then a priest, then a Reformer, called at St. Andrews as suddenly as Saul at Mizpeh, afterward a prisoner, enduring the horrors of the French galley service, and last of all a student once more, and at the feet of John Calvin. So he rose to his stature and his work. Since the days of Israel, when a prophet now prayed on Carmel, and now dared Jezebel at Jezreel, history presents no figure bolder than that of Knox, now praying in his garden, "Oh, God! give me Scotland or I die!" and now confronting the queen at Holyrood Castle. A man not so catholic as Luther, nor so scholarly as Calvin, yet in the quality of his courage and the singleness of his devotion without a superior in the reformatory ranks. An exile from his country, his calling haunted him. One starry morning, rowing a French galley in sight of the white towers of St. Andrews, with the outlook of a prophet he exclaimed: "It is the steeple of the place where God first opened my mouth in public to His glory, and I am persuaded I shall not depart this life till my tongue glorify His Godly name in the same place." His life was one long protest—stormy battle with popes and princes. He was held to his purpose with a courage so sublime as to constrain the Earl of Morton to say at his grave: "There lies one who never feared the face of man." Of him Carlyle says: "He is the one Scotchman to whom above all others his country and the world owe a debt." And Froude as justly says: "No grander figure can be found in the entire history of the Reforma-

tion in this island." That figure gets ever larger as it recedes. What William the Silent was in the Netherlands, that was Knox in Scotland—a bulwark which flung back oppression as the rock flings back the sea.

And what bearing on American Presbyterianism have the struggles of John Knox? Much every way. The first English-speaking General Assembly, numbering only six ministers and thirty-four laymen, met under Knox in 1560. To-day more than twelve thousand ministers and churches look back to that small Assembly as the historic mother of us all. That Assembly had a lineal successor in the First Assembly in Ireland in 1642, and both of those in our own Assembly, whose centennial anniversary we keep to-day. Among our first immigrants were many Scotch-Irish. The First Assembly was composed largely of their children. Its first convener was a lineal descendant of John Knox. There is no stamp on our Presbyterianism to-day so decided as that which Scotland gave, nor is there any land where Knox's guiding principle of the absolute independence of Church from every form of State control has found so fine an illustration as here.

There is no time to-night to even sketch the other beams that from across the sea contribute to the brightness of this day. But justice may claim one moment to speak the name of William of Orange, to recognize the important relations of the Dutch Church to our own, to honor the heroism and orthodoxy of those teachers of the Pilgrim Fathers; one moment to speak of the marvelous force of the Protestantism of the Palatinate that lives in many of our Presbyterian names and has impressed so profoundly alike our scholarship and our theology. Thus the prism of three centuries resolves our daylight. From violet to blue, it deepens from the flowers of France to the Alpine skies, yellow and orange bands stretch from Heidelberg to Holland, green on the Green Isle, and royal red in the land that owned no king but Christ.

The men thus sketched had worthy successors among us. The spirit of freedom, which the old world brought to the new, has inspired our Presbyterian history. It was a Presbyterian graduate of Princeton, Ephraim Brevard, who wrote the Mecklenburg Declaration, a pen-stroke that, in 1775, separated one county in North Carolina from the British crown. And when the Declaration was under discussion in this city, it was John Witherspoon who, when Congress for a moment wavered between the slavery and liberty of the nation, lifted his voice till the old hall rang again. "For my own part, of property I have some, of reputation more; that property is staked, that reputation is pledged on the issue of this contest." His name is on that roll of honor, the signers of the Declara-

tion. To that distinction his monument in Fairmount Park can add how little; but it may attest to future times the fact that the father of our Church committed American Presbyterianism to the defense of American liberties.

Our Church, though conservative, did not lack in the evangelizing spirit. The fire first kindled by Whitfield was scattered from New England to the Carolinas by Presbyterian ministers, among whom the names of the Tennants ever deserve grateful mention. Intense in their convictions, extreme sometimes in their judgments, they had hearts like old prophets, and zeal like apostles for the extension of the kingdom of Christ.

Neither the spiritual nor the intellectual side of our Presbyterianism can be said to be unworthy of the reformation type so long as the names of Archibald Alexander and Charles Hodge are remembered among men. To speak these names is to recall to our memory a saintliness like Melancthon's and a defense of the faith like Calvin's. In the forensic arena, the high debates of the Westminster Assembly had a ringing echo in our own Assemblies, when were heard the voices of Thornwell and Robert J. Breckenridge.

We have likewise been true to that expansive genius of original Presbyterianism which sent Huguenot missionaries to Brazil and Florida. For we have helped to organize modern missions, whose daring conception is "The World for Christ." Many men share this honor; but chief among them may be called the name of a layman, who surrendered brilliant political prospects that he might organize our Church for missions. That name is Walter Lowrie, who gave to this great cause his personal ambition, his life-long services, and his eldest son a martyr to China.

When thus I analyze the elements of our greatness, this tree of Presbyterian life that shadows a continent and has fruit for the world, I perceive much history has lifted and shaped it. The soil of Switzerland is in its roots, the blood of Holland is in its veins, the free breath of Scotland is in its leaves.

Our history may well embolden an outlook toward the future. That outlook is broadened when we read the past in the light of the present. We accord peculiar honor to the fatherlands and their heroes, when we claim a progressive Church and declare that our inheritance had such vitality that we have improved on the original type. Our doctrines are broader, our spirit more catholic, our missionary conception more daring—more Christlike. We bear the lineaments of our origin, and are proud of them, but the type is American and good for a march around the world. Our spectrum holds the best metal of the old saints, and the living light of to-day.

A feeble ray, that light crept on Long Island and the shores of the Chesapeake. To-day a hundred colleges flash it forth, and eight thousand ministers carry it on. It has crossed the continent and the Pacific, and its arrows of sunrise pierce the Himalayas.

Mr. Ruskin tells of the possible changes of a handful of earth picked up from the streets of a manufacturing town. In it are clay, sand, soot, and water. Give it time enough, and the clay becomes a sapphire, reflecting rays as blue as heaven. The sand becomes an opal, the soot a diamond, and the drop of water a blazing star of snow. So wonderful is the chemistry of nature with its law of co-operation. Handfuls of dust, blown about Alpine and Scottish hills, dust of the martyrs of our faith, the ages are thine, and the economy of God! His chemistry never fails. The ashes of Wickliffe, which the Avon to the Severn took, the Severn to the sea; of Hamilton blown over Scotland; of Calvin in their nameless grave, wrought upon in the laboratory of ages are the foundations, opal, sapphire, diamond, of that vast temple covering earth and sea, whose walls shall be salvation, and whose gates shall be praise.