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## THE NEW PRESIDENT.

By R. A. LAPSLEY, JR., D. D.,

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"The Presidency of Union Seminary is the biggest job in the Southern Presbyterian Church today!" "The best qualified man in the Southern Presbyterian Church for the Presidency of Union Seminary is B. R. Lacy, Jr., of Atlanta, Ga.!" These statements, made at different times by a minister of our Church express the conviction of the author of this article and constitute his apology for writing it.

The first of these statements scarcely requires argument. The men who shape the thinking and direct the training of the Presbyterian preachers of the next generation will exert the predominating influence upon the future of our Church. Union Seminary is the largest of our four seminaries. Just a few less than one-half of the ministers serving our Church today were educated at Union. Of the candidates of our Church in theological training in 1925, Union enrolled one more than the other three seminaries combined. Such facts imply that the President of Union Seminary will be the outstanding figure in the realm of theological education in our Church.

It is the second statement that challenges attention. Every true lover of the Seminary has viewed with anxiety the decline in the health of her beloved former president. They have dreaded the time when he would be forced to relinquish the office he filled in so incomparable a way. Wherever alumni have gathered, this question has been asked, "Where will the Seminary turn for a successor?" It is my deep-seated con-

## THE PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH AND THE NATION.

By REV. CLARENCE EDWARD MACARTNEY, D. D.,  
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[The year 1926 marks the 150th anniversary of the Independence of the American Republic. No doubt many ministers will preach during the year on the debt America owes to Presbyterianism. Dr. Macartney's address is informative and inspiring. This address was delivered June 1, 1926, before the 138th General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church in the U. S. A., meeting in Baltimore, Md.—Editor.]

“There is a tide in the affairs of men, a nick of time. We perceive it now before us. To hesitate is to consent to our own slavery. . . . For my own part, of property I have some, of reputation more. That reputation is staked, that property is pledged, on the issue of this contest; and although these grey hairs must soon descend into the sepulchre, I would infinitely rather that they descend thither by the hand of the executioner than desert at this crisis the sacred cause of my country.”

These words, spoken by John Witherspoon in the Continental Congress before he affixed his signature to the Declaration of Independence, voiced the sentiment of all Presbyterian ministers when the struggle for independence commenced. The clergy of the Episcopal Church naturally sided with the Crown and, with a few notable exceptions, such as Bishop White, were adherents of England. Of the six Wesleyan ministers in the colonies, all but Asbury returned to England and shared Wesley's views concerning the revolt of the colonies. But we know of just one Presbyterian minister who either prayed or fought for the British cause, and he was suspended by the Synod of New Jersey. The Tory rector of Trinity Church, New York, Dr. Ingles, wrote in 1776: “I do not know one Presbyterian minister, nor have I been able after strict inquiry to hear of any who did not, by preaching and every effort in

their power promote all the measures of the Continental Congress, however extravagant."

This unanimous support of the Revolution had some relationship, no doubt, to the Presbyterian dread of the Established Church. The Presbyterians who had come to the Colonies were the natural inheritors of a conflict with King and Crown. King James I, at the time of his struggle with the Presbyterians, declared that "a Scottish Presbytery agreeth with the monarchy as God with the devil." The Presbyterians of the new world seem to have lived up to this reputation and rejoiced when the hour for combat struck. The part our Presbyterian forefathers took in the deliberations of the council chamber and in the operations in the field was not exaggerated by Horace Walpole when he said in the House of Commons: "There is no good in crying about the matter. America has run off with a Presbyterian parson, and that is the end of it."

Were not the book of history, wherein are inscribed the mighty acts of Calvinists, open before us, it might be thought that Calvinism, with its doctrine of predestination, would have a restraining effect upon political revolt, and influence men to acquiesce in tyrannical government as their appointed lot. But practically it has had the very opposite effect. The effect of Calvinism, wherever it has taken root, has been the establishment of free representative government and the liberation of men. Wherever the Calvinists have gone they have been the relentless foes of ignorance, superstition and despotism.

In the words of Froude's tribute: "It (Calvinism) has been able to inspire the bravest efforts ever made by man to break the yoke of unjust authority. When all else has failed; when patriotism has covered its face, and human courage has broken down; when intellect has yielded with a smile or a sigh; when emotion and sentiment have become the handmaids of superstition, and have dreamt themselves into forgetfulness that there was any difference between truth and lies, the slavish form of belief called Calvinism has borne an inflexible front to illusion and mendacity, and has preferred rather to be ground to powder like flint than to bend before violence, or melt under enervating temptation."

Since two-thirds of the three million inhabitants in the Colonies at the outbreak of the Revolution were Calvinists, and nearly one-third of Scotch and Scotch-Irish descent, we may say in truth that the establishment of the American Republic was a great achievement of Calvinism. That must have been what Ranke meant when he said that John Calvin was the virtual founder of America.

Presbyterianism has profoundly influenced the nation because of the great ideas back of it. Presbyterians put the iron of Calvinism into our nation's life so successfully that the deluge of foreign races and ideals and religions has not yet been able to obliterate the traces of the handiwork of men who "abhorred as no body of men ever abhorred all conscious mendacity, all impurity, all moral wrong of every kind, so far as they could recognize it".

It would be impossible to overestimate the deep impress of Presbyterianism upon American life. The makers of the nation were Calvinists. An index to that influence is the roll call of the Presidents of the United States, showing that of the thirty Presidents, nine of them, including the two Presidents of the Dutch Reformed Church, were Presbyterian in adherence, descent or church membership. These are Jackson, Polk, Van Buren, Buchanan, Lincoln, Cleveland, Harrison, Roosevelt, Wilson. A roll call of the Justices of the Supreme Court, United States Senators and Governors of the commonwealth would show in like striking manner the deep mark which Calvinism has scored on our national life.

In the great crisis of the American Civil War Presbyterians were arrayed against Presbyterians. The sons of the Presbyterians of Pennsylvania and New Jersey, of Virginia and the Carolinas, who fought the Revolution through to a successful issue, now found themselves in mortal combat. One reason that the Civil War lasted so long was because on both sides there were so many Presbyterian statesmen, generals and privates in the ranks. The part that the Presbyterian Church played in the final issue is best described in the words of the Hon. James S. Cothran, of South Carolina, who, speaking at the Centennial Assembly of 1888, said: "It cannot be denied

that its bloody issue was in large part determined by the stern and violent patriotism of the Presbyterians of the prevailing section."

There are two monuments on battlefields of the Civil War which tell the story of Presbyterian fortitude on either side. The one I saw on a summer's day in a quiet grove of trees at Appomattox Court House, where the curtain fell on the Confederacy. The monument is to the memory of North Carolina troops, descendants of the Presbyterians of Cowpens and King's Mountain. It bears this inscription:

"First at Bethel. Farthest to the Front at Gettysburg and Chickamauga. Last at Appomattox. 5,012 North Carolinians paroled at Appomattox. Military population, 115,359. Troops furnished, 127,000."

The other monument I saw on an August afternoon on the banks of the little Antietam, where an atonement of blood was made for the sins of the guilty nation. It is a monument to the famous Roundhead regiment, made up of psalm-singing Presbyterians from Western Pennsylvania. With his rifle across his shoulder, his back to the Antietam, his brow high and lifted up, that bronze figure of the Roundhead sums up and symbolizes that moral earnestness and faith in God which fought the Civil War to a successful issue.

Threescore and five years have passed since our Zion was disrupted in the Civil War. But the presence today at these commemorative exercises of a distinguished representative of the Presbyterian Church in the U. S. (Southern) bears witness to the fact that, although the two Churches are not yet one, the lines which separate no longer alienate. We can say today that the Lord hath made the wrath of man to praise Him, and the remainder He will restrain. As when the two cliffs of a mountain, cleft by some convulsion of nature, stand facing each other with scowling and barren countenance, but ere long are draped with vegetation and festooned with flowers and graced with silver cascades, so our two Churches today, once facing each other in anger and distrust, now display towards one another only the features of fraternal affection and mutual good will.

A State is greatly influenced by its schools and colleges. Next to the moral earnestness which Presbyterianism gave to our national life, the American nation is indebted to the Presbyterian Church for the way in which it has trimmed the lamp of learning. Like the Calvinists who founded Harvard University, the Presbyterians of our pioneer days feared to leave to the Church an illiterate ministry. Therefore they founded their academies and colleges, and when they went into the wilderness carried with them not only the axe and the rifle, but the spelling book and the Latin grammar. The schools and colleges of the Presbyterian Church have blazed a trail of knowledge and light from the Pennsylvania forests to the waves of the Pacific. This emphasis upon education has not only furnished leaders for the State, but it has preserved the Church from superstition and bigotry. The Presbyterian Church never

“Dreads the skeptic’s puny hands,  
While near her school the church spire stands;  
Nor fears the blinded bigot’s rule,  
While near her church spire stands a school.”

But the great service of a Church to a nation is not its witness in council or battlefield, nor its contribution to education, but what it does for the moral and spiritual life of the people. The greatest event in the religious history of America was the Great Awakening of the middle of the eighteenth century and the Great Revival of the first decade of the nineteenth century. The nation still draws on the immense spiritual capital which was stored up in those outpourings of Divine grace. The peril of the Calvinistic Churches has always been a drift towards formalism and Unitarianism. The Great Awakening and the Great Revival saved our Churches from such a fate. The Great Awakening began in 1728 and its flames burned until 1744. Jonathan Edwards and the Tennents and Whitefield were sons of thunder in that mighty shaking. It split churches, as did the later revival, but it left behind it, as did the second revival, something more important than organic unity—a love for Christ and consuming zeal for His kingdom.

At the opening of the nineteenth century religious life was at a low ebb in the new nation. The struggle with the forces of nature was turning men's thoughts away from the supernatural. The labor for the bread which perisheth was making men forget the Bread of Life. French rationalism and infidelity were rampant in the land. The Legislature of one of the States, Kentucky, had abolished prayer to Almighty God. The reports of our own Assemblies and of other Church convocations reveal a deep anxiety for the spiritual condition of the nation and the Church. Ministers confessed that their hearts were as dry as Gilboa and the resources of their minds exhausted.

Then, in the solitudes of Kentucky, in the hills of Western Pennsylvania, and in the mountains of Virginia and Carolina, there suddenly burst forth the flames of the Great Revival. The preaching of the Word was with power and the demonstration of the Holy Spirit. Ordained ministers could not satisfy the hunger for the Word, and illiterate frontiersmen, and little children lifted upon men's shoulders, preached to wondering thousands. In every town and settlement sinners were convicted and called upon God for mercy. Thousands fell to the ground in the camp meetings or in the fields and highways as if they had been felled by some awful unseen Hand. The churches were not sufficient for the multitudes, and the throngs resorted to the wilderness where the leaves of the forest shook with their fervent psalmody and sons of thunder called upon men to repent and make straight in the wilderness a highway for our God.

Ere long the flames began to subside. But a mighty work had been done, never to be undone. The nation was saved from barbarism and irreligion, and the Church from apostasy and unbelief. Instead of a godless, materialistic civilization being built up in the east and the southwest, there was founded a civilization which, with all its crudities and shortcomings, was rich in the fear of God, the only solid foundation of those nations which endure. Those great movements of grace gave the Churches the study of the Bible, the prayer meeting and the evangelistic meetings. There was born the missionary

movement, the agitation against slavery, and the temperance reform. "It wrought in fact a social revolution, whose extent is hidden from us by the fact that we have always lived among its results and do not realize with what a price they were bought for us."

These are some of the achievements of the past. But, however pleasant it may be, we must not sit too long beneath the shade of our genealogical tree and rejoice in the work of our Church. We must gird up our loins for the task of tomorrow. If the nation needed the Presbyterian Church in the days of the Revolution, in the great movement towards the west in the nineteenth century, and in the throes of fratricidal strife, none the less does it need our Church today, when prosperity has dulled the soul and dimmed the eye of the people, when a flood of those who know not our speech or our faith is sweeping into the remotest corners of the land and the moral standards of the Christian religion are openly violated and flouted.

One hundred and fifty years of Presbyterianism in the nation are worth commemorating today because the Presbyterian Church of the past was a Church which believed that the Bible was the Word of God and was not afraid to say so to all men; a Church which knew the difference between the Gospel of redeeming grace and "another gospel which is not another"; a Church which has ever been quick to detect the poison of Satan when disguised in the sweet syrup of some alleged reinterpretation or hypothesis, and fearless to spew it out; a Church whose children were trained at a family altar and which remembered the Sabbath day to keep it holy.

Let the Presbyterian Church depart from these grand truths and sacred customs, and one hundred and fifty years hence its tercentenary will not be worth commemorating. But let it abide true and faithful to Christ and the Scriptures, let it stand as a Church which witnesses to the everlasting Gospel of redeeming love, and one hundred and fifty years hence they who stand in our place to tell the story of the Presbyterian Church and the nation will have a story to tell, not less, but more glorious than that which we try to tell today.