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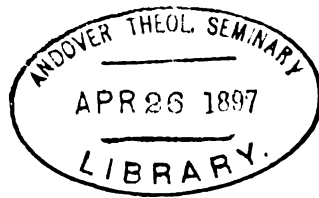
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AT HOME AND ABROAD.

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CURRENT EVENTS AND THE KINGDOM.

The Pilgrimage to Mecca.—Very wisely has the Sultan of Morocco prohibited the annual pilgrimage to Mecca of Moslems in his dominions, on the ground that the prevalence of the plague will make it a dangerous journey. It is said to be the first time that a Sultan of Morocco has issued such an order.

Baron de Hirsch Fund.—The Baroness de Hirsch, recognizing a responsibility for the welfare of the Hebrews in the crowded East Side tenements of New York, places at the disposal of the trustees of the Fund about one million dollars, to be used in the erection of model tenements, and in securing for Hebrew children the advantages of technical education.

Russia in China.—The most noteworthy treaty of modern times is that which gives to Russia the virtual control of the northern provinces of the Chinese empire. With the privilege of running the Siberian railroad a thousand miles through Chinese territory to an ice-free terminus near Port Arthur, and erecting military garrisons, the Muscovite has gained a controlling influence in the affairs of Asia and in the commerce of the Pacific.

Affairs in Madagascar.—The trials of the Malagasy Church since the French occupation of the island have been many and severe. The promise of religious freedom has not been fulfilled, and Jesuit influence has done much to overthrow the work of the London Missionary Society. And now Queen Ranaivalona III has been

banished to the island of Reunion, the reason for this summary act being the charge that she was implicated in a plot to kill the French governor, General Galieni. Remembering the experiences of the Malagasy Christians many years ago, when persecuted by a former queen, the outcome of the present difficulties will be awaited with deep interest and sympathy.

A Needed Charity.—Mrs. Rose Hawthorne Lathrop, the daughter of Nathaniel Hawthorne, is devoting herself to the relief of a class of sufferers for whom no adequate provision has yet been made. Since cancer patients are admitted to the hospitals only for treatment, and there is no public institution where they can receive needed care, it is Mrs. Lathrop's desire to provide a hospital for those afflicted with cancer and similar diseases. She has moved into rooms in a tenement on Water street, New York, and has fitted up one of the rooms for the accommodation of two or three patients. When you read "The Marble Faun" or "Mosses from an Old Manse," think of the noble work undertaken by the author's daughter.

Relief Ships for India.—Congress has authorized the Secretary of the Navy to transport in American ships contributions of corn for the starving millions of India. Out of the abundance of our last year's corn harvest—2,283,875,000 bushels—we are surely able to make a liberal offering. A former Governor-General of India writes in the April *North American Review* of the methods of bringing food within the reach of the

three times. I even took an oath that I did not know him. He was in an inner room, while I was standing in the court warming myself at the fire. I looked up and saw my Master looking at me ; then I went out and wept." But Peter cannot go on. He is overwhelmed by the sad memory. The two men are silent for a little time. Paul has drunk in every word of the chief apostle.—*From Dr. E. W. Work's Great Moments in the Life of Paul.*

PRESBYTERIAN CHARACTERISTICS.

REV. WM. HENRY ROBERTS, D.D.

The Presbyterian Church in the United States of America has certain marked characteristics, in faith, practice and history, which are entitled to special emphasis. They are :

- I. Scriptural doctrine.
- II. Simplicity of worship.
- III. Representative government.
- IV. High standard of Christian living.
- V. Missionary spirit.
- VI. Resolute maintenance of liberty.
- VII. Insistence upon popular education.
- VIII. Patriotism.
- IX. Catholicity of spirit.

The following concise statement, in connection with these characteristics, will be advantageous to many persons. The authors quoted are, with one exception, non-Presbyterians. The characteristics are treated in the order above indicated.

I. Presbyterian doctrine is based upon the Scriptures alone, and finds its modern form in the famous Westminster Confession and Catechisms. These all were the work of the Westminster Assembly (London, 1644-48), concerning which a German historian, Von Rudloff, writes that "a more zealous, intelligent and learned body of divines seldom, if ever, met in Christendom." The eminent Methodist divine, Dr. Curry, says of the Confession itself, that "it is the clearest and most comprehensive system of doctrine ever framed. It is not only a wonderful monument of the intellectual greatness of its framers, but also a comprehensive embodiment of nearly all the precious truths of the gospel."

II. The simple worship of the Presbyterian Church finds its prototype in the worship of the primitive Christian Church. True Protestantism permits no obstacles—not even forms of prayer—to come between the human soul and God. Presbyterians believe not only in free grace, but also in free prayer.

III. As a representative form of government,

Presbyterianism accords to the people a share in the administration of church affairs. It is neither a pure democracy, with anarchical tendencies, nor a monarchy, with its repression of individual freedom. The Presbyterian Church is, on the human side, a republic, and its organization is similar, in all essential things, to that of the Government of the United States of America. Where, in the civil government, Americans have the Township Committee, the County Board, the State Legislature and the Congress of the United States, the Presbyterian Church has the session of the particular church, the presbytery, the synod and the General Assembly. Presbyterianism is, therefore, a government by representative bodies ; and with reference to the highest of its governing bodies, the General Assembly, the late distinguished Roman Catholic Archbishop of New York, Rev. John Hughes, wrote as follows : "Though it is my privilege to regard the authority exercised by the General Assembly as usurpation, still I must say, with every man acquainted with the mode in which it is organized, that for the purpose of popular and political government, its organization is little inferior to that of Congress itself. It acts on the principle of a radiating centre, and is without equal or rival among the other denominations of the country."

IV. The standard of Christian living among Presbyterians is sometimes called, with a sneer, puritanical. Whatever may be thought of this standard in theory, it is in practice unequaled by any other. The influence of Presbyterianism, Hon. William E. Gladstone depicts as follows : "It has given Presbyterian communions the advantages which in civil order belong to local self-government and representative institutions, orderly habits of mind, respect for adversaries, and some of the elements of the judicial temper ; the development of a genuine individuality, together with the discouragement of mere arbitrary will and of all eccentric tendencies ; the sense of common life and the disposition energetically to defend it ; the love of law combined with the love of freedom." True Presbyterianism is the most vigilant foe of anarchy and infidelity, and infidels and anarchists hate it accordingly.

V. The work of missions has been carried on by the Presbyterian Church in the U. S. A. since its first establishment. Ex-President Benjamin Harrison, a Presbyterian elder, says of it : "It has been a missionary Church from the beginning. The missionary spirit is inherent in it." Its mission force in the U. S. A. (1896) consists of 1544 home missionaries, 330 home missionary teachers, 80 Sabbath-school missionaries, and 151 Freedmen's

missionaries with 230 Freedmen teachers. Outside the United States it has twenty-four missions located in 14 countries, and conducted by 659 missionaries and 1943 native helpers. The foreign mission force is larger than that of any other American Protestant Church.

VI. Resolute maintenance of the fundamental principle of liberty, i. e., liberty of conscience. The first paragraph of the Presbyterian Form of Government reads, "We are unanimously of opinion that God alone is Lord of the conscience." Human liberty has had no more outspoken, united and indomitable advocates than those men who were and are Presbyterians in polity and Calvinists in doctrine. Concerning the refusal of the Scotch people to receive the English liturgy, sought to be forced upon them by Charles I, Carlyle says: "The tumult in the High Church at Edinburgh spread into a universal battle, a struggle over all these realms; there came out, after fifty years' struggling, what we call the glorious Revolution, a habeas corpus act, free parliaments and much else." Our national historian, Bancroft, writes: "He who will not honor the memory and respect the influence of Calvin knows but little of the origin of American liberty."

VII. The interest taken by Calvinists for centuries in education, family, public and collegiate, needs little emphasis. The facts speak for themselves. Bancroft states "that Calvin was the father of popular education, the inventor of the system of free schools." In the United States, as in other lands, Calvinism and education have gone forward hand in hand. The majority of the colleges established in this land were founded by Calvinists, "and there is no more glorious leaf in the annals of American Presbyterianism than that on which is written the history of her educational institutions."

VIII. Patriotism. In illustration of this characteristic of American Presbyterianism, a quotation is made from a pastoral letter, adopted May 20, 1775, by the Synod of New York and Philadelphia, the highest court of the Presbyterian Church at the time of the Revolution. The letter was addressed to all the ministers and churches, and says, among other things: "Be careful to maintain the union which at present subsists through all the colonies. In particular, as the Continental Congress, now sitting at Philadelphia, consists of delegates chosen in the most free and unbiased manner, by the body of the people, let them not only be treated with respect and encouraged in their difficult service, not only let your prayers be offered up to God for his direction in their proceedings, but adhere firmly to their resolutions; and let it be seen that they are

able to bring out the whole strength of this vast country to carry them into execution." Presbyterian ministers and churches were a unit in support of American independence.

IX. Catholicity of spirit. No Church exists which can rightly claim, as exclusive property, the name Catholic or Universal, but every Church ought to evince its possession of a catholic spirit. This spirit is a marked feature of Presbyterianism. The Form of Government of the Presbyterian Church, Chap. ii, Sec. 2, defines the Catholic Church as follows: "The Universal Church consists of all those persons in every nation, together with their children, who make profession of the holy religion of Christ, and of submission to his laws." Presbyterians unchurch none who lay claim to the Christian name. Their catholic spirit finds practical expression in Chap. xxiii, Sec. 3, of their Confession of Faith, in which it is said respecting the civil authorities: "Civil magistrates may not in the least interfere in matters of faith. Yet it is the duty of civil magistrates to protect the Church of our common Lord, without giving the preference to any denomination of Christians above the rest." Presbyterianism is synonymous with that true catholicity which cheerfully accords to others, whatever opinions they may cherish, their full rights of conscience. It illustrates the truth, that strength of conviction and true catholicity are co-ordinate principles, in full harmony one with the other; and emphasizes the belief that true freedom finds its clearest expression in the respect which men accord to the rights of others. True Presbyterianism, therefore, enforces the Scripture rule for human conduct, "As ye would that men should do to you, do ye also to them likewise."

St. Andrew's Cross reports a Brotherhood Chapter which enjoys at each meeting a talk and discussion on some topic which will help men to live better during the week. The following is a syllabus of the discussion on "Dishonesty":

- | | | |
|------------------------------|---|--------------------------------------|
| | { | 1. False pretenses. |
| | { | 2. Boasting. |
| | { | 3. Covering up. |
| (a) Lying. | { | 1. Gossip. |
| | { | 2. Backbiting. |
| | { | 3. Slander. |
| (b) Cheating. | { | 1. Your employer of time or service. |
| | { | 2. Your employes of rights or wages. |
| | { | 3. Your customers. |
| (c) Conniving in dishonesty. | { | 1. In tricks in trade. |
| | { | 2. In buying too cheap. |
| | { | 3. In politics. |
| (d) Next door to dishonesty. | | |

A copy of it is placed in each man's hand just before the meeting.