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## JOHN RANDOLPH—THE MAN AND HIS FAITH.

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On June 3, 1773, near the point where the waters of the Appomattox blend with those of the James, was born one of the most remarkable men America has produced. "John Randolph, of Roanoke," the world has elected to call him, and so indeed he often wrote himself in his later years. But as a matter of fact he did not begin to reside at the "Roanoke" plantation in Charlotte County until he was nearly forty years of age. "Cawsons" was his birthplace, and "Matoax," opposite Petersburg, the home of his childhood. The perils resulting from Arnold's invasion compelled his mother to flee westward with her young children and to take up her residence at "Bizarre." This still prosperous plantation, charmingly situated on the crest of a hill overlooking the town of Farmville, was the home of John Randolph until long after he had achieved a fame as statesman and orator that reached beyond the seas. Here he lived in the midst of a people whom he loved best of all Virginians, and whom he proudly described on the floor of Congress as "such constituents as no man ever had." They repaid his admiration with a loyal and enthusiastic devotion that never failed or faltered throughout a long and stormy public career.

Mr. Randolph's life covers the most picturesque period of American history, and in those lofty and momentous struggles that marked the first four decades of the life of the Republic, he played a conspicuous and impressive part. There were

giants in those days. Probably no other nation has produced within so brief a period so brilliant and numerous a company of statesmen as those whose names adorn the annals of our country prior to 1840. Washington, Henry, Mason, Madison, Jefferson, Hamilton, Burr, the Adamses, Jackson, Clay, Calhoun, Webster and others of like mould, were cotemporary with Randolph in those formative days of the Republic, and he was easily the peer of any one of them in the forum of debate. It has been charged that with all his gifts of intellect and eloquence, his was not a constructive statesmanship. While he exposed with withering power the fallacies or perils involved in the legislation proposed by others, no great measure found upon our statute books bears his name. He frankly admitted the charge, saying that he regarded this as the "brightest feather in his cap." In his judgment, there is too much law-making, and the people least governed are generally best governed.

Mr. Randolph did not possess the temperament requisite to permanent success as a party leader, though he filled that very exacting position with distinguished ability for a time. He was essentially an Independent, and with him principle stood always above the claims of party. His manner was reserved and often haughty. He scorned the arts of the mere politician, and would not "crook the pregnant hinges of the knee that thrift might follow fawning." He knew little of conciliatory measures, and was a stranger to compromise. He *drove* men by the sheer force of his logic, by his masterful grasp of the question at issue, and by his resistless eloquence, but he could not *draw* them to himself by his personal magnetism. The result

\*The idea is widely current that Mr. Randolph's voice was shrill and rasping—an idea derived, in all likelihood, from the incisive quality of the language in which his thoughts were couched. Whatever his intellectual powers, no man who spoke in rasping tones could be universally accounted an *eloquent* speaker. His ear was as sensitive to jarring sounds, or even an infelicitous phrase, as is an accomplished musician to a discordant note. Though pitched somewhat high, and possessed of great carrying power, the tones of Mr. Randolph's voice were mellow and pleasing.

The late Hon. Thomas S. Bocock, speaker of the Confederate Congress, once stated to the writer that John Randolph possessed the noblest voice for public speaking to which he had ever been privileged to listen.

was that while multitudes admired him profoundly—almost extravagantly—yet few cherished for him a warm personal affection, or were admitted to terms of genuine intimacy with the sage of Roanoke.

Wherever he spoke, men crowded to hear him and hung with breathless interest upon his every word. When he arose all eyes were fastened upon him, and the mellow music of his voice,\* kindled the intellect and stirred the heart of men as the leaves of the forest are moved by the winds of autumn. Although Mr. Randolph died nearly four score years ago, his sayings are more often upon the lips of men—some brilliant epigram or biting sarcasm—and his picturesque personality a more familiar theme of conversation than is true of any other of that notable company of statesmen who claim Virginia as their birthplace.

The political career of a man of gifts so transcendent, of personality so unique, of eccentricities so marked, opens before us an alluring field of investigation. But to enter it would be to extend a brief article into a volume. We must, therefore, be content with this passing allusion to the statesman, and speak of the man and his faith.

From boyhood to old age Randolph was like no other man. His spirit of aloofness tended inevitably to increase his personal eccentricity, and throws an atmosphere of pathos even about a life so richly endowed as his. He was fatherless at two years of age, and motherless at fifteen. His mother's death was to him a crushing blow, for he loved her with romantic devotion, and there was no one to take her place in his heart's affections. Even as a youth his intimates were few, and almost all of those who were closely bound to him by the ties of kinship or of friendship preceded him to the grave. In a letter appearing elsewhere, he writes, ". . . . it pleased God that my pride should be mortified; that by death and desertion I should lose my friends; that, except in the veins of a maniac, and he, too, possessed 'of a child' by a deaf and dumb spirit, there should not run one drop of my father's blood in any living creature besides myself." A more pathetic picture of loneliness—of a life apart from the life currents that ebbed and flowed about him could scarcely be conceived.

Moreover, the superb intellect that flashed before the eyes of men with such fascinating power was housed in a body that was the constant prey to illness and disease, and was linked with a nature singularly high-strung and sensitive. Things that would pass unnoticed with others would set his nerves on edge, and perhaps call forth emphatic rebuke. He was a constant sufferer, and did not know the meaning of robust health. Under conditions that would have condemned many to a life of invalidism, Mr. Randolph prosecuted his work as planter and statesman with unabated vigor. Infirmity of body induced an infirmity of temper that often rendered him irritable and even morose, and gave a sting to his words that the victim did not soon forget.

His engagement to the beautiful Maria Ward was suddenly broken off. Of her he wrote, "I loved, aye, and was loved again, not wisely, but too well." The abrupt termination of this charming romance touched his proud spirit to the quick, and threw an added shadow across his life.

The facts thus briefly enumerated throw helpful sidelights upon a strangely unique and perplexing character. They enable us to see him in the midst of his environment, and to realize that while no American statesman has been more richly endowed, no one has done his life task under circumstances more adverse. As Carlyle so well says of Israel's king, a just appraisal of his character must take into account the temptations he was called to face and the circumstances that surrounded his life. The same thing is true of the brilliant and eccentric Sage of Roanoke. If we would rightly measure the man, we must take into account his temperament, his training, and the circumstances—adverse, and at times tragic—in the midst of which his lifework was done.

This is especially true of his *Religious experience*. As, for instance, when he writes: "My condition has on more than one occasion resembled that of him who, having one evil spirit cast out, was taken possession of by seven other spirits more wicked than the first, and the first also."

The Christian life was not all sunshine for him, The swift running currents of the world, the flesh, and the Devil set strongly

against him, and at times threatened to sweep him from his moorings. His anchor dragged at times, but never altogether lost its hold.

Proud as Lucifer, it was not easy for him to bend the knee, even before the Prince of Life. His imperious temper, strong by nature and intensified by a life of suffering, often burst all bounds and flashed forth in scathing rebuke and indignation. The customs of the day, together with the tastes formed long years before, led him at times to partake too freely of the social cup. Yet he did not attempt to conceal his failures, or to condone his faults.

Dr. Robert J. Breckenridge once said in half humorous vein: "You ought not to judge me by the standards by which other men are judged. *It takes more grace to show on me than on any one else.*" The subject of this sketch might well claim that the world's judgment of him be tempered with the charity that is kind, for it took a goodly measure of grace "to show on him."

Mr. Randolph frankly confesses that he was for years an infidel. It will be interesting to note the steps by which the good providence of God led him out of darkness into His marvelous light, and find illustration of the words of the wise man, "as in water face answereth to face, so the heart of man to man."

First of all there was the influence and example of his mother, whose maiden name was Frances Bland. Of the impress left by this beautiful and accomplished woman upon her gifted son, one of Mr. Randolph's biographers has this to say: "His mother early taught him to read, and impressed on his mind the best lessons. She was a member of the Church of England, a faith from which her son never long departed. On her bended knees, with him by her side, she repeated day after day the prayers and collects of that admirable litany, which were never effaced from his tenacious memory. Often through life he has been known, in mental agony, to ejaculate them with an earnestness that called forth tears from all who heard him.

"When I could first remember," says he to a friend, "I slept in the same bed with my widowed mother—each night, before putting me to bed, I repeated on my knees before her the Lord's Prayer

and the Aposale's Creed—each morning kneeling in the bed I put up my little hands in prayer in the same form. Years have since passed away; I have been a skeptic, a professed scoffer, glorying in my infidelity, and vain of the ingenuity with which I could defend it. Prayer never crossed my mind, but in scorn. I am now conscious that the lessons above mentioned, taught me by my dear and revered mother, are of more value to me than all that I have learned from my preceptors and compeers. On Sunday I said my catechism, a great part of which at the distance of thirty-five years I can yet repeat.' " Across the long and troubled years that lay between his boyhood and his conversion, he saw that gentle mother's hand outstretched and beckoning him home to that Saviour whose name he had learned to lip in accents of prayer at her knee.

To the impress left upon the plastic mind of this youth by the gracious spirit of his mother, should be added the potent influence exerted by certain friends of his maturer years, who thus afford happy illustration of the Apostolic word: "Ye are our epistle . . . . known and read of all men." Writing in 1815 to his friend, Dr. Brockenbrough, who like himself was passing slowly from the clinging shadows of scepticism into the clear light of faith, Mr. Randolph said: "*The only men I ever knew well, ever approached closely,* whom I did not discover to be unhappy are sincere believers of the Gospel, and conform their lives, as far as the nature of man can permit, to its precepts. There are only three of them." With these trusted friends he conversed, or corresponded, often and most earnestly about the things of the soul, and gratefully acknowledged their help in the bitter struggles through which he passed.

Another element in his conversion was *disappointed ambition*. He declared: "Had I remained a successful political leader, I might never have been a Christian." His bitter opposition to the War of 1812 left him standing almost alone in the Halls of Congress. The war spirit swept over the land. He was strongly opposed at the next election, and for the first and only time in his life, Randolph was defeated at the polls, and was forced to retire for a brief period to private life. This enforced retirement afforded him needed time for meditation. Being thus brought

to realize the uncertain and unsatisfying nature of earthly honors and ambitions, he began to seek those rewards that abide—"the crown of glory that fadeth not away."

The fourth element in his conversion lay in the *loss of his loved ones by death*. The repeated invasions of the dread enemy filled him with dismay and shadowed his life with grief. Desolate and broken, he felt the utter emptiness of the consolations which the world had to offer. Sitting in the shadow of his multiplied afflictions, he confesses: "I had tried all things but the refuge in Christ, and to that, with parental stripes, was I driven."

These are the elements which in the providence of God brought this man of genius and ambition to an humble faith in the Son of God. It cannot fail to be of interest to look in upon this mystery at first hand. For happily this man, so reserved and inscrutable to the world at large, has laid bare his heart to the eye of one or two trusted friends, and in the pages of his private diary.

When this struggle between light and darkness, that was waged so long and so bitterly within his soul, was at its height, he writes to his trusted friend, Francis Scott Key:

"For a long time the thoughts that now occupy me came and went out of my mind. Sometimes they were banished by business; at others by pleasure. But heavy afflictions fell upon me. They came more frequently and staid longer—pressing upon me, until, at last, I never went to sleep, nor awoke, but they were the first and last in my recollection. Oftentimes have they awakened me, until, at length, I cannot, if I would, detach myself from them. Mixing in the business of the world I find highly injurious to me. I cannot repress the feelings which the conduct of our fellow-men too often excites; yet I hate nobody, and I have endeavored to forgive all who have done me an injury, as I have asked forgiveness of those whom I have *wronged in thought or deed*. If I could have my way, I would retire to some retreat far from the strife of the world, and pass the remnant of my days in meditation and prayer; and yet this would be a life of ignoble security. But, my good friend, I am not qualified

(as yet, at least) to leave the heat of the battle. I seek for rest—for peace. I have read much of the New Testament lately. Some of the texts are full of consolation; others inspire dread. The Epistle of Paul, I cannot, for the most part, comprehend; with the assistance of Mr. Locke's paraphrase, I hope to accomplish it. My good friend, you will bear with this egotism; for I seek from you instruction on a subject in comparison with which all others sink into insignificance. I have had a strong desire to go to the Lord's Supper; but I was deterred by a sense of my unworthiness; and, only yesterday, reading the denunciation against those who received unworthily, I thought it would never be in my power to present myself at the altar."

Later he writes in more confident note:

" . . . . . But there is one source of affliction, the last and deepest, which I must reserve until we meet, if I can prevail upon myself to communicate it even then. It was laid open by one of those wonderful coincidences, which men call chance, but which manifest the hand of God. It has lacerated my heart, and taken from it its last hope in this world. Ought I not to bless God for the evil (as it seems in my sight) as well as the good?

Is it not the greatest of blessings if it be made the means of drawing me unto Him? Do I know what to ask at His hands? Is He not the judge of what is good for me? If it be His pleasure that I perish, am I not conscious that the sentence is just?

Implicitly, then, will I throw myself upon His mercy; 'not my will, but Thine be done'; 'Lord, be merciful to me a sinner'; 'Help, Lord, or I perish.' And now, my friend, if, after these glimpses of the light, I should shut mine eyes and harden my heart, which now is as melted wax; if I should be enticed back to the 'herd,' and lose all recollection of my wounds, how much deeper my guilt than his, whose heart has never been touched by the sense of his perishing undone condition. This has rushed upon my mind when I have thought of partaking of the Lord's Supper."

In a subsequent letter, he tells Key: "In a critique of Scott, vol. xii., upon the Bishop of Lincoln's 'Refutation of Calvinism,'



it is stated, that no man is converted to the truth of Christianity without the self-experience of a miracle. Such is the substance. He must be sensible of the working of a miracle in his own person. Now, my good friend, I have never experienced anything like this. I am sensible, and am always, of the proneness to sin in my nature. I have grieved unfeignedly for my manifold transgressions. I have thrown myself upon the mercy of my Redeemer, conscious of my utter inability to conceive one good thought, or do one good act without His gracious aid. But I have felt nothing like what Scott requires." Again to Dr. Brockenbrough, himself, it seems, at this time, disposed to be somewhat skeptical: "I am no disciple of Calvin or Wesley, but I feel the necessity of a changed nature, of a new life, of an altered heart. I feel my stubborn and rebellious nature to be softened, and that it is essential to my comfort here, as well as to my future welfare, to cultivate and cherish feelings of good will towards all mankind; to strive against envy, malice, and all uncharitableness. I think I have succeeded in forgiving all my enemies. There is not a human being I would hurt if it were in my power; not even Bonaparte."

At last the clouds that have so long hovered above his spirit are rolled away, and standing in the mellow light of assured faith he writes in joyous strain:

"Congratulate me, dear Frank—wish me joy you need not; give it you cannot. I am at last reconciled to my God, and have assurance of His pardon, through faith in Christ, against which the very gates of hell cannot prevail. Fear hath been driven out by perfect love. I now know that you know how I feel; and within a month for the first time I understand your feelings, and those of every real Christian."

The following note is taken from his diary. It will be the more interesting because not intended for any eye but his own:

"It is my business to avoid giving offense to the world, especially in all matters merely indifferent. I shall, therefore, stick to my old uniform, blue and buff, unless God sees fit to change it for black. I must be as attentive to my dress, and to household

affairs, as far as cleanliness and comfort are concerned, as ever, and, indeed, more so. Let us take care to drive none away from God, by dressing religion in the garb of fanaticism. Let us exhibit her as she is, equally removed from superstition and lukewarmness. But we must take care, that while we avoid one extreme, we fall not into another; no matter which. I was born and baptized in the Church of England. If I attend the convention at Charlottesville, which I rather doubt, I shall oppose myself then and always to every attempt at encroachment on the part of the Church, the clergy especially, on the right of conscience. I attribute, in a very great degree, my long estrangement from God, to my abhorrence of prelatical pride and puritanical preciseness; to ecclesiastical tyranny, whether Roman Catholic or Protestant; whether of Henry V. or Henry VIII.; of Mary or Elizabeth; of John Knox or Archbishop Laud; of the Cameronians of Scotland, the Jacobins of France, or the Protestants of Ireland. Should I fail to attend, it will arise from a repugnance to submit the religion, or Church, any more than the liberty of my country, to foreign influence. When I speak of my country, I mean the Commonwealth of Virginia. I was born in allegiance to George III.; the Bishop of London (Terrick!) was my diocesan. My ancestors threw off the oppressive yoke of the mother country, but they never made me subject to *New* England in matters spiritual or temporal; neither do I mean to become so voluntarily."

Mr. Randolph's devotion to the Episcopal Church, as indicated above, affords a striking example of the power of heredity, and bears witness to the lasting influence of his mother's gentle piety. Most of his life was spent out of reach of the Episcopal Church. The ministers who most profoundly influenced him, and for whose eloquence and learning he cherished the highest admiration, were Dr. Moses Hoge (the elder), President of Hampden-Sidney College, and Dr. John Holt Rice, Professor at Hampden-Sidney College, and later the founder of the Union Theological Seminary. While these Presbyterian ministers were his spiritual advisers and his devoted friends, he never abandoned the Church of his mother.

The excerpt that follows is of the highest interest, not only because of its notable testimony to the Bible as the Word of God, and its fitness to satisfy both the intellect and the heart of a man of extraordinary genius; but also because of the happy glimpse it affords of the reality of his conversion, as evidenced by his concern for the religious welfare of his slaves, and his endeavor to secure their spiritual uplift.

"Mr. Randolph, from the dignity of Rev. A. W. Clopton's character, became peculiarly attached to him. He frequently invited him to his house to preach to his negroes, and on these occasions he would have them collected from his different plantations, to the number of several hundreds, to hear him.

On one occasion, after Mr. Clopton had closed his discourse, Mr. Randolph undertook to deliver an appendix.

He dwelt on the gratitude that was due to God for His kindness, and illustrated by his own kindness to his servants. He spoke of the ingratitude shown to the Creator, and illustrated by their ingratitude to him. "My ancestors," said he, "have raised all of you, save one, whom I bought from a hard master for sympathy's sake. I have cherished and nourished you likè children; I have fed and clothed you better than my neighbors have fed and clothed their servants. I have allowed you more privileges than others have been allowed. Consequently, any good heart would have shown gratitude even to me.

But, oh! the ingratitude of the depraved heart! After all my superior kindness, when I was in my feeble health, sent a minister to Russia, you all thought I would not live to return, and you and the overseers (damn you\*—God forgive me) wasted and stole all you could, and came well-nigh ruining me. But come back, and I will forgive; come back to God, and He will forgive. My negroes, hear what the clergyman says." He stopped and said, "Don't think I mean any disrespect by calling you negroes, for

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\*NOTE.—It is stated that the minister promptly rebuked him for the use of this term as being profane and irreverent. In his most gracious manner, Mr. Randolph replied that he had no thought of being profane, but was using the term "damn" in its strict Biblical sense as indicative of the punishment that was sure to descend upon those guilty of the sins he was condemning, unless they repent.

I must inform you that negro is only a Spanish word for black.'

When the service closed, he took the clergyman into his library, a room full of shelves and books arranged in good order. Passing on to a corner, he called for two chairs, and sat down to relate his Christian experience.

In that corner was stored a fine family Bible, with a number of works for and against its authenticity. "Mr. Clopton," said he, "I was raised by a pious mother (God bless her memory), who taught me the Christian religion in all its requirements. But, alas! I grew up an infidel; if not an infidel complete, yet a decided deist. But when I became a man, in this as well as in political and all other matters, I resolved to examine for myself, and never to pin my faith to any other man's sleeve. *So I bought that Bible; I pored over it; I examined it carefully. I sought and procured those books for and against it, and when my labors were ended, I came to this irresistible conclusion: The Bible is true. It would have been as easy for a mole to have written Sir Isaac Newton's Treatise on Optics, as for uninspired men to have written that Bible.*"

The letter that follows is the most remarkable product of Mr. Randolph's pen that bears upon his religious views. It is a letter of sympathy addressed to his "mother's son" (his half-brother), after the death of a boy of eighteen, who is said to have possessed talents nearly, if not quite, equal to those of Mr. Randolph himself. In its exquisite phrasing, it might well be adopted as a model by those who are called upon to write letters of sympathy to-day:

"May He who has the power, and always the will, when earnestly, humbly, and devoutly entreated, support and comfort you, my brother! I shall not point you to the treasures that remain to you in your surviving children, and their mother, dearer than all these put together. No; I have felt too deeply how little power have words that play around the head to reach the heart when it is sorely wounded. The commonplaces of consolation are at the tongue's end of all the self-complacent and satisfied, from the pedant priest to the washerwoman. (They who don't feel can talk.) I abjure them all. The father

of Lord Russell, when condoled with according to form, by the book, said, "I would not give my dead son for any other man's living." May this thought come to your bosom too; but not on the same occasion. May the Spirit of God, which is not the chimera of heated brains, nor a device of artful men to frighten and cajole the credulous, but is as much an existence that can be felt and understood as the whisperings of your own heart, or the love you bore to him that you have lost—may the Spirit, which is the Comforter, shed His influence upon your soul, and incline your heart and understanding to the only right way, which is that of life eternal! Did you ever read Bishop Butler's Analogy? If not I will send it to you. Have you read the Book? What I say upon this subject, I not only believe, but I know to be true—that *the Bible studied with an humble and contrite heart, never yet failed to do its work*, even with those who from idiosyncrasy or disordered minds have conceived that they were cut off from its promises of a life to come.

"Ask and ye shall receive; seek and ye shall find; knock and it shall be opened unto you." This was my only support and stay through years of misery and darkness; and just as I had almost begun to despair, after more than ten years of penitence and prayer, it pleased God to enable me to see the truth, to which until then my eyes had been sealed. To this vouchsafement I have made the most ungrateful returns. But I would not give up my slender portion of the price paid for our redemption—yes, my brother, our redemption—the ransom of sinners—of all who do not hug their chains and refuse to come out from the house of bondage—I say that I would not exchange my little portion in the Son of David for the power and glory of the Parthian or Roman empires, as described by Milton in the temptation of our Lord and Saviour, not for all with which the enemy tempted the Saviour of man.

This is the secret of the change of my spirits, which all who know me must have observed within a few years past. After years spent in humble and contrite entreaty that the tremendous sacrifice on Mount Calvary might not have been made in vain for me, the chiefest of sinners, it pleased God to speak His peace into my heart—that peace of God which passeth all understand-

ing to them that know it not, and even to them that do. And although I have now, as then, to reproach myself with time mispent and faculties misemployed; although my condition has on more than one occasion resembled that of him who, having one evil spirit cast out, was taken possession of by seven other spirits more wicked than the first, and the first also; yet I trust that they, too, by the power and mercy of God, may be, if they are not, vanquished.

But where am I running to? On this subject more hereafter. Meanwhile, assure yourself of what is of small value compared with that of those who are a piece of yourself—of the unchanged regard and sympathy of your mother's son. Ah! My God! I remember to have seen her die—to have followed her to the grave—to have wondered that the sun continued to rise and set, and the order of nature to go on. Ignorant of true religion, but not yet an atheist, I remember with horror my impious expostulations with God upon this bereavement—"but not yet an atheist." The existence of atheism has been denied; but I was an honest one; Hume began and Hobbs finished me. I read Spinoza and all the tribe. Surely I fell by no ignoble hand. And the very man (————) who gave me Hume's "Essay Upon Human Nature" to read, administered "Beattie Upon Truth" as the antidote—Venice treacle against arsenic and the essential oil of bitter almonds—a bread and milk poultice for the bite of the cobra de capello.

Had I remained a successful political leader I might never have been a Christian. But it pleased God that my pride should be mortified; that by death and desertion I should lose my friends, that, except in the veins of a maniac, and he, too, possessed "of a child" by a deaf and dumb spirit, there should not run one drop of my father's blood in any living creature besides myself. The death of Tudor finished my humiliation. I had tried all things but the refuge in Christ, and to that, with parental stripes, was I driven. Often did I cry out with the father of that wretched boy, "Lord, I believe, help thou mine unbelief"; and the gracious mercy of our Lord to this wavering faith, staggering under the force of the hard heart of unbelief,

I humbly hoped would, in His good time, be extended to me also. St. Mark 9:17-29.

Throw Revelation aside, and I can drive any man by irresistible induction into atheism. John Marshall could not resist me. When I say man, I mean a man capable of logical and consequential reasoning. Deism is the refuge of those that startle at atheism, and can't believe Revelation; and my ————, (may God have forgiven us both), and myself used with Diderot & Co., to laugh at the deistical bigots who must have milk; not being able to digest meat. All theism is derived from Revelation—that of the laws confessedly. Our own is from the same source—so is the false revelation of Mahomet; and I can't much blame the Turks for considering the Franks and Greeks to be idolaters. Every other idea of one God that floats in the world is derived from the tradition of the sons of Noah and handed down to their posterity.

But enough—and more than enough. I can scarcely guide my pen. I will, however, add that no lukewarm seeker ever became a real Christian; for “from the days of John the Baptist until now, the Kingdom of heaven suffereth violence, and the violent take it by force”—a text which I read five hundred times before I had the slightest conception of its true application.

Your brother, J. R., of Roanoke.

To H. St. G. Tucker, Esq.

This letter may well be accounted John Randolph's “Confession of Faith.” Certainly it would be difficult to frame a confession of sin more contrite and complete, or a statement of belief more comprehensive than this.\*

It is said that when this brilliant statesman lay dying in Philadelphia, whither he had gone to embark upon an ocean voyage in the hope that his broken health might be improved, he called for pencil and paper, and wrote the words: “Remorse, Remorse.” This has been often quoted as the dying cry of a man of genius who has lived for the world and died without Christ. The rather must it be understood to express the deep shame of a penitent sinner who, reviewing his life, is oppressed

\*See footnote next page.

with the sense of his own unworthiness and filled with contrition, "carries his repentance to the very gate of Heaven." "Nothing in my hands I bring, Simply to Thy cross I cling." Over against this confession of a life misspent *by* him, we place his confession of immovable trust in another life well-spent *for* him:

*"But I would not give up my slender portion of the price paid for our redemption—yes, my brother, our redemption—the ransom of sinners—of all who do not hug their chains and refuse to come out of the house of bondage—I say that I would not exchange my little portion in the Son of David for the power and glory of the Parthian or Roman empires, as described by Milton in the temptation of our Lord and Saviour, not for all with which the enemy tempted the Saviour of man."*

\*It might be added, as a matter of more than passing interest, that this letter was the means under God of saving from spiritual shipwreck a nephew and namesake of its author, and a son of the man to whom it was addressed. The late John Randolph Tucker—brilliant lawyer, statesman, and orator—in conversation with the writer stated that in his early manhood he was tainted with scepticism, and the much "exploited" difficulties of the Bible bulked large in his view. One sentence from this letter, however, kept echoing in his memory, and finally banished all doubt: "Throw Revelation aside, and I can drive any man by irresistible induction into atheism. John Marshall could not resist me." In that conversation, the nephew made this impressive statement: "*I never won a case in court upon evidence so strong as that which convinces me of the Resurrection of our Lord.*" Long years after he declared: "Let the sceptical astronomer construct the universe as he will, so he leaves me the Sun of Righteousness. Let the geologist delve into the crust of the earth, and come to what conclusion he may, so my feet stand upon the Rock of Ages. Let the evolutionist trace man back to some primordial germ, he cannot evolve a Christ, nor evolve me from a joyous faith in him."