



VOL. 94.

LOUISVILLE, KY., MARCH 28, 1906.

NO. 13.

# CHRISTIAN OBSERVER,

Founded September 4th, 1813.

A Presbyterian Family Newspaper.

F. BARTLETT CONVERSE, D. D.,  
FRANCIS R. BEATTIE, D. D., LL. D. } Editors.

Published Every Wednesday by

CONVERSE & CO., (Incorporated).

512 Third Avenue, Louisville, Ky.

For "Terms of Subscription," etc., see foot of page 19

Remittances should be made by money order, or by registered letter, or by draft on some of the large cities. When checks on local banks are sent, ten cents should be added to cover cost of collection.

Address all business letters to Converse & Co.

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## Editorial Notes.

On other pages of this issue our readers will find an account of the recent Conference at Charlotte, N. C., touching the closer relations of the Presbyterian and Reformed Churches in this country. We also publish the "Articles of Agreement" in full, so that our readers may know what was finally approved. These articles bear the marks of very careful consideration, and they deserve diligent study by all our people. We understand that the Committee of our Church met and took action recommending to the next General Assembly that these "Articles of Agreement" be adopted by that body. We are very sure that the great majority of our people will approve of them.

Charlotte was an interesting place for this Committee to meet. It is a very stronghold of Presbyterianism, and the cradle of the Revolution. It is also the site of one of the strongest educational institutions which the Church, North, has in the South, and the visit to Biddle University was a pleasant interlude during the sessions of the Conference. The reception at the Presbyterian College for Women was also a delightful expression of a generous hospitality extended to the visitors. Then only about twenty miles away is Davidson College, which is doing such a splendid educational work. Had time permitted, a visit to this institution would have been a very pleasant thing. Altogether the Conference seems to have left happy memories.

Mr. John J. Harbison, of Louisville, Ky., after a brief illness, departed this life last week, having reached his seventy seventh year. He was a native of Kentucky, and spent all his active business life in Louisville. He prospered in business, and amassed considerable property. He was an elder in the Presbyterian Church for fully forty-six years, and over forty of these years were devoted to faithful service in the Second church, Louisville. He was for many years associated with Dr. Stuart Robinson in the session of this church. He was one of the founders of the Louisville Seminary, and he was a member of the Board of Directors from the beginning to the time of his death, and on several occasions he made generous gifts to this institution. He was a godly, quiet, strong and true man.

The separation of Church and State in France as recently effected by the Government is bound to have several far-reaching results. To begin with, the ten million francs appropriated annually is to be withdrawn from the support of religion, and devoted to secular purposes. This affects the Roman Catholics, the Jews, and one branch of the Reformed Protestant Church. The effect of this will be severely felt by all of these bodies, and it will take some time to readjust the financial support of religion among them. The burden on these bodies will become all the greater if the proposal to tax all Church property is carried out. Indeed, in some sections the ordinances of religion may be suspended entirely for a time.

What the effect upon Romanism may be, cannot be easily forecast. It will undoubtedly feel the loss of the money support most of all the bodies. Then how far entire religious freedom and self-support may stir up the people who have any deep devotion to the Church in their hearts, may move these people to rally to the support of the Church, is a question no one can answer. The fact that so many in France are virtual

atheists, and that many others may have only a very slender attachment to the Church, may leave not more than one-fourth of the French people with definite connection with the Church. Hence, the future of Romanism in France is uncertain.

The future of Protestantism may be a little brighter than that of Romanism in France. Still there are features of uncertainty in regard to Protestantism. First of all, Protestantism is numerically weak, and by no means rich in this world's goods. Perhaps not more than two of the forty-five millions in France are Protestant. In addition, the Protestants are divided into several bodies. The Reformed Church which had connection with the State, is divided between the liberal and conservative types of doctrine. The Free Reformed Church is quite weak, yet will not feel the recent legislation so much because it never received State aid. The McAll Mission and other Protestant bodies have been at work in France for some time. Still for a long time Protestantism will have a struggle in France.

The one most hopeful feature is the fact that the recent legislation places all the Churches on the sound basis in relation to the State. Whatever may have been the causes which provoked the French Government to take the steps it did, or whatever may have been its motives in enacting this radical action, it is still true that by this legislation the sound principle of the separation of Church and State has been introduced in France. In the long run, if the Reformed Churches are true to this principle and loyal to the truth of God in the Holy Scriptures, and devoted to the spiritual welfare of the people, there is reason to believe that Protestantism of the Reformed type may have a large future in this fair land of the Huguenots.

Rev. Geo. W. White, D. D., calmly and peacefully entered into rest from his home at Moorefield, W. Va., on Friday last, March 23, at 2:30 A. M. He was a son of the venerable and beloved Dr. W. S. White, Gen. Stonewall Jackson's pastor. He was born in Nottoway county, Va., on June 22, 1830, and lacked but a few months of being seventy-six years of age. Educated at the University of Virginia and Union Theological Seminary, he was well equipped for his long and useful service. For about eight years he was the pastor of his first charge at Brunswick, Va. Then in 1866 he was called to the Moorefield church, W. Va., and served this people faithfully and lovingly for thirty-nine years. At the time of his death he was pastor *emeritus*. His faith and assurance were beautiful.

The article by Rev. Dr. J. H. McNeilly on the Church and Moral Reform is worthy of careful perusal. It is a very clear and able presentation of the mission of both the Church and the State, and the limits of each in dealing with moral and political questions. But it is only one of a number of valuable contributions.

Ordinarily a judicial case should not be discussed in the newspapers, and for this reason we have declined a number of articles that have been offered us. That by Rev. W. A. Gillon on another page, on the Caldwell Case in the Synod of Texas, does not discuss the merits of the case. But it calls attention to some very peculiar features in the proceedings connected with that case, which make it possible for great injustice to be done, if attention were not called to them before the Assembly enters upon the judicial consideration of the case.

### The Conference at Charlotte.

The outcome of this Conference is to us highly satisfactory, and we are sure that it will result in much good for the Presbyterian and Reformed Churches in this country. Forty-three able and earnest men, representing seven branches of the Presbyterian family, conferred together, with a view to discover how these Churches could more fully evince their spiritual unity, and more effectively co-operate in building up the kingdom of Christ in the world. This was surely a most important and noble object, and these men addressed themselves to their task in a spirit worthy of the highest praise.

The result of the Conference which lasted for three days was the adoption of certain "Articles of Agreement," with but two opposing votes. The perusal of these "Articles," which we publish on page eleven of this issue, will show that they are in all essential particulars the same as those drawn up at Pittsburg a year ago, under the title of a "Plan of Federation." In some respects we like the "Articles of Agreement" better than the "Plan of Federation," because they are a little more explicit and are likely to be more acceptable to our people. We care but little for the name, but we are deeply concerned for the thing; and these "Articles of Agreement" embody, in a very definite way, the principle for which we have been pleading for two or three years, as the basis of closer relations between the Presbyterian Churches, because they provide a body called a Council, which at once expresses the unity of these several Churches, and serves as an agency for conference, advice and reference, touching questions of common interest to these Churches. This is, in our judgment, the vital thing so much needed, and clearly provided for in these "Articles." The omission of the terms "federal" and "federated" is consequently a merely verbal change, which in no way affects the central principle of the "Articles."

The addition to Article IV, only makes explicit what is implied in the "Articles" throughout, because in every case the findings of the Council must be referred to the supreme judicatories of the Churches concerned before they come into force. The addition is as follows: "The Council should exercise only advisory authority, except in cases where power is conferred upon it by specific acts of the constituent Churches."

With the "Articles of Agreement" before us we signalize a few things contained in them. We like the name given to the "Council," as that of "The Reformed Churches in America holding the Presbyterian System." The composition of this Council seems good, as it will make the Council a strong representative agency, with the weaker bodies given their proper places and representation relatively.

It is very important to note that each Church entering into this Council "retains its distinct individuality, its own creed, government and worship, as well as every power, jurisdiction and right, which is not expressly and exclusively delegated to the body hereby constituted." Art. III. This means that the Council can do nothing with the Constitution and internal life of any of the Churches represented in it, for it is added, in Art. IV., that the Council "shall not interfere with the creed, worship or government of the Churches, and, in particular, all matters of discipline shall be left to the exclusive and final judgment of the ecclesiastical authorities of the Churches concerned."

On the other hand, the Council is to deal only with practical questions. Its function, Art. V., is "to promote the co-operation of the constituent Churches in their foreign missionary work," and also . . . "in connection with Home Missions, work among the colored people, Church Erection, Sabbath schools, Publication and Education." In addition "it may initiate movements having this co-operation in view, subject to the approval of the Churches concerned." And the Council may "advise and recommend in other matters pertaining to the general welfare of the Kingdom of Christ." But every decision of the Council "shall be transmitted to the supreme judicatories of the Churches concerned," and these "shall take such steps as are necessary to carry the decisions into effect."

It will thus be seen that the autonomy of the several Churches is carefully safeguarded, and at the same time an agency is created whose function it is to deal with the practical problems of church work, in which all these Churches have a common interest, and where more effective service can be rendered by proper co-operation.

Therefore it is that we can give these "Articles of Agreement" our very hearty approval. They are the natural and very carefully matured result of what our Church did at Mobile in 1904 by her General Assembly appointing the Committee of Conference. This action of the Charlotte Conference also follows very naturally from the decisions of the Assembly last year at Fort Worth, when it declined to exclude either federation in general, or the Pittsburg plan in particular, from the future deliberations of the Committee of Conference. The Pittsburg plan, in its essential features, with the omissions of the terms "federal" and "federated," has been approved by the joint conference in Charlotte, and it is recommended to our General Assembly for adoption. We are very sure that the great majority of our office-bearers and people, when they carefully consider these "Articles," will heartily approve of them. And we believe that our General Assembly will do a wise thing for our Church and for the kingdom of Christ at large if it adopts them. It will give us what we will surely need in dealing with problems which are certain to arise, it will in no wise affect our autonomy or weaken our testimony to the truth, and it will give us an opportunity to make our well-defined Presbyterianism tell for good on all of the bodies associated with us in this "Council."

As for our own position in regard to this whole matter of closer relations, we have all along stood just where the Church by her official action has placed herself. This we did after the Mobile and Fort Worth Assemblies. In our editorial utterances from time to time, we have argued and pleaded for just what the Charlotte Conference has formulated. We have discussed many phases of the problem of "closer relations." We have tried to remove some misapprehensions which may be in the minds of some of our people in regard to the Presbyterian Church, North. We have not argued for the reunion of these two Churches; and even when we were writing on some things involved in their relations, we expressly disavowed any such argument. If the facts which we adduced led some of our readers to infer that organic union was the goal of these facts, we cannot help it. We adduced these facts only to plead for some such plan as the Charlotte Conference has given us, which at once preserves our autonomy and gives us a bond with our sister Churches of like faith and order, and thus saves us from the disabilities of isolation.

We firmly believe that the providence of God has led us thus far, and we are willing to trust that guidance as we think we see it. The reunion of the Churches, North and South, is not the question now under consideration. We have never assumed that it was in any of our discussions. The problem is a far wider one. It is the banding together of the Presbyterian forces of this country by a Council for the avowed purpose of making their energies more effective, their gifts more fruitful, and their prayers more earnest in advancing the kingdom of Christ in the world.

In subsequent issues we may revert to other aspects of the wide problem raised by the "Articles of Agreement" now before these several Churches for consideration. In what we may say we will have in view mainly such explanations as may lead these constituent bodies to understand each other better, and especially that we may give our own readers some information in regard to the various Churches which are to be banded together by this "Council."

### The Change in China.

Whilst the whole world (and especially our entire nation) anxiously looks far away to the East and seeks to spell out the signs of the times in China; whilst parents and friends and Churches and Missionary Boards and Committees are anxiously trying to find out the true inwardness of the Chinese situation, and are preparing for

eventualities,—reassuring news comes from nearly every missionary station. Not that our brethren at the front minimize or underrate the seriousness of the situation, not that they deny the danger of another uprising of the Boxer element, far from it. But one and all they tell us that since the Boxer massacres the eyes and ears of China-men have been far more open to the gospel truth and gospel light than before.

Up to that dark period the Chinese had looked upon Christianity from its theoretic side; now they were forced to acknowledge its immense superiority in the day of trouble and of death.

*It has been ever thus!* The plant of the Church must be watered with blood before it can take firm root. Every martyr, who makes a glorious confession in dying, is a testimony to the truth of the Gospel, far more weighty than scores of converts who live in the sunshine of peaceful days. God keep us from another massacre! But if it must come, and if more saints are called to follow in the long historic train of martyrdom, we know that God is but paving the road along which the King's chariot will ride in glory. In the midst of all our fears, we are strengthened by the news which comes from the front. God be praised for it!

### The Place of Miracles in the Holy Scriptures.

The place of that aspect of the supernatural in Christianity which miracles express, needs careful consideration, in order to a correct understanding of it. The impression sometimes prevails in the popular mind not properly instructed, that Christianity is a religion full of extravagant doings on the part of God; and that, in this respect at least, it differs little from the pagan religions, in which are to be found many signs and wonders of an unreasonable sort. Keeping in mind that the miracle, in the strict sense, is only one phase of the supernatural in the Christian system, the impression just described is entirely erroneous; for, as a matter of fact, there is a severe economy of the miracles in the Scripture record of the revealed will of God. God does not waste his energy, if we may so speak; and he never works miracles just for the sake of making a mere show of his divine power.

This in no way minimizes the fact that Christianity is a revealed religion, or that the Bible is the inspired and infallible record of that revelation. Nor does it reduce in any degree the thoroughly supernatural character of the Christian system. It simply means that these forms of the supernatural which stand related to the order of nature, and the stream of human history, and which authenticate the revelation as at once divine, and as a part of the revelation itself, are not brought upon the scene in any unnecessary profusion. In other words, miracles are carefully, and almost infrequently, used by the Almighty, as is shown in the record of the Scriptures. Our Lord on several occasions declined to work miracles, either because of the unbelief of the people, or because he was entirely unwilling to pander to the idle curiosity of the multitude, or to work miracles when moral and redemptive ends were not to be served thereby.

When we look with a little care into the sacred Scriptures we find the miracles gathered mainly about three great periods, while all along between these there are very few miracles. In the book of Genesis there are but few recorded; and this is the case even though the period covered by Genesis is a period when we would almost expect many of them. So it is with several of the other books of the Bible.

There are really three epochs about which the miracles are grouped. The first is that of the Exodus from the sojourn and bondage in Egypt, in which Moses was the chief actor. The second is that of the later stages in the two kingdoms of Judah and Israel, in which Elijah was the main figure. And the third is that of the advent and ministry of Jesus Christ, in which he himself and his apostles were the leading agents. About these great stages of revelation the miracles are grouped.

A little reflection will show the propriety of this grouping of the miracles, in the light of

what we have already suggested concerning the divine economy in regard to the use of miracles. Each of these three periods was an important crisis in the progress of the redemptive revelation. Each was indeed epochal in this respect. It was not only fitting, but, in a sense, necessary, that miracles, as divine seals and attestations to the purpose and agency of God in very special ways, should appear just when God was making such new and special revelations to men. The miracles of these three periods stand as parts of the revelation, and they witness to the purpose, presence and power of God as well.

This implies what may be called the teleology of the miracle. A moral and redemptive end is always in view; and the redemptive purpose of God is unfolded and attested by the miracle. This also gives to the Biblical miracles proper, as distinguished from the false miracles and lying wonders of the Biblical narratives, a dignity and elevation which is readily recognized. It also enables us to distinguish between the miracles of the Scripture record, from the so-called miracles of the pagan systems, and from the alleged ecclesiastical miracles. There is a reserve, a majesty and a teleology about the one, not found in the other.

In connection with the grouping of the miracles about these three periods, it is interesting to recall the scene on the Mount of Transfiguration, and the personages who appear in that transcendent scene. Moses, and Elijah, and Jesus were there; and these are the three great personages prominent in these three epochs of miracles. This cannot fail to arrest attention; and we do little more now than make note of it. Its significance we cannot fully discuss now, and within our present limits. There is doubtless a deep redemptive meaning wrapped up in this fact. The transfiguration was an epitome of God's redemptive revelation which moves through the ages.

It is a familiar point to Bible Students, that Moses represents the *law*, Elijah the *prophets*, and Jesus the *Gospel*, summing it all up. On the Mount of Transfiguration the three were present, and were discussing the decease which Jesus should suffer at Jerusalem, in order to our redemption. About these three personages also, the miracles of the sacred Scriptures, as the record of God's redemptive revelation, are adjusted. Of these wonderful works there is no waste nor profusion. They are exhibited in such a way as to have the very best effects for apologetic purposes.

## A Foreign Testimony.

### The President and the Sabbath.

In one of our foreign exchanges we found the following testimony regarding the religious life of our President:

"Not a half dozen Sundays in a year President Roosevelt is absent from his pew in church on Sunday, when he is in the Capitol. If he is not ill himself or kept at home by the illness of members of his family, or if absolute duty does not call him elsewhere—which happens very rarely,—it makes no difference whether the rain pours down or the sun shines, whether it is hot or cold, mild or stormy weather, you see the President regularly walk to the house of prayer. He is a member of the Dutch Reformed church, but attends the Grace Reformed church (German) at Washington, and by the regularity of his attendance he sets an excellent example.

Nor is he ever too late. Although the White House is fully half a mile away from the church, the President, who is a very rapid walker, is always present three or four minutes before the opening of the service. This is his fixed rule. And moreover, everything indicates that President Roosevelt takes a deep personal interest in every part of the services."

Of how many of the kings and potentates of Europe could a like testimony be given? Yes, we would find them if we searched, and we thank God for it; but it is nevertheless our honor and our pride before the world that we call ourselves a Christian nation, and at the same time show the proof of it in the conduct of our leaders.

How many of our officers, at sea and on land, are "children of the King!" There are many more of them than our Christian people are aware of. It is still an honor among us to stand boldly forth in our Christian profession wherever we may be. And the bolder one's stand the deeper the respect of unbelievers. The president's example is one to be emulated by every profess-

ing Christian. All our efforts to move others to keep the Sabbath holy will be utterly in vain unless we show, by our own integrity and by our own example, how precious to us are the principles, for the maintenance of which we publicly strive.

## Faith in Religious Experience.

The large place which the Scriptures give to faith in religious experience at once arrests attention. It is made the central fact and the vital principle in that experience; so that *pistis* rather than *gnosis* is the fundamental fact in the spiritual life of the believer.

It becomes an interesting thing to inquire into the real nature and significance of this true vital faith. What do we really do when we exercise this faith? What interpretation should we make of it? How can we describe it to another? How should we explain it to one who makes serious inquiry into it? As we begin this inquiry, with the Scripture and our own experience as our guides, we find faith before us in very many aspects and relations.

First of all, it stands *related* to several great facts in our state and experience under grace. It is related to justification, for we are justified by faith. It conditions our sonship, for authority or right is given to those who believe in Jesus Christ to become the sons of God. It is the subjective condition of sanctification, for we live the life which we now live by faith upon the Son of God, and the heart is purified by faith. It is the root of good works, for without faith it is impossible to please God, and whatsoever is not of faith is sin. It is also one of the fruits of the Spirit; it conditions answer to prayer, and enables us to overcome the world and obtain the victory.

Then, again, faith rests on several *objects*, and embraces them in its hold. It finds its object in God, for we must believe that He is, and that He is a rewarder of all them that seek Him. Faith thus relies confidently on the triune God—the Father, Son and Holy Spirit. Again, faith rests on God's Word. By it we believe the testimony God gives in his Word, regarding himself and his law regarding ourselves and our sin, and regarding Jesus Christ and the conditions of salvation in Him. It also accepts the precepts, heeds the warnings and relies upon the promises of God in his Word.

But true vital faith has as its main goal trust or confidence in Jesus Christ. By it we accept Christ, and receive and rest upon Him alone for salvation. By means of faith we take Christ in all his offices, and in all his gracious, saving benefits. He becomes our prophet, priest and king to us by faith; and it is the empty hand of faith which we hold out to receive the gift of eternal life at his hand. By faith we are found in Him, by faith we abide in Him, and by faith we grow up in likeness to Him.

In the third place, what are the *contents* of faith? What are its main factors? First, there is *conviction*. This may be called the intellectual factor, and relates to the truth which faith relies on. This is mainly the truth as it is in Jesus. Then, there is *confidence*. This may be called the emotional factor and involves the trust of the heart. This is the repose of the soul as it rests confidently on Jesus Christ. And again, there is *committal*. This is really the volitional factor, and it implies the voluntary self-surrender of the soul and all its interests to the Saviour. The soul thereby commits itself entirely to Jesus Christ. Faith, then, is conviction of the truth as it is in Jesus, confidence in Jesus, and committal to Jesus. The result of it all will be *conversion*.

Finally, how may this experimental faith be *cultivated*? How is it to be fostered? How is the habit of faith to be more and more fixed?

First, by the careful and regular devotional study of the Scriptures. They are the food for the soul, by faith this food is taken and thereby faith is nourished. This meets the intellectual factor in faith and supplies its demand. Then the cultivation of the habit of *prayer* and meditation is a great help. Quiet communion and communing of the soul with God, and thereby getting acquainted with him will beget confidence and trust. In addition, if we *obey*, the faith we

have, and prove its reality and vitality by obedience it will be made much stronger thereby. If we do not put our faith into obedient exercise, it will fail more and more. If we act out our faith, it will increase in strength.

Let us never forget that all unbelief is sin, and let our prayer ever be—"Lord, increase our faith."

## American and European Residents in Foreign Seaports.

BY REV. S. H. CHESTER, D. D.

Chairman of Committee of the Alliance of the Presbyterian and the Reformed Churches.

This topic has been on the programme of the last two meetings of the Annual Conference of the Foreign Mission Boards of the United States and Canada. By reason of its interdenominational character, and also of its direct contact with the problems involved, that Conference is perhaps the only agency competent to deal with the problems involved in a practical way.

American and European residents in foreign seaports are divided with reference to character into three groups.

I. A limited number is of those who had the root of the matter in them before they left their American and European homes, and who have been developed by their successful resistance of extraordinary temptation into Christians of the strongest and finest type.

II. A larger number is of those whose names are on the Church rolls at their American and European homes, but whose religious life has collapsed under the pressure of temptation.

III. Much the largest number is of those who went out without any religious life or Church connection at home, and who have been so corrupted by their present environment that they constitute, perhaps, the greatest single obstacle to the progress of Christ's kingdom in the cities and countries where they dwell.

The first class includes men like Lord Lawrence, General Havelock, David Olyphant, John W. Foster, Charles T. Denby, Horace N. Allen, the late lamented Mr. Buck, of Japan, and many others whose names might be mentioned, who, by reason of the invaluable help they have given to the missionary cause, are entitled to expect from the Church at home at least an effort to provide for the spiritual needs of themselves and their families, in the places where duty has called them to labor for the good of mankind and for the cause of Christ. There are many of lesser note who are living the lives of Christian heroes in these foreign seaports, who, both for what they need and for what they can do and are ready to do as helpers of the Church's work, are entitled to the Church's care.

The second and third groups may be considered as one, and they need to receive the most prayerful consideration on the part of their home Churches, both for their own sakes and for the sake of the harm they are capable of doing, and are constantly doing, to our missionary cause.

What could make a stronger appeal to the Church's pity than the case of a young man going out to a foreign seaport, where he will at once be freed from all the restraints of family life, and from all the social and religious influences which surrounded him at home, and where he will be brought in constant contact with the most revolting and at the same time the most enticing forms of wickedness, and have companionships thrust upon him of those who have been long enough in his new environment to be thoroughly corrupted by it; with no grace of God in his heart, and no Sunday and no church to remind him of better things as the weeks roll by?

Surely, if there is anything that the Churches of America and Europe can do to pull these unfortunates out of the fire before they are destroyed, it should not be left undone. Moreover, these are they who meet the ceaseless train of tourists in the clubs and in the hotels, and fill them with slanderous stories of missionaries and missionary work, and send them on their way to report when they reach home, as experts speaking from first-hand knowledge, on the folly of attempting to convert China and Japan and India to Christianity through the agency of foreign missionaries. These are they also whom the heathen see living