

HARRY POLLARD CONVERSE

Harry Pollard Converse, managing editor of the Christian Observer since 1907, died at Norton Memorial Infirmary in Louisville, Kentucky, on February 29 1960, aged eighty-three years. He had been active in publishing the Christian Observer since his graduation from Princeton University in 1899.

Mr. Converse was born in Louisville on August 20 1876, the son of Rev. and Mrs. F. Bartlett Converse, D. D. His father had been editor of the Observer, and his grandfather, Dr. Amasa Converse, first brought the Christian Observer under the management of the Converse family in 1827 (although the name of the publication did not become the Christian Observer until 1840).

When Mr. Converse graduated from college he immediately entered the Observer office. At the death of his father in 1907 he took over the management of the paper. When he came on the Observer's staff he found the paper in severe financial difficulties. For five or ten years he drew no salary beyond his immediate needs, putting most of his earnings back into the company. In fact, he virtually mortgaged his future by signing his own name to notes on behalf of the company.

He succeeded in building up the circulation of the paper until it became the largest Presbyterian weekly in America and a household word in many thousands of Southern Presbyterian homes. He built up the paper by studying all available up-to-date methods of magazine publication and by streamlining operations to avoid duplication. For years until his death he was constantly working out better ways of handling the paper and extending its influence.

Mr. Converse was extremely proud of the fact that the Christian Observer through all its one hundred and forty-six years of publication is the only Church paper that has always paid all of its own expenses. All other Church papers are subsidized either by individuals or by the denomination, many of them receiving tens of thousands of dollars yearly in outside help. Mr. Converse liked to remember that over a hundred million copies of the Christian Observer have been published free of cost to the Church, resulting in untold gains to the various Church agencies.

His interests were many and varied. He chose Princeton University because so many of the Converses had gone to the seminary at Princeton. At the university he was a member of the Colonial Club and editor of the college

and other worthy causes. He was an elder in the Second Presbyterian church. All through the years he helped to support quite a number of needy individuals who otherwise might have had a much more difficult time.

Mr. Converse traveled extensively—not only through Europe but also on a Mediterranean cruise, to the Caribbean, through Western United States and New England, and on a cruise down the Mississippi. It was on his return from a trip to Europe in 1912 that the ship he was on turned northward to go to the rescue of the sinking Titanic, but did not get to the scene of the disaster in time to help.

All kinds of athletics also greatly interested him. In Louisville he was a member of the old Tavern Club which later became the Pendennis Club, the Louisville Country Club, and a conversation club called the Pierian Club.

The principal thing that everyone associated with Mr. Converse will remember was his wonderful spirit and kindly disposition. He was always in a good humor, loved to joke, and enjoyed a good laugh, and was completely free from any spirit of animosity or pettiness. His unfailing kindness and generosity to all who came in contact with him were matched only by his gracious manners.

The Christian Observer to which Mr. Converse gave so many years of effective service is now in its one hundred and forty-seventh year of publication. For one hundred and thirty-three years of that time it has been owned and published continuously by the Converse family through three generations: Dr. Amasa Converse, 1827-1872; his son, Dr. F. Bartlett Converse, 1858-1907; and grandson, Harry P. Converse, 1899 to 1960. So far as we know, no other publication, religious or secular, has been owned and edited by succeeding generations of one family without a break for one hundred and thirty-three years.

Harry Converse looked on the Christian Observer not as a business but as a means of promoting the work of the Church and advancing the cause of Christ in the world. Along with this idea there was another always uppermost in his mind. That was that the Christian Observer might be the means



HARRY POLLARD CONVERSE,
 Managing Editor of the Christian Observer
 from 1907 to 1960, and Associated With
 the Paper Since 1899.

magazine, "The Princeton Tiger." As a young man he engaged in many activities. For several years he was superintendent of the Westminster Presbyterian Sunday school and also taught a Bible class. For a time he also taught a class in the Louisville Presbyterian Colored Missions. He was also active in fund-raising campaigns for the Louisville Presbyterian Theological Seminary, the Colored Missions, the Y. M. C. A., the Community Chest,

of developing in the individual reader a deeper personal relation to Christ and of promoting a Christian atmosphere in all the homes into which it went. To these ends he devoted his life from his college days to his last thought. Much as he loved the paper, it was to him never an end in itself but a means to the above

mentioned greater ends.

Mr. Converse was married on June 16 1917 to Helen Mary Austin, who died November 20 1953. He is survived by their daughter, Miss Marys A. Converse, of Louisville; a brother, Bernard T. Converse, of Rosemont, Pennsylvania; and a number of nieces and nephews.

Mission to the Nation

With the slogan, "A New Commitment in a New Century," the Presbyterian Church in the United States is planning to carry out in the first three months of 1961 what is termed "The Presbyterian Mission to the Nation."

The purpose of the mission, as stated in a leaflet sent out by the Division of Evangelism, "is to glorify God through a faithful and obedient presentation of His Gospel. Jesus Christ is the Gospel. Evangelism is all that the Church is and does to present Jesus Christ, through the power of the Holy Spirit, that men may put their trust in God through Him, receive Him as Savior from the guilt and power of sin, and serve Him as Lord in the fellowship of the Church."

The mission is to be carried out in co-operation with other denominations of the Reformed faith. As stated in the latest annual report of the Division of Evangelism, it is but one effort in the campaign for Christ, and as a co-operative effort it has strength in that it is a united appeal. It thus employs resources of leadership and harnesses powers beyond the reach of any one denomination. "It proposes to make an impact that will be broad and deep in concern. . . . It is born, planned, and presented in the prayer that God may be glorified and that His Kingdom may come, that those for whom we are responsible may become Christian."

Under the provisions of the plan, the year 1960 is to be a year of preparation for the intensive effort of the opening quarter of next year. This preparation is to include:

Spring—Pre-Assembly Evangelism Conference and Pre-Synod Evangelism Conferences.

Summer—Courses in Christian Witnessing at Presbytery and Synod conferences of men, women, and youth.

Fall—Emphasis in meetings of Presbytery and Presbyterials, and in rallies of men and youth.

October—Cavalcades, October 3-14, in eighty cities, led by outstanding teams of three leaders moving across each Synod.

November and December—Self-examination by every church and final preparation for the mission program.

January 1—Dedication Sunday.

The Church's mission to the nation is, of course, the same as its mission to the world, not only for the current years but for all time. That is to proclaim the Gospel of Christ so that men everywhere may know Him and be

led to commit their lives in faith to Him. Jesus' words of commission to His disciples are: "Go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all that I have commanded you; and lo, I am with you always, to the close of the age." And: "You shall be My witnesses in Jerusalem and in all Judea and Samaria and to the end of the earth."

These words show us that along with the message of the Gospel there must be the messengers. Too often the rank and file of the church members have looked upon it as the duty of the ministers and other full time Christian workers to be the messengers of Christ and have felt that they themselves have little responsibility in this respect beyond providing the necessary financial support.

The New Testament teaching permits no such viewpoint. All believers in Christ are to be His messengers—Jesus' own word is "witnesses." We may not be formally ordained "ambassadors of Christ," but we are to be His

In these times when the wave of juvenile delinquency is rising higher and higher each year anything that is helpful to the children and young people is of great importance. They need every stabilizing and inspiring influence that can possibly be placed in their way. That is why the importance of having a family religious paper, one that appeals to the young people as well as the adults, in the home cannot be overemphasized. The Christian Observer is one weekly family paper that has departments for every member of every household. The children and young people get interested in the stories and articles intended for them, and as they grow older they begin to read the other departments, and by the time they are grown the Church paper has become a valued part of their reading habits. Thus as the years go by the Christian Observer, when kept in the home, is constantly training the next generation in moral and spiritual truth and in the knowledge of what the Church is and what it is doing in the world. It helps to guard them against temptation, draws them closer to Christ, and trains them to take a place of Christian leadership in the world. The subscription price of the Christian Observer is \$4 a year. However, from now through Church Paper Week, April 17-24, the Christian Observer will give \$2 of the amount collected from each new subscriber to the Women of the Church to be used for any Church cause they may select. Do not collect renewals of subscriptions. No commission is allowed for the collection of renewals. Persuade your friends to subscribe.

ambassadors nevertheless.

Only as the millions of church members become increasingly faithful to their Lord's commission will the "Mission to the Nation" be fulfilled.

What Jesus was to His first disciples He can be to us if we will hear and respond to His call to follow Him. He was their friend and companion. He was their teacher and guide. He was their Savior. He was their Lord. Is He these things to us? He would be. As such He would walk with us the common ways of life, filling our lives with new meaning and purpose and leading us in the way everlasting.

Christian Observer

Presbyterian Family Newspaper.

The Oldest Religious Weekly.

ONE HUNDRED AND FORTY-SIX YEARS
OF CONTINUOUS PUBLICATION.

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WILLIAM T. McELROY, D. D., Editor.

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