

## Noblest Christian Layman Crowned

THOSE who personally know Dr. J. Wilbur Chapman as we came to know him while in his evangelistic campaigns in Boston and New England, and Hon. John H. Converse, of Philadelphia, his sympathetic and unfailing sponsor, will grieve inexpressibly over the death of the latter, which occurred at his summer home in Rosemont, near that city, May 3. There may have been other laymen as deeply interested in evangelistic work, and as munificent and wise in supporting it, but we cannot name them, nor, in fact, any one man with whom we can compare him. He had heard the Christ message: "Go ye into all the world and preach the Gospel to every creature," and he made it the chief business of these later years of his life to see to it that the command of Jesus was obeyed. A member of the Presbyterian Church, and active in all its work and interests, he became convinced some years ago that his denomination was not doing the one essential work of preaching the Gospel to the multitude in its saving power as it ought, and so he inaugurated the well known evangelistic movement in that body. When the Presbyterian General Assembly met in Philadelphia in May, 1901, he called this matter to its attention, and it appointed an evangelistic committee, with Mr. Converse as chairman. The services of Rev. J. Wilbur Chapman, then a pastor in New York city, were secured as corresponding secretary, and an evangelistic effort was begun, which, from the very first, produced the most satisfactory results. In 1904 the General Assembly authorized the Evangelistic Committee to enter into relations with other denominations, and as a result revivals were held in all the cities in the country. In the making of all these plans John H. Converse was the guiding spirit, and upon his shoulders fell the most onerous work. But he felt that the movement was good, and that it should be widened in its scope, and so, largely at his initiative, the General Assembly of 1909 authorized his committee to arrange for a world-wide evangelistic effort. It was his generous contribution of \$25,000 the first year of the committee's existence which assured the success of the committee's work. Each year he gave more and more generously, until, through the eight years and more, his contributions were simply amazing, but the church was stirred, evangelism established, and souls won to Christ by the thousand. That Mr. Converse counted it worth while, is evidenced by the fact that he was overheard to say that the best investment in his life was that money which was given to the establishment of evangelism. He had always been an aggressive Christian, but an address of D. L. Moody suggested to him the feasibility of tent work in Philadelphia in the summer, and out of the tent work grew the great denominational Evangelistic Committee. This meeting of two distinguished New Englanders meant much to the kingdom of God — the one in many respects the greatest business man of the day, the other in many respects the mightiest preacher since the days of the

apostles, both fired with the love of God, both possessed with the passion for winning souls, and both devoutly loving Jesus as their Master.

Mr. Converse stood, as we have said, as the sponsor for the work of Dr. J. Wilbur Chapman. Dr. Chapman counseled with him about everything — accepted no engagements without placing them before him. Some years he gave, it is said, \$60,000 to carry on the great simultaneous evangelistic campaigns. He stood behind the financial expense of the recent around-the-world evangelistic tour of Chapman and Alexander and their co-workers — the greatest Christian campaign in scope, success, and far-reaching influence the world has ever seen. Dr. Chapman, in writing of him for the *HERALD* for the issue of March 17, 1909, said: "All hail to the great Christian



THE LATE HON. JOHN H. CONVERSE

layman who has challenged the admiration of the Christian world by his giving, who has thrilled the church with his devotion to Christ, and whose life now is highly honored, and whose memory while the church lasts will ever be cherished as a sacred heritage!"

With Dr. Chapman we weep over the death of this constant and generous friend and supporter. He was a model of humility and simple, frank earnestness. In no sense a remarkable or brilliant man in thought or speech, he was the most striking illustration we have ever known of great success in Christian planning and effort, simply because he delighted and persisted in doing what was both a duty and a privilege. He was in no sense an orator, but he did not, as so many laymen do, excuse himself from public service because of this fact. He was so full of the essence of Christian evangelism, and so alive with the passion for it, that he was always ready to speak for it as opportunity

offered. The last address he ever made was upon this subject. On Monday night, April 25, he was the guest of greatest honor in the celebration of "Presbyterian Night," at a banquet in the Bellevue-Stratford, Philadelphia. It was largely for his appreciation that the program was arranged. All the talks were upon a subject very dear to him — Evangelization. To the loving eyes of his friends he then appeared pale and weak, yet no one in the room was more cordial, more earnest, than he. One of the most uplifting addresses was made by him. In it he preached the doctrine of abiding Christian life and hope. This was the last sustained effort of a long and useful life. Although he went to his office the next day, the fatal illness, angina pectoris, was upon him.

It is impossible even to suggest the scope, influence, victory, of such a life. We believe that God gave him a distinct and clearly identifiable part in the soul-

inspiring and saving work of Chapman and Alexander, and that all through eternity he will be recognized as the one who made possible the bringing into the kingdom of a great multitude of redeemed souls. Ah! the world's millennium delays only for the development of a contingent of wealthy men who shall catch his spirit of evangelism and consecrate their wealth, labor and speech to the evangelization of the world. May his death and the glory of his life-work inspire many to take up his mantle and carry it with like glorious passion. We have never known but one John H. Converse. May a multitude rise up to take his place!

Rev. William H. Roberts, of Philadelphia, stated clerk of the Presbyterian General Assembly, pays him this high tribute:

"The death of Mr. Converse is a great loss to the Presbyterian Church. Associated with him for years in various lines of work of the church, I early realized the large abilities, broad-mindedness and generosity of the man. More than any other person, he brought about, by careful planning and through the use of large resources, that Forward Movement in the Presbyterian and other churches which has given a great impulse to every good movement during the past decade. Within a week he spoke to me about the world evangelistic movement, in whose organization he had taken a leading part, and which had in view the extension of the Forward Movement to every Christian country and to the heathen and Mohammedan worlds. His was, in a remarkable degree, that love for man and the world which is the keynote of the Christian religion."

Mr. Converse was born in Burlington, Vt., seventy-years-ago, and was the son of a Congregational minister. For many years he had been president of the Baldwin Locomotive Works. He had striking business instincts and marvelous sagacity, and easily accumulated great wealth. While giving away yearly \$200,000, it is

estimated that he leaves an estate of several millions.

He is survived by a son and four daughters.

Dr. J. Wilbur Chapman, who is at Cardiff, Wales, engaged in an evangelistic campaign, received there a cablegram informing him of the death of his incomparable friend.

## MIRACLES—WHAT AND WHY

IN the just issued April number of the *Harvard Theological Review* the late Borden P. Bowne discourses in characteristically brilliant and conclusive fashion concerning Miracles. The perusal of the article acutely intensifies our conviction that in the departure of this peerless professor we lose one that could least of all be spared when deep questions are under debate. His mental processes were so crystalline, his command of language so complete, his grasp of abstruse profundities so competent, his loyalty to essential truth so perfect, his championship of the evangelical fundamentals so prompt and effective, that each day adds to our grief that he is no longer available for these high purposes. But "he being dead yet speaketh." Or, rather, though he has gone on to live in some larger sphere, his burning, brainy words abide with us, a priceless and changeless memorial that we shall increasingly prize as the years augment.

He does not specifically refer to the discussion which has occupied no little space in public thought of late because of the startling utterances of a prominent preacher; but the truths he enunciates and the distinctions he formulates cast much light on the vexing problem. He leaves us in no doubt as to his position, nor is he himself in any doubt as to the reality of miracle, its meaning, and its important place in God's scheme. Only he would have us discriminate between the miraculous and the supernatural, would have us remember that "signs and wonders are only means to an end in any case." The end is the salvation of men, the bringing of rest to the weary, the helping of humanity to find God and do His will. The subject should be dealt with, he says, "from the Christian point of view and the central Christian conceptions. One who holds the central, the supreme, the stupendous miracle of the incarnation of the Son of God could hardly fail to see that the resurrection and ascension are an integral part of it." "Without the miracle of the resurrection not much of the Christian faith would be left." "Nothing is gained for religion by minimizing its supernatural claims. The just claims of science can be fully recognized without infringing on the equally just claims of faith. There is much of the old rationalistic dogmatism masquerading as science and pursuing its old trade of undermining the higher faiths of humanity, and we must be careful not to aid it by using its specious but treacherous phrases." There is a true science, resulting from the fruitful study of the order of experience, and there is a false science, "the question-begging term of the half-educated and hearsay thinker."

The doctrine of the Divine Immanence properly understood destroys the old, out-

worn deistic philosophy, and solves the main difficulty about miracles. Nature is not something substantial and self-administering, but only the phenomenal form of the divine causality, the continuous product of the invisible energy on which it forever depends. It continually proceeds from the divine will. It is throughout supernatural in its causality. We have "a supernatural natural—that is, a natural which forever roots in the supernatural; and a natural supernatural—that is, a supernatural that proceeds in orderly and uniform ways." Thus, "miracles root no more intimately in the divine will and purpose than the most familiar events." They are a departure from the familiar order so as to indicate to believers a divine presence and meaning, a condescension to human weakness, signs of a divine power which men immersed in sense could not find in the ordinary course of the natural. Men can use the system of general laws for the production of a great variety of effects which the laws left to themselves would never produce. There seems to be no good reason why God cannot work similar effects, working not against general laws, but in accordance with them, for the production of effects which would be as specially willed as though they had been dropped out of the skies by immediate decree. "We may maintain at once the inviolability of law and its subordinate character, so that freedom may manifest itself through the law and not against it; yet in such a way that the results shall be as distinctly an outcome of purpose as they would be if produced by fiat."

As having a supernatural root, in the ever-living, ever-working will of God, all things are miracles; also in the sense that they cannot be deduced in their successive phases from antecedent conditions, but continually proceed from the activity of the Divine. At the same time these things are natural in the sense that an order may be discerned in them on which we can practically depend. "The space and time order are subject to continual irruptions from the invisible world of power." "God himself as the absolute source of all finite being is bound by nothing but His own wisdom and goodness. What they declare, that He does. If they call for uniformity, there is uniformity. If they call for change, there is change. God never acts against nature, because for Him there is no nature to act against." Any such conception "is a pure fiction, a product of unclear thought which has lost itself in dogmatic abstractions." From the standpoint of the Divine there are no "interventions," "interferences," and that sort of thing. There is simply the continual working of the Divine will to realize the Divine purpose.

Miracle in the sense of a manifest departure from experienced law, from the regular observed order or uniformity of procedure, is chiefly useful to call the attention of men to a Divine presence and purpose which they would otherwise miss. In a rational system miracles without moral meaning and religious bearing, a mere showy thaumaturgy, can have no credibility. It is also quite certain that in the early stages of human development, when both knowledge and

religion were very crude, God would be obliged to use signs and wonders in a way not necessary today. His methods now have changed. We are no longer in the kindergarten. "For us the physical miracle is becoming less and less important, and the spiritual miracle of the redeemed and transformed life, redeemed and transformed society, the spread of reason and righteousness on the earth, are the perennial miracles always possible and ever to be insisted upon."

## Dr. Knudson on Dr. Bowne

IT has been impossible for us to publish either the innumerable letters or the extended tributes to Dr. Bowne which have been sent to this office. We have endeavored to do our unique friend full and comprehensive justice, and have given more space to deserved tributes to his memory than to any other person who has died during the twenty-two years of the present editorial management. While we must, therefore, very reluctantly decline to publish more at present, we cannot but make an exception for the communication just received from Prof. A. C. Knudson, one of Dr. Bowne's closest friends and colleagues. It should be stated that Dr. Bowne was present at the lunch which a group of friends gave to Dr. Knudson just before his departure for Europe, and in a brief address which he made he spoke in the most complimentary terms of Dr. Knudson as friend, teacher and Christian philosopher, saying—as if he felt that he was soon to be translated—"If I should vacate my professorship and work for any cause, I am assured that Dr. Knudson could take it up and successfully carry it on." The following is Dr. Knudson's communication, without elimination, written from Berlin, April 24:

"Professor Bowne is gone! Not until April 14 did this sad news reach us. We were then in Paris. It was a dark and dreary day. And since then the clouds for us have not lifted. Boston will not be the same place without him, and Boston University—how is she bereft! Her chief light is gone out.

"Having had the privilege of a rather close acquaintanceship with Professor Bowne, I cannot adequately express my sense of personal loss. While a student in college twenty years ago, his books fascinated me, and called forth an admiration which with the years has deepened into a love and reverence such as one seldom comes to feel towards another of one's kind. Fed in college on pantheistic idealism with its tendency to dissolve away freedom and personality, it came to me with a sense of relief, kindred to conversion itself, when under the tuition of Professor Bowne I came to see that the last word of philosophy was to be found, not there, but in the very opposite direction, viz., in personalism. The importance of insight into this truth, on the part of those who receive our current academic training, cannot be overestimated. I have had some experience as a college teacher in different parts of the country, and it is my conviction that nothing is so sorely needed at the present time in the academic world as the right kind of instruction in philosophy. Either the subject is treated superficially, or it is approached from a wrong point of view and with a defective method. The result in either case is mental confusion, and this in turn leads to religious unrest, and frequently to open skepticism. No teacher of philosophy, so far as I know, so completely met the deepest needs of his time as Professor Bowne. And because

## John H. Converse—Christian Layman

The sudden death of John H. Converse, head of the Baldwin Locomotive Works at Philadelphia, in his seventieth year, removes a man of prominence in the industrial world, but one still more widely and favorably known because of his deep personal interest in religion and in Christian activities, particularly those of evangelistic type. He had stood behind Dr. J. Wilbur Chapman, once his own pastor in Philadelphia during these past years in which he has proclaimed the gospel the world around, and a good share of the expenses connected with these great simultaneous campaigns were met by Mr. Converse. But his benevolent spirit found expression in many other channels. Few men of his means gave so constantly and so gladly out of the large means at his disposal,



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but he gave something more than his dollars, namely, his own personal interest and participation in Christian work, speaking effectively on many platforms and following the details of various Christian undertakings with the same painstaking care which he gave to his own business.

Mr. Converse was honored in the Presbyterian Church, being a trustee of Princeton Seminary and having served as vice-moderator of the Presbyterian General Assembly. He leaves \$200,000 to the boards of that church.

### A Personal Appreciation

BY A. Z. CONRAD, D. D.

Mr. Converse was one of the manliest men I have ever known. He was dignified without austerity, courteous without coldness, sympathetic without being patronizing, humble without affectation, positive without abruptness, ardent yet with judicial temper. As a Christian he was unwavering in his advocacy and support of the great evangelical essentials. His love of Jesus Christ was a passion. He was charitable in judgment, keen in compassion, devout without cant or sanctimoniousness, saintly yet virile, a sincere follower of Jesus Christ.

As a citizen he was interested in public affairs, independent in political judgment and intensely concerned in the movements for social and civic betterment. He stood firm as adamant against bossism and every sort of venality.

He was a model parishioner, unqualifiedly loyal to his church and his pastor, proverbially generous, unfailingly genial, with a longing for the salvation of men. From every standpoint Mr. Converse was a high type of a Christian gentleman and to an extraordinary degree exemplified the teachings of Jesus. He was a fine illustration of a man whom Christ had mastered and therefore himself masterful.