

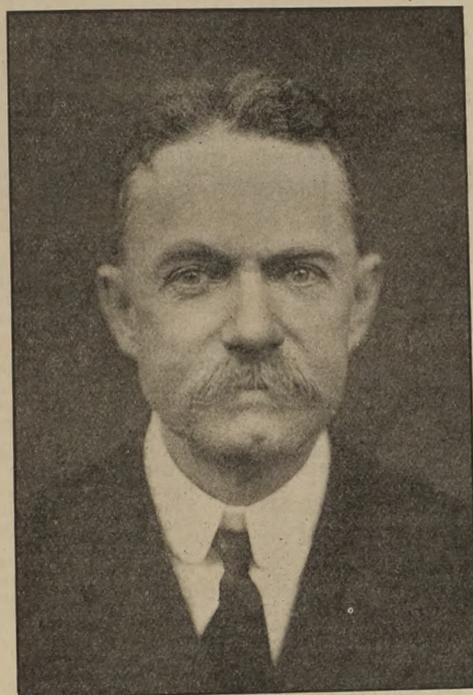
# Christian Observer

## GENERAL ASSEMBLY REPORT.

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NO. 22



Rev. John M. Wells, D. D.  
Moderator of the Assembly of 1917.

do this and no one would seek to do so. "I would be ashamed of my Assembly if we refused to shake the hand extended to us by a sister Assembly." This plan of federation is not something new. No man can read the history of the Presbyterian bodies of this country and not mourn over its divisions. Our Church, while recognizing its distinctive principles, ought yet to manifest the oneness of Christian purpose and spirit that our Master manifested and commends. In this substitute we say that organic union is impracticable, but we say that we believe that there is something better, and that is federation. I hope that this Assembly will adopt the substitute by an almost overwhelming majority, and that there may be a federated union of all Presbyterian Churches which will preserve the autonomy of each Church.

The vote which was then taken on Dr. Whaling's resolution as a substitute for the minority report was: For, 160; against, 20. Dr. Whaling's resolution was thus substituted for the minority report.

Dr. E. R. Leyburn offered the following as a substitute for Dr. Whaling's resolution:

#### SUBSTITUTE OF DR. LEYBURN.

(1) The General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church, U. S., expresses its grateful appreciation of the sentiments voiced in the telegram and assures that body of its cordial good will and fraternal love.

(2) That this Assembly decline to appoint a committee to confer with a similar committee of the Presbyterian Church, U. S. A., on the question of Organic Union.

(3) That the Assembly appoint a committee of conference and invite the Presbyterian Church, U. S. A., and any other Presbyterian bodies which may desire to do so, to confer with us on the question of a Federal Union, with Provincial Assemblies each having complete autonomy, and having undisputed control within its own territory, and looking toward the formation of a quadrennial national or international Assembly with delegated powers.

Dr. Leyburn's substitute was lost by a vote of 125 to 62.

Dr. C. W. Grafton then presented the following substitute for Dr. Whaling's resolution:

#### DR. GRAFTON'S SUBSTITUTE.

(1) We recommend the following answer to the telegram from the General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church, U. S. A., touching the matter of organic union between the Presbyterian Church, U. S. A., and the Presbyterian Church, U. S.

(2) The General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church in the United States in session at Birmingham expresses its thanks to our sister Assembly at Dallas for their warm greetings and our high appreciation of their invitation to enter into conference with them on the subject of union. Sharing with them in the common heritage of our Westminster forefathers and in the sacred traditions of a glorious past we hail them as brethren and extend to them our tender love. But for reasons which are to us good and sufficient we decline to appoint the Committee of Conference on Union.

Dr. Grafton's substitute was lost by a vote of 140 to 39.

The vote then came upon the motion to substitute Dr. Whaling's resolution for the majority report of the special committee.

Before the vote was taken Dr. W. H. Frazer was given the floor to make the closing argument in favor of the majority report. He said that the history of the Southern Presbyterian Church is one of which we may well be proud. He asserted that New York Presbytery had violated the injunctions of the Northern General Assembly in reference to the licensing of candidates for the ministry who deny fundamental doctrines. He said that there is a compact between Union Seminary of New York and the Presbytery of New York for the training of candidates for the ministry. He opposed Dr. Whaling's resolution because, while it says organic union is not practicable, yet it appoints "the committee on union asked for," etc. He said that he could not possibly vote for the substitute, which is unworthy of this Assembly. He then said: "If you pass this substitute, I charge you here and now with open, premeditated insincerity."

There was a solemn pause for a few seconds, when Dr. W. R. Dobyns arose and said that he resented such an imputation and demanded that such a charge be withdrawn, and that the language be ruled out of order.

The moderator ruled that it was out of order.

Dr. Frazer then said he would withdraw the statement, though he still believed it.

Dr. Dobyns objected to this as a reiteration of the charge of insincerity.

The moderator ruled again that Dr. Frazer's statement was out of order and Dr. Frazer then withdrew it and resumed his address.

After Dr. Frazer had concluded his address, he asked the privilege of making a statement, saying: "If I have said anything that reflects on the intent of Dr. Whaling and Dr. Dobyns, I am heartily sorry for it."

Dr. Whaling said he accepted the statement. Dr. Whaling's resolution was adopted as a substitute for the majority report by a vote of 141 to 42.

Rev. W. Hooper Adams moved that the resolution be amended by adding the words "at this time" after the word "practicable." This was carried.

The amended resolution was then declared by vote to be the judgment of the Assembly. The report, amended by the adoption of Dr. Whaling's resolution (also amended) was then adopted as a whole as follows:

#### DR. WHALING'S SUBSTITUTE AS AMENDED AND ADOPTED.

While this Assembly does not regard organic union as practicable at this time, yet it hereby appoints the Committee of Conference on Union asked for by the Assembly of the Presbyterian Church in the United States of America, and recommends to the proposed conference the consideration of the Federation of all the Presbyterian Churches of our country upon some practical and effective basis.

The Assembly then engaged in a devotional service at which time Dr. R. S. Brank preached.

Recess was taken until 2 p. m.

#### THURSDAY AFTERNOON, MAY 24.

The Assembly resumed its session at 2 p. m.

It was ordered that

#### A Conference Committee of Seven on Union and Federation,

of which the moderator shall be the chairman, be appointed by the moderator.

A communication from the Presbyterian Ministers' Fund was received and referred to the Executive Committee on Christian Education and Ministerial Relief.

The report of the Standing Committee on the Bible Cause was taken from the docket, amended by adding the name of Dr. E. R. Leyburn to the Ad Interim Committee, and adopted as follows:

#### BIBLE CAUSE.

##### Report of Standing Committee.

(Abstract.)

The American Bible Society, which is now 101 years old, has, during its history, printed and circulated over 120,000,000 volumes of the Scriptures and is now printing and distributing Scriptures at the rate of over 7,000,000 copies a year, these being printed in over 150 languages, and distributed in all countries of the world.

As the Society sells none of its Bibles for more than the cost of production, and great numbers are either given away or sold below cost, it is evident that the Society must depend chiefly upon the contributions of God's people for its support. Our Church is one of the few which has included the American Bible Society in its budget, apportioning one per cent. of funds contributed for Systematic Beneficence to this work. Last year, however, 1,998 of our 3,383 churches reported no contribution to the Bible Cause. The total amount reported from the churches of our Assembly was \$9,015.

##### Recommendations.

(1) That the General Assembly gratefully recognizes the great work done by the American Bible Society during the 100 years of its history, and cordially indorses it as being the chief agency upon which our Church is dependent for translation and publication of the Scriptures in the different languages of the world. We look upon it as one of our most important missionary agencies for giving the Gospel to the whole world, and as such, urge all our Presbyteries, pastors, and churches to give it their hearty and liberal support.

(2) That the Assembly express its special approval of the great work of distributing the Bible among the millions of soldiers in Europe in their own language, and to the thousands of soldiers being assembled and trained in our own land. In view of the special opportunities and needs among the sol-