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SUMMER CONFERENCE GUIDE

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The Presbyterian
Outlook



Montreat Was His Idea---for Presbyterians . . .

Last fall the Synod of North Carolina adopted a resolution urging Montreat authorities to name the new hotel, now a-building on the site of the old Alba, for Dr. J. R. Howerton. Most people in the church of today will not know the significance of this request, but they should know it and here are a few paragraphs telling why.

So far as Presbyterians are concerned, Dr. Howerton is the father of Montreat. True, he did not begin it, but, again, so far as a Presbyterian founder is concerned, he is it.

Dr. Howerton was pastor of the First church, Charlotte, when people began to talk about summer activities in or near Black Mountain, in western North Carolina. As the stories had it, there were a good many "Northerners" from the different denominations who were congregating there for religious conferences. In 1899 Dr. Howerton took his family to this spot. Then he wrote a letter to *The Presbyterian Standard*, the first of many to come, telling why he was there. He had always looked on the place with amused tolerance at best, until he got there, he said, but really the people were Christian gentlemen and he had heard as good sermons there as in any Southern Presbyterian pulpit. He then gave a glowing account of the scenery and the good living and invited all his readers to try it out (thus setting the pace for thousands of Montreaters who were to follow enthusiastically in his train).

It was not long until Dr. Howerton talked Montreat everywhere he went, enlisting the support of others in a project then simmering in his mind. Others thought the Blowing Rock section or some other would

be better, but Dr. Howerton liked the friendly little valley and he thought it could be bought without too much trouble. It would be of inestimable value to the church's cause secretaries in promoting the church's program, and then he thought it would be a fine thing for Presbyterian families to have cottages there so they



J. H. HOWERTON

Amused tolerance became enthusiasm

and their children could meet each other and mingle with people of like minds.

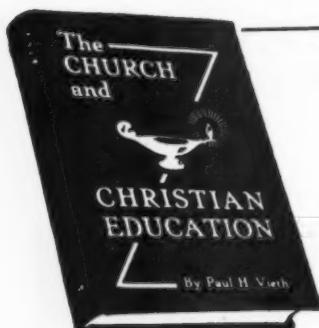
By the fall of 1905 he had secured the backing of his synod; in 1906 the plan was advertised throughout the church, and finally Mr. John S. Huyler, the candy manu-

facturer, sold Montreat for \$50,000 (later forgiving a debt of \$24,000 of the selling price). In 1906 Dr. Howerton left the Charlotte church and gave his time to developing his grand idea which was to grow through the years in a perfectly amazing manner. The first Montreat conference of the Southern Presbyterian Church was in the summer of 1907 when an elaborate program was presented. Then with the work well under way, Dr. Howerton bade it godspeed as he took up his new post as professor of philosophy at Washington and Lee University.

He is the man, then, who saw what Presbyterians could do and who backed his vision to see it win its day. In that plan he saw the development of a girls' school and a boys' school on those grounds. In it he saw far-reaching influences stretching out in all directions for the Kingdom of God. And, being a very practical sort of man, he saw what must surely come in the way of untold hundreds of personal relationships as in the short romance, reported in the official Montreat bulletin of 1907. A young couple attending that year's conference, thrilled by the conference, and not altogether unmindful of each other, said (girl to boy): "Just think, Reginald, how much the church owes to Dr. Howerton, for Montreat was his idea entirely."

In many ways since that time, countless others, if they had known of Dr. Howerton's pioneering vision and sacrificial efforts, would have joined with their praise, for, so far as Presbyterians are concerned, he is Montreat's father.

(Based upon research by Miss Madeline Orr, Charlotte, N. C.)



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Let us give thanks to God for the fine evangelistic, and educational work accomplished through the summer camp and conference. Let us pay tribute to the thousands of ministers and lay workers who have given unselfishly of their time to lead our youth in the way of Christ. Let us also look back over the fine record of our church, and resolve to move forward in this great work to the end that more young people may come under the Christian influence of summer conferences.