

The Central Messenger

ISSUED MONTHLY

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A POSTAGE STAMP A WEEK.

It is said that a postage stamp a week to the work of the kingdom of God from each member of our churches would double the contributions of the Baptists of North Carolina to this work! Of course, many give much more than that already, but there are so many who do absolutely nothing. Suppose we institute a campaign among the churches of the Central Association to get every member to give at least a postage stamp a week to Missions. Is there one who cannot do this? Is there one who is not willing to do this much for the spread of the Kingdom of God? Let us try it for one year and see how it works.

THAT REPORT ON THE CONDITION OF THE CHURCHES.

We hope that every reader of the Messenger will read with thought and prayer Prof. Terrell's report on the condition of the churches. We believe our people are being put to the test today as never before in our history. We have stood the poverty of reconstruction days and after, and have come through it all richer and stronger, in character and life. Can we now stand in the day of our prosperity loyal to the same Lord and Saviour who has brought us to our present success? This report gives cause for anxiety at this point. Let us betake ourselves to our knees and then to a new consecration to the service of Him who gave himself for us.

THE YEAR AHEAD OF US.

In the programme of our Union meeting to be held at Wake Union the last of the month it will be seen that the discussions for Saturday afternoon are to be grouped around the question of the coming year with our churches. Are we satisfied with our present attainments in Christian character? Are we content with our present degree of efficiency in the work of the Kingdom? Can we sit still in comfort while hundreds of our people are drifting down the broad road toward destruction? We hope the churches will send up some of their best men and women to the Union meeting, and that when they come together they will address themselves with all seriousness and earnestness to these questions. We believe the Central Association should take a square, honest look at itself—its resources, its opportunities, its needs and address itself with all seriousness to the matter of improvement.

Let us begin to pray more earnestly, to give with greater liberality and cheerfulness, and to put our hearts into the work of the Association.

STATE MISSIONS.

October and November are the months in which the churches are expected to do their best for State Missions. This object ought to appeal to every patriotic soul, whether he be a Christian or not. To do what we can to keep the spirit of Christ amongst our people, and to build them up in the principles of the gospel, is a task that should challenge the very best devotion of all our people. When we

think further of the thousands and hundreds of thousands of lost ones among us, here is another task that would certainly appeal strongly to Jesus or to Paul. Can we claim to have the spirit of Christ and remain indifferent on the great question of leading the lost to the Saviour? When we think, moreover, that the work of State Missions lies at the basis of all other mission work, Home and Foreign, we can see at once that if the foundations of the Kingdom of God are to be maintained we must be loyal to the work of State Missions.

What then are we to do? There are several things that each one of us may do and ought to do. (1) We should take this part of the work of the kingdom to God in prayer. Jesus taught his people to pray, "Thy kingdom come!" When we pray for State Missions we are praying for the coming of the kingdom in North Carolina. (2) We should speak a good word for this work. It is so easy to talk a thing up or down. If we would cultivate the habit of speaking a good word for the work of Jesus on all occasions, in season and out of season, it would count greatly for his glory and for the building up of his cause. It would also make us happier in our lives and more helpful to people generally. Let us try it. (3) We should make a sacrifice for the work, unless somebody does this we shall be compelled to go to the Convention at Winston-Salem with a debt on our State Mission Board. Who is to make the sacrifice? Do you think the Saviour would have you bear some of it? Let each one of us make a contribution to State Missions during the next month, and make a contribution that will mean a sacrifice for the cause of Christ and all will be well.

THE CENTRAL ASSOCIATION.

The last session of the Central Association was held with the Youngsville Baptist Church. It was an interesting meeting. Before organization, Secretary Livingston Johnson gave a telling address on State Missions, the officers of the body being delayed in arriving. The Association convened on Wednesday, September 27, 11 a. m. The same officers were re-elected. The Central would hardly know what to do with itself without Moderator Ray and Clerk Brewer.

All the objects of the Convention were discussed. The Home Mission report was read by Brother R. B. White; his speech was pointed sharp as a needle. Secretary E. L. Middleton struck the spot on Sunday Schools in his own overwhelming way. The address of Dr. T. W. O'Kelly on Ministerial Education was unique and effective.

The report on the Biblical Recorder, written by Dr. W. R. Cullom, was the best paper we have heard read on that subject; Dr. W. L. Poteat excelled himself in an address on the subject. His arraignment of the daily press was withering; his words had the force of self-evidence. None who heard that message will forget it. The report on Temperance brought forth a shower of speeches as usual; that subject always lifts the flood-gates of eloquence in a Baptist meeting.

There was a minor key running through the whole Association; there was a falling off in the number of Baptisms among the churches this year. There was also an apparent drop in the contributions of the Association; this however was likely only apparent, we know of some amounts not reported in church letters. But the decrease in the number of baptisms is a bad omen. It is sympto-

matic of low spiritual temperature. Many were distressed over it. There was intense feeling on this point the last day of the session; it showed itself in prayer.

The question of grouping our churches into more convenient fields came up incidentally. This matter will keep bobbing up among Baptists till our churches are more efficient in the Master's work. It is the most acute need of our country churches. We are going to sag in our work for the salvation of the world till there is found a method of gathering our churches closer together in fields, so that pastors can work among their people more effectively. It is the conviction of this writer that there is no hope of doing this grouping of churches into compact pastorates with four churches on a field; we must intensify our cultivation of the churches so that two of them will support a pastor. They can be brought to this with the right kind of leadership. This is the only hope. It would take a man mightier than Napoleon to keep four, or even three, independent Baptist churches in line more than a year at a time.

It was the first time Dr. T. W. O'Kelly ever attended our Association. He is a great addition to our forces. The Association congratulates the First Church, Raleigh, upon its achievement in bringing him to our midst. Brother Jno. F. Mitchiner, of Winston-Salem, was with us. The Association was meeting in his old home. He is temporarily retired from work for his health. May God soon restore him to his former activity in the affairs of the Kingdom.

The attendance was good for two days; but the third day it seemed that the bottom had dropped out, the crowd was gone. There was strong discussion of cutting the sessions down to two days hereafter. The Association came in an ace of doing it on the last day. But the question was finally left over for another year, being referred to a committee for a recommendation of some kind at the next session.

The entertainment of the Association by the Youngsville people was cordial, informal, unique, plentiful. Pastor Harrill's address of welcome was short; just an invitation to dinner on the grounds; he says he has never been so complimented on any address that he ever delivered anywhere. The next session of the Association will be held Wednesday after the fourth Sunday in September, 1912, at New Bethel Church. Let us be getting ready for the greatest Association in our history; if we begin the preparation right now all over the Association, we shall be happy in the result; God will be glorified.

The Central Messenger was sustained in the Association. The Committee are encouraged to go on with its publication. We count on the co-operation of the churches and the pastors in making the little paper capable of doing its work among us. Send us the news from your church and community. Give us the necessary financial support. We are doing our best to make the undertaking worth while.

The Association is not over. One of its sessions has adjourned. There will soon be another. But while the Association is not in session the real work of the Central is done. Let us then be up and doing all the time.

W. N. J.

REPORT ON THE CONDITION OF THE CHURCHES.

The characteristic of the religion of Christ is the spirit of self-sacrifice—the rendering of great service for the

good of others. From the statistics of our efficient Clerk it appears that during the year past the churches have fallen off in their contributions to State Missions \$65.97, to Foreign Missions \$166.06, Sunday School Missions \$29.24, Orphanage \$35.19, Ministerial Relief \$30.85. There have been 62 less in number of baptisms.

There has been a gain of \$46.86 for Home Missions, and a gain of \$247.00 for Education. In membership we have made a gain of only 8. There has been a gain of 96 in our membership in the Sunday Schools.

In the total contributions for the year there has been a gain of \$4,796.26 over the contributions for last year. But, you see that we have spent more on ourselves than for others.

Your Committee feel that while many of our churches have done well, as a whole the Association has not measured up to its splendid opportunities. The past year for material prosperity has been the best yet, still we have not contributed to the spread of the gospel so generously as formerly.

May our churches for the coming year catch the spirit of Jesus in true self-sacrifice and real service in our communities, and next year a great forward step will be taken.

W. J. FERRELL,
For Committee.

OUR NEXT UNION MEETING.

Our next Union meeting will be held with the church at Wake Union on Saturday and Sunday, October 28-29. This is one of the old churches of the Association which has been drawn upon to build other churches until the old mother has been made to feel keenly the drain upon her resources. Under the vigorous leadership of pastor E. F. Sullivan she is taking on new life and invites the Union to come and give her a word of encouragement, while she promises in turn to do her best to give the delegates and visitors a good time, and to send them home strengthened and helped for the work of the Master. Following is the program:

Saturday, October 28.

11:00 o'clock—Wake Union Church.
(1) Reminiscences of the past. Brethren Dick Holland, George Davis, Geo. Wall, Dick Griffin and others. (2) Its present Work and Prospects.—E. T. Sullivan.

1:30 o'clock—The year ahead of us in the Central Association.

(1) In the matter of collections, W. J. Ferrell.

(2) In the matter of Soul-winning, T. W. O'Kelly.

(3) In the matter of Spiritual Growth, G. P. Harrill.

Sunday, October 29.

10:00 o'clock—The Sunday School.
(1) The lesson of the Day, E. W. Sikes.

(2) Music in the Sunday School, J. D. Boushall.

(3) Shall we have an Institute during the year? J. Henry Highsmith.

11:30 o'clock—Sermon, W. N. Johnson.

1:30 o'clock—Our Schools and Colleges.

(1) What have they done for the Denomination? N. Y. Gulley.

(2) What Ought the Denomination do for them? R. B. White.

The brother whose name appears with each subject is expected to open the discussion. It is hoped that many brethren will come prepared to make speeches on whatever subject may appeal to them most.

The Moderator will also make place for any miscellaneous matters that may claim attention. Let all the churches send delegates.