

The Atlantic Messenger.

EDITOR:

HIGHT C. MOORE, New Bern, N. C.

A monthly Baptist newspaper started in May, 1899, as the organ of the Atlantic Association; twice enlarged and improved within a year; in January, 1902, its field was so extended as to embrace the "Baptist Destitute" of about twenty counties in Eastern North Carolina, the territory lying mainly in the bounds of the Atlantic, Neuse, Wilmington, and Tar River Associations.

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THE NINETEENTH SESSION OF THE ATLANTIC ASSOCIATION.

The Atlantic Association met in its nineteenth annual session with our church at Bayboro on Wednesday morning September 17th, 1902. In the absence of all the former officers of the body, a new election was necessary. To the positions of Moderator and Clerk Revs. A. W. Setzer and Hight C. Moore were elected respectively, and Bro. M. S. Webb was elected Treasurer.

The churches are few, feeble and widely scattered, but our representation was by no means what it might and should have been. Of twenty-two churches, two were represented by letter alone, five others were represented only by their pastors, while six (think of it!) were not represented either by letter or messenger. And, aside from the eight ordained ministers present, only sixteen delegates were enrolled. We can easily do much better than this, and should never allow our annual meeting to be again so thinly attended.

There are fourteen ordained ministers either resident or at work somewhere in our Association. This looks more promising than for years. Our churches are scattered over four counties (one church is in another) covering an area of 2,500 square miles and containing a white population of about 33,000. Our little band of about 1,500 members has plenty of room in which to exercise itself.

We have two churches less than a year ago, Moore's Chapel having re-united with the mother church at Morehead City and Maysville having gone with the remainder of the Jones county field to the Neuse Association. At this session one new church was admitted: Spring Hill in Onslow county, recently organized with eight members by brethren King and Olive.

Brethren Butler and McLeod were the two new pastors present at this session. Both received the hand of hearty welcome and contributed much to the interest of the session. Much to his own regret and that of the brotherhood, Bro. Hobbs, of Swansboro, was unable to be present on account of the critical illness of his wife. Visitors also were "few and far between," but those who were with us were of real service and were gladly heard. Rev. W. F. Fry, once the popular pastor of our Pamlico field, was present as the representative of the Baptist Female University of Raleigh, and his work was much better done than the financial returns would indicate. Rev. J. W. Cobb spoke for the *Biblical Recorder* (which by the way, was started as such in our Association) and placed on his subscription list the names of several of our choicest workers. Rev. John E. King, of Wilmington, who has done such good work in Jones and Onslow counties re-

cently was also present and was heard with pleasure.

The various reports were made on the objects of our benevolence and lines of work, and discussed with unusual interest, we should say, considering the smallness of the crowds. The introductory sermon by Rev. A. A. Butler on "The Church the Pillar and Ground of Truth," was earnestly given and well received. The discussion of State Missions, including the reports of the missionaries in our territory, brought the session to the highest point of interest. The closing meeting with its discussion of the Orphanage by Bro. Whitty and of the Atlantic Institute by Principal Setzer, was also very profitable. Both these subjects lie very close to the hearts of our people. It may be said here that our churches are most earnestly requested to make a generous contribution this month (October) to Atlantic Institute. The funds are needed and the brethren are more able to give just now than they will be later.

Three collections of about five dollars each were taken for the building of Aurora church, the Baptist Female University, and the Thomasville Orphanage. The churches sent to the Association \$153.48 as reported through the Finance Committee.

During the past associational year our churches have made a total contribution of \$6,690.50. Of this amount \$2,765.20 is credited to pastor's salaries. The two objects receiving the largest contributions were the Orphanage with \$302.77 and State Missions with \$283.45.

The table of Church Statistics shows that two churches are pastorless and four houseless. The property of our churches is estimated at \$40,365 and our houses of worship will seat 5,859 people. Last year there were 44 baptisms in the Association, the total accessions running up to 86; but the total loss amounted to 55, leaving a net gain in membership of 25 for the entire Association. The total membership is 1,497.

Sunday School statistics are not very numerous in the Atlantic. Thirteen of our churches have no Sunday schools at all. The ten Sunday Schools reporting, have 91 officers and teachers, an enrollment of 764, an average attendance of 501, and they report a total contribution of \$642.22. We truly hope all our churches will give more heed to the Sunday School work.

As to our work as financially outlined for the coming Associational year, we have planned to raise for the various benevolences the sum of \$1,179.50. The largest pledge of any one church is \$448. The largest pledge to any object is for the Orphanage—\$348.50. We ought to give more—much more than the \$315 we have pledged to State Missions; we expect twice that amount to be given to our field by the State Board. The work of Colportage was presented and while the messengers were not instructed in regard to this, yet \$62.50 was pledged; we hope it will run much above that figure. Let us make the pledges which will appear in the minutes our minimum offerings for the various objects.

The recent session was devoted strictly to business. There was little time wasted. Bro. Setzer presides with dignity and grace and carries forward the work with ease and dispatch. The people of Bayboro, irrespective of denominational lines, accorded to the Association a generous hospitality and an attentive hearing.

The editor of this paper with Bro. Whitty was most graciously entertained in the homes of brethren Cowell, Rice and Sawyer. The skies also smiled upon us and our visit to our neighboring town was quite agreeable in many ways.

The Association changed its time of meeting back to October—Wednesday morning after the second Sunday. And we are to meet next year with our Piney Grove church near Swansboro, Rev. Needham L. Gaskins to preach the introductory sermon. Let us begin now and make our next meeting the very best in all our history.

A SERMON ON SWEARING.

The habit of swearing is as common as it is degrading. The language of the street, the store, the office, the factory, the highway, is tainted with it and vitiated by it. Boys and men, who claim to be self-respecting and who move in the best society as gentlemen, are often guilty of the very ungentlemanly vice of swearing.

Profanity is the impious use of the name of God. In a moment of rage or recklessness the unbridled tongue ejects a bold and bitter oath, sometimes in venomous invocation and sometimes in blasphemous irreverence. What person, upon a moment's thought, can harbor such a spirit, belching forth the poisonous hate of a polluted heart upon the head of associate and fellow-man? Yet it is lamentably true that in the make-up of many men there are reservoirs of oaths issuing in frequent and blighting streams.

Again, there are many non-swearers who have the fault of repeating profane conversation and emphasizing the oath used. This is little better than original swearing. Is there nothing else to repeat but careless oaths and abusive profanity? Where are godly men and women that we should stop with eyes and ears and mouth open to catch and retain and nuzzle the silly yarns of the contemptible swearer? Where are Shakespeare and Milton and Longfellow and Father Ryan—volumes sparkling with gems of golden truth—that any man should parade the streets in search of the execrable wretch who takes the name of God in vain? Where is the Bible, with truth in every line and love in every verse and Christ in every page, that we should never repeat its sublime passages, but fondle and hoard and cherish as sweet spices the profane utterances of the foul-mouthed swearer?

Further, there is no valid defence to be made for the unthoughtful by-word which is profanity's twin-brother. The English language, with its rich vocabulary and endless varieties of expression, is insufficient for some men to give their ideas to the world in a polite manner. By-words are called in to enhance the value of weak sayings and support flimsy assertions; but they are defeated in their very object, for, while intended for emphasis, they indicate weakness of statements. They also lead to unmistakable profanity. The user of by-words will after awhile become the user of oaths. The meanest thief that ever stole his thousands began by taking pennies. The basest assassin that ever drew a dagger began his career in trivial misdemeanors. So the foulest blackguard and the profanest human brute that ever strode the earth began their lives of mischief with jesting by-words and petty vulgarities. Behold

the vicious end and beware of the insidious beginnings!

What then, may be said of swearing?

1. It is totally useless. Listen to Herbert:

"Lust and wine plead pleasure, avarice, gain; But the cheap swearer through his open sluice Lets his soul run for naught."

2. It is shamefully indecent. The organ of profane utterance deserves to be washed in concentrated lye. Chapin has this to say: "Profanity is a brutal vice. He who indulges in it is no gentleman—I care not what his stamp may be in society, I care not what clothes he wears or what culture he boasts. Despite all his refinement, the light and habitual taking of God's name betrays a coarse nature and a brutal will."

3. It is intensely degrading. The oath is intimately connected with the blackest iniquities known to man. Hence its use lowers self-respect and leads to baser vices which brutalize and dehumanize the unwary victim.

4. It is flagrantly unchristian. The swearer openly violates the laws of God, crushing afresh the Sinaitic tablet and disobeying the Great Teacher of the Twelve.

May the time soon be at hand when the oath shall be met with a frown and the sin of swearing fall into universal disuse!

LETTER FROM WILMINGTON.

Rev. C. B. Paul, Wilmington.

DEAR BRO. MOORE:—When I left Onslow I thought I should be sure to give an account of myself and my work each month through the MESSENGER, but I missed the first month and that made it easier to miss the second and so on until, like all other neglected duties, it is a hard matter to get at it again. Well, I like my people and I hope they like me. South Side is a country church in a city. I mean by that that many of her members, came from the country and brought with them that love and reverence for that "old time religion" that is so characteristic of country churches, and those of them who were brought up in the city are firm in their determination to stick close to the old landmarks. We have no such thing as a church fair or festival to raise money for the Lord because we believe there is a better way. We believe that it is more blessed to give than to receive and we want the blessing. I doubt very much whether there is another city in North Carolina where there is such union among Baptist churches as Wilmington, and this union and harmony is by no means, as we sometimes say, an indication that we are doing nothing. Brooklyn on the north has just placed an order for an entirely new outfit of seats. The First Church in the centre has begun this year's work on a basis of several hundred dollars more than last and South Side on the south has just begun the erection of a Sunday School room for the infant class which will add greatly to our equipment for Sunday school work.

Besides the work that is being done here in the city, Bro. J. W. Wheeler is forging ahead at Delgado Mills and surrounding country. I am now helping him in a meeting that we trust will result in much good.

A few weeks ago I went down to my old field in Onslow to help Bro. Hobbs in a meeting at Enon Chapel. Bro. Hobbs could not be with us during the meeting on account of his sick wife, who a few

days ago crossed over the river. May our Heavenly Father comfort him in his sad bereavement. We had a gracious meeting, seven-teen additions to the church and among them Bro. Isaac Henderson of Hubert, whom we believe will advance our cause in Eastern Onslow county. What a gracious privilege it is to visit our old field and mingle again with the brothers and sisters who stood by us so nobly when our untrained hands first unfolded the banner of Jesus. Yes, I shall always love Onslow county.

I must not make my first letter too long, so I will close with a word of advice to the brethren. Let us be sure that we practice ourselves what we preach to our churches. If a brother should trespass against us, let us go to him personally and tell him his fault between him and us alone before we proceed to administer a drastic dose, which while it may gratify the flesh will surely injure the Cause.

MOREHEAD CITY.

Rev. A. W. Setzer, Morehead City.

DEAR BRO. MOORE:—Perhaps the brethren throughout the Association are as much interested in the Associational school—Atlantic Institute—as any other department of our work here. It gives me not a little pleasure to be able to make such an encouraging report. As has been announced in the MESSENGER, the second session began on the 9th of September, and up to this writing, ninety-five pupils have been enrolled. Were I to delay writing until the beginning of the second month of the school year, I have no doubt but that I could report more than a hundred pupils.

The teachers have entered into their work with earnestness and zeal, and the pupils in general seem to be faithful and diligent in their work. There are many boys and girls throughout the bounds of the Association who ought to be in school in Atlantic Institute. It is your school, brethren, and must live or die as you nourish it or withhold from it sustenance. We need your prayers, your money, and your boys and girls. Give us the former and the other two will quickly follow.

It is to be hoped that the brethren will not forget to take the collections and pledges for our school work authorized by the Association to be taken during the month of October. The need of funds is very pressing just at this time.

We ended the Associational year with all our pledges paid in full. All this is very gratifying but not satisfying. We have not done ALL we might have done. We have not given as largely nor as unselfishly as we should. Let the prayer of every one of us be that the Lord may lay each object of the Convention, nearer, very much nearer, our hearts.

The fourth Sunday in September ended the third year of my pastorate here. They have been busy years, but all that might have been done has not been accomplished. No doubt there have been mistakes not a few, but, with all the imperfections and mistakes, there have been some successes in which pastor and people have rejoiced together. No people ever stood more loyally by their pastor. We begin the fourth year with every assurance of appreciation a pastor could wish. May the fourth count for more in building up the Master's Kingdom than either of the three that have preceded.