

**\*THE OUTLOOK FOR MISSIONS IN THE EASTERN VIRGINIA CHRISTIAN CONFERENCE.**

As our incomplete history will show, the first systematic effort to raise Home Missions funds in the Eastern Va. Christian Conference, was the introduction of the system during the Conference year 1876 - 77, just thirty years ago. To Spring Hill Church the honor is due of heading the movement by action of its Quarterly Conference held February 13, 1876. There was collection under the note plan for the year 1876-77 \$450.00.

As I review the history of the past to base an opinion as to the outlook for the future, I am struck with the fact that our old leaders are rapidly passing away. Death has removed more prominent laymen of the Eastern Va. Christian Conference this year than any year of its history, so far as I have investigated. Time will not permit me to tell of many laymen who have fallen fighting the Christian warfare, nor is it my purpose to deliver even a short oration on those fathers in the church, whom I will mention, but I simply desire to draw a lesson or two from the lives of those leading laymen who have passed over the river this year, with the prayer and hope that we who are left may close in the ranks, be inspired to greater faith and determination to make next year the greatest in the history of this Conference.

When a Sunday School boy at Spring Hill, in Sussex County, I learned to love the names of Deacons John T. Harris, I. W. Duck, W. H. Gay, and P. H. Lee. Each would be the subject of an address, but I can only pause a moment to drop one rose upon their graves.

I loved these men not because they were great soldiers like Napoleon and Washington, not because they were statesmen like Jefferson and Lincoln, not because they were leaders in finance like Vanderbilt and Morgan, not because they were preachers like Paul, not because they were educated leaders like Moses, but because of their Christian character and usefulness in the church of God. They resembled the great leader Caleb, in being selfmade men, in their neverfailing faith in God, strength in old age and desire for the inheritance, which is promised to all who are faithful to the end.

When I first knew John T. Harris, he was a coworker with my father at Spring Hill and later one of the founders of Waverly Church. As I saw him bring his family twelve miles through rain or snow, sunshine or storm regularly to Sunday school, it impressed me with the man's devotion to duty, faith in God, obedience to the commandments, and loyalty to his church. While not blessed with an over-abundance of worldly goods, he was full of spiritual power. As an exhorter he was fluent, inspiring, and filled with the Holy Ghost; as an extemporaneous prayer maker, he had no equal among the laymen of our Church. When life's race was ended, he could exclaim with the Apostle Paul.

"I have fought a good fight, I have finished my course, I have kept the faith; henceforth there is laid up for me a crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous Judge shall give me at that day; and not to me only, but unto all them that love his appearing."

I. W. Duck was not known so well to me, but by his kindness to young ministers, he was called "Father Duck". The man who gives encouragement and support to the young ministerial students is laying up for himself treasures in Heaven he cannot estimate. He was strong in the support of his local church, Mt. Carmel. Being the most prominent and influential man of his community, his life, which was extended beyond four score years and ten, stood for God and humanity, and his influence will live long after his marble shaft has crumbled into dust.

"Write upon wood and it will soon decay, Write upon marble and it crumbles into dust, Write upon brass and it corrodes away; But write upon the immortal mind of childhood, And it will live and glow throughout the eternal ages."

Deacon W. H. Gay was another type of a Christian. While he was the pioneer in the lumber business in Eastern Virginia, which added untold wealth to her resources, when I formed his personal acquaintances, he had retired from active business. As I review

his Christian life, he was noted for his simple childlike faith, implicit trust in the Word of God, strong convictions against intemperance, Sabbath desecration, and the other common sins that are retarding the spread of the Gospel, and the courage to express his opinions. He took no stock in the new theology, he loved the weekly prayer meeting and frequently took a part in its exercises. It was a pleasure of his life to attend the annual sessions of this body and stay till the close.

"Servant of God, well done!  
Rest from thy loved employ;  
The battle fought, the victory won,  
Enter thy Master's joy."

Capt. P. H. Lee was not only true to the interests of the local church, but he was loyal to the various enterprises of the denomination. He did not support one or two interests of our church, but all. God had blessed him with this world's goods, but unlike many, he seemed to realize that he held his wealth in trust. He was a Christian philanthropist, and will go down in our history as the first laymen in the south to be worth as much as one thousand dollars (to Elon College, which he has so much loved, and to which he had given larger gifts than any member of the Southern Christian Convention.

While not an old man, our church sustained an irreparable loss in the death of Deacon A. M. Eley. It was said of the late Henry W. Grady, of Georgia, that he accomplished more for the new south at 35, he having died at the zenith of his glory, than if he had lived 75 or 80 years. So it might be said of this younger deacon, that in the sphere in which he worked, he did as much for his church in fifty years as many fathers in the church do in eighty. Being of unlimited energy and strong faith, he seldom became discouraged. While loyal to every enterprise of the church, he caught the spirit of Missions which is the spirit of the Gospel. While giving credit to all, I feel safe in saying that he was the moving spirit in the Norfolk church in assisting the pastor in the great annual collection for Foreign Missions, which not only encouraged our Mission Board, but had a silent influence on the churches of other denominations in Norfolk. His last work was trying to help in the establishment of a Christian Church in Park Place, Norfolk.

"God's workers die, but the work goes on."

At the annual session of this body held at Cypress Chapel in 1892, I said in part: "Do you know that the boundaries of this Conference are about same as when Rice Haggard suggested the name Christian to the exclusion of all sectarian and party names? Do you know that beginning with 1000 members in the days of O'Kelley, we, in the south, have not increased much faster, if any, than the population? Do you know that for the last five years, the American Christian Convention has only averaged \$15,000. per annum for home and Foreign Missions? Think of the entire Christian denomination averaging per year 16 cents per member for Home and Foreign Missions. \$1.00 per member per year for Missions is a small average and until our church reaches that standard, we will stay behind the times."

As progress in government and science is slow, so progress in morals and religion is slow and we must not become discouraged. While we have not accomplished as much as we should, we have cause for rejoicing, when we compare the results at the end of this Conference with those of 25 years ago.

Putting our membership at 5500, we are not far from the day when our annual contributions for missions will average \$1.00 per member. What a pace we are setting for other Conferences and what an inspiration to our Mission Board! Our statistics are such that it is impossible to get accurate date of special collections for Home and Foreign Missions, but I feel confident that we reached the \$5000. mark in 1906 and 1907, and will again in 1908. For the benefit of those interested in details, I estimate for 1908 as follows:

Mission through E. V. S. S. C. ....	\$748.
Conference Mission .....	900
Convention Missions .....	750.
Foreign Mission .....	500.
(71 per cent of total apportionment.)	
C. M. A. ....	1000.

Special Foreign Mission collections by churches ..... 1200.

Total ..... \$5048.

The special collections and individual contributions to mission churches by individuals others than members of mission churches, will offset loss of any churches that do not pay conference calls in full.

What of the outlook for the future? There can be no retrogression; we must go forward. Let us aim high, if we miss the mark \$5500. for missions should be our watchword for 1908. Then let it be sounded throughout the length and breadth of the A. C. C. that the Eastern Virginia Conference is leading the way for \$100,000. per annum for missions. If we lead, others will follow. Let us study some of the courses that have put us ahead of other Conferences, and at the same time make suggestions for improvement in the future. Among the causes, I have would name the following:

The introduction of the apportionment plan in all our Conference and Sunday School Convention work, some education along the line of systematic giving as opposed to spasmodic, loyalty to all enterprises and calls of the denominations, a college educated ministry, and our ministers, with few exceptions, giving their entire time to the ministry.

There has been an awaking along missionary lines such as the world has never witnessed before. The laymen's movement to take the world for Christ during the present generation, the men's million dollar offering in the Episcopal Church, the Disciples \$200,000, offering for missions ought to inspire us to give more for Missions, or we will not have full share in the glory of helping to carry the Gospel to every nation.

I want to do my part in the evangelization of the world and don't want to put that responsibility on members of other churches or on other people in my own church. Let us claim for ourselves as much intelligence and as much love for the salvation of human souls as other people; let us accept our share of the responsibility for the salvation of men at home and abroad, let us go forward with faith in God.

Among other things, we need a Ministry giving its entire time to the work, not only in Eastern Virginia Conference, but in every Conference. The various denominations are alarmed that the supply of ministers will not equal the demand, but I believe America's entire ministry with heart and time fully consecrated to the work can save this country without another addition within the next five years. We need a consecrated ministry preaching the Word of God, not theology, not politics, not science.

Our ministry should be better supported financially. The expense of living has increased, the demands upon the ministry are more and more, we pay our laborers more, and common justice, to say nothing of our responsibility as church members, demands better salaries for our ministers.

The laymen should run the finances of the church. It is a reflection on the business capacity of most of the churches of this Conference that the minister should have to waste his time with church finance, but his entire time should be given to the work of the ministry.

We must teach and practice the system as the minimum standard for giving. All the arguments favor it, and there is none against it. When this system becomes the custom with our people, the financial problems of mission work will have been solved.

With finances cared for, the layment must take up the real work of saving men, and specially preventing the destruction of our institutions and religious beliefs by the thousands of immigrants that are constantly landing on our shores. Not only must we give liberally, but we must have a more consecrated laity. Worldliness must be driven out of the churches at all cost. I wish that I could write this in words of old on the walls of every church of every name and order in this great American Union and make its consummation a burden upon the hearts of every member of every church.

If it be true that religion offers something the world can not give, then the more we exemplify in our lives true and undefiled religion, the more we will draw men unto Christ. We must eliminate from our thoughts and homes false standards of greatness.

"To serve with lofty gifts the lawly needs  
Of the poor race for which the God-man died,  
And do it all for love,  
Oh, this is great."

We must take a strong stand against the leading evils of the day, such as intemperance, Sabbath desecration, divorce, and commercial dishonesty, each of which would be a theme for a speech, and the minister who has not the foresight or courage to lead in these fights will impair his usefulness with the progressive laity, if not the entire laity and all outsiders.

We have reached such a period of commercial prosperity in the history of our country, the greed for gain is so great, and the opportunities for misusing positions of trust in large corporations for private gain are so many, it is hard to find the line of demarkation between commercial honesty and commercial dishonesty. We must exemplify the Christ life in our business dealings. The recent investigation of life insurance companies did not reveal a lack of good assets but improper use of trust funds, misconception of the duties of high officials, a lack of regard for the interest of stockholders, much less policy holders. The same is largely true of the railroad investigations. What these large corporations need is a true Christian management with high standards and honesty and there will be no necessity for many of the laws passed by our legislature and Congress regulating these great corporations. For example, with proper officials in charge, no law will be necessary against rebates either by life insurance companies or railroads. I do not wish to obtain notoriety by attacking the richest and also poorest man in America, John D. Rockefeller, but until he reforms the methods of the corporation, of which he is the principal owner, people will doubt his piety, and still debate the question of receiving tainted money from him. What I am contending for is a square deal for every one with whom we have business dealings. Let our transactions be such as to reflect the Christ life and not draw men from the church. Let us never put money above manhood. In dealing with inferior races, whether in the field of business or in our courts, we should mete out justice, and not take advantage of ignorance or prejudice. When church members conduct business by such methods as will meet the approval of our Heavenly Father, then will the world be redeemed for Christ; and until then, some of us will be stumbling blocks in the way that leads to Calvary's Cross.

\*An address delivered before the late session of the Eastern Va. Conference by the Chairman on Home Missions, Col. J. E. West, Suffolk, Va. and published by the request of that body.

**HOLLAND ITEMS**

The 4th Sunday was quite a rainy day, and the congregation was small at our church. The services were edifying and instructive. The song service was especially exhilarative and inspiring. The choir here has been paying much attention to the study and practical part of this very important part of religious service, and the result is, we have an excellent choir. I need not add that the sermon by the pastor, was much enjoyed. I did not attend the night service, as it was quite dark and there was some risk for me, as I might have taken a fall, on account of my dim sightedness and weakness. But learn from those that attended that the congregation was good, and the sermon even better than that of the morning.

One of our merchants is closing up his business here, partially to rearrange and settle finances, that greater success may attend his work afterwards. He is a man capable of doing business successfully and the present arrangement, will no doubt, inspire and strengthen him for greater success.

Mr. Holland, brother of the above named gentleman, and whose home and business are in Georgia has been here several days, settling up business connected with his deceased father's estate. He is a subscriber and interested reader of the Christian Sun.

The stringency in money matters seems greatly to puzzle and dishearten people, generally. The peanut crop, the main moneyed crops here, is so very short, and