

Rev. C. T. BAILEY, Editor. Rev. J. D. HUPHAM, Asst. Editor. W. T. WATERS, D.D., Assoc. Editor.

WEDNESDAY, March 29, 1876

In our examination into the condition of Society and the evils of the day we have been impressed with the want of reverence for, and obedience to the laws. That the civil statutes have ceased to be respected to a very great extent cannot be doubted. There is a widespread and deep disregard of what is now written in the codes. Men in this age have little regard for what is termed law. This is to a great extent a new feature in our history. The time has been when the great rules of conduct prescribed by our congresses and legislatures inspired the respect of the people and received their implicit obedience. To violate the law of the land was not only a crime but a disgrace. Why it is not so now may be easily discovered. Several things in our history have led to a greater or less extent to this sad change.

Among the first of these causes we must mention the virtual suspension of the civil code during the late war. The military law was in force in all sections of our country, and in all departments of life and business. The suspension of the laws for the four long years accustomed the people to their absence, and led to habits incompatible with them. New and more exciting methods of dealing man with man, and more rapid methods of acquiring property were instituted. The slow processes of law were rejected and despised. This was more literally true and more generally in force in the successful section, though it had its effect all over the land.

In addition to these military methods of thought and business, we have the next most direct and potent means of sapping the foundations of respect and reverence—that is, the frequent and fundamental changes that were made in the law. Human nature naturally respects that which is of long standing and permanent while it at the same time as naturally contemns the creations of a day and that which may easily perish to-morrow. Rules of men must ever have regard to this element of man's nature. Such laws, customs and institutions as are found in full operation in our early years, and under which we grow to maturity, we will not willingly change—unless they are exceedingly oppressive—or will we systematically violate them. But when that which is law to-day may not be law to-morrow, or if law may be easily evaded or despised, then there is no controlling the vicious or the ill disposed. Personal aims and selfish devices take the place of law, or become the law of the immoral and the wicked. We see this in the violent outbreaks of the depraved passions of the human heart in every section of our country. Much of this incoherence for the law originated in the many changes in the law of the land, both national and State. Amendment after amendment to the country till the people lost all respect for the original instruments as well as the amendments made to them. Every legislature felt under obligation to work hard on the State statutes and amend, re-amend, amend and re-amend till they themselves lost sight of the true meaning of the law and the people turned in disgust from it as from a problem that had but an indefinite answer and was of no practical importance. In their utter inability to learn what was law and what not law, what it was in force and what amended or antiquated, they have concluded to do as they are inclined and take the chances. In this they are to be pitied, for even after a man has spent years in mental training and then years in patient research amid the tomes of dusty volumes of State statutes and constitutional amendments no two men can reach the same conclusion as to what is law and what is not law in any given case. That is, if we are to be the advocates of the bar on the day of trial. The people see this, and are led to inattention to it, and disregard for it as the rule of life and business. We regard the amendment of a law as an unmitigated evil except in such instances as necessity compels.

THE EDUCATION BOARD.

We have received a good many letters from the friends to whom we sent appeals for aid to the Board. Some of those who did well as agents in their churches last year write sadly of their inability to do anything for us this year. There is a good brother at Selma who gives regularly \$50 a year, and a noble lady who gets up a monthly contribution to the Board. The first money we received for this purpose was \$5 from Mr. Jenkins of Newbern. He is not a member of any church but has promised to give \$5 a year as long as he lives to help educate the young preachers. Wish all the dear friends who promised to do so would help as soon as possible. The Ladies Sewing Society of the First Baptist Church, Raleigh, have raised \$125 for us. We thank them for it, and hope this example will be followed by many of the good women of the State. The Sunday-school of this church within itself supports one young brother.

METHODIST CENTENNIAL.

I am no Methodist, and with my views of truth, never could be one. Some of the doctrines of the Methodist church do not seem to me to be supported by the word of God, and its polity, wonderfully successful as it has been, is confessedly man-made throughout, and hardly worthy to take the place of that system God has given us in the New Testament for the government of His Kingdom. Certainly, it would take more grace than we have ever enjoyed to be a Methodist preacher. We could never willingly surrender to bishops and presiding elders, the rights of personal liberty, guaranteed to me in the very charter of my creation.

THE PURPOSE OF THE CENTENNIAL.

to celebrate the hundredth year of Methodism in North Carolina. While it is probable that Epiphany Williams, who brought Methodism to Virginia, preached in this State as early as 1773-4, it was not till 1776 that "Carolina Circuit" appears on the minutes, with a membership of six hundred and three traveling preachers. This event, interesting in itself and worthy to be commemorated, it was proposed to utilize for the purpose of erecting a suitable house of worship in Raleigh and relieving their institutions of learning from debt. Twenty-five thousand dollars are needed to build this church, and sixty thousand to pay college debts. The Greensboro Female College owes fifty thousand dollars, five thousand are needed at

Trinity to complete a new building, and Bathford Female College at Lenoir, is also embarrassed by a debt of five thousand dollars. Dr. Craven, President of Trinity College, stated that after paying the debt on the building he wanted fifty thousand more for chemical and philosophical apparatus, and one hundred thousand for an endowment of the college. If there is any man in America who can run a college without an endowment, Dr. B. Craven is that man—he has come nearer doing it than any man we ever knew or heard of, but he stated that his experience taught him that an endowment was an absolute necessity for the permanent efficiency of a college. Upwards of twelve thousand dollars were secured from the people of Raleigh alone towards building the church proposed, and the residue of the money needed for that object, as well as for the relief of the colleges will be apportioned to the districts of the presiding elders, and by the help of Rev. Messrs. Cunningham, Sharpe and other agents, will be realized, we doubt not, during this centennial year. And all this will be but preliminary to taking hold of their colleges and endowing them handsomely. No denomination can invest money more wisely than to put it into institutions of learning.

TOPICS DISCUSSED.

It is said that the honor of originating the movement belongs to the Rev. H. T. Hudson, and Dr. Burkes and his coadjutors worked up the idea admirably well. The principal topics were the Founders of Methodism, by Bishop McTear; The Progress of Methodism, by Bishop Doggett; The Revival History of Methodism, by Bishop Marvin; The Pioneers of Methodism in North Carolina, by Messrs. Robey and Donb; The Early Methodists of Raleigh, by Rev. A. W. Mangum; The Relations of Methodism to Sunday Schools, Bible Societies and Missions, by Rev. Messrs. Yeates and Jenkins; The Relations of Church and State, by Hon. J. N. Staples, and The Itinerant System, by Presiding Elder Black. The speeches of the Bishops were very able and very long, Bishop McTear speaking two hours, Bishop Doggett an hour and three quarters and Bishop Marvin two and a quarter.

THE SPIRIT OF THE MEETING.

Of the lesser dignitaries, our friend Mangum seemed to have made the finest impression, and we respectfully suggest to Trinity, Randolph Macon, or some other college that his effort here entitles him to a doctorate. We were particularly struck with the candid and charitable spirit towards other denominations which distinguished all the speeches we heard; notably those of the bishops present. Of course, there was a good deal of blowing, and not a little glorification of John Wesley and Methodism—the truth is, it was claimed that the Methodists had originated so many good things, the revival system, the Sunday school, the Tract Society, Bible Society, modern missions, &c., &c., that we were really afraid nothing would be left to the honor of the Baptists and other older denominations, and thought it rather fortunate for us that Methodism was so young. Still, we must confess that we have heard fully as much boasting in some Baptist meetings we have attended, and we really felt that, considering the very wonderful progress they have made in the world within the last hundred years, a good deal of self-gratulation was pardonable.

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The projected meeting of this place closed on the 20th inst. Four have made a profession of faith in Christ. The congregations were large and attentive. Many are interested of the subject of baptism. As it is not our privilege to baptize we have to leave the work unfinished. This church is indeed weak and struggling for assistance. They are without a pastor. We have reported the proceedings to the Recorder.

D. BILKARD.

Next in size to the Methodist is the Baptist denomination. According to the Year Book of 1875, which contains the statistics of 1874, two years behind the Methodist Almanac, which is for 1876, the Regular Baptist number in the United States, 21,511 churches, 13,354 ministers, and 1,761,710 members. With other Baptist bodies, the Baptist membership reached the first of last year, 2,335,737. The Presbyterians are next, who number 5,799 ministers, and 613,368 members. The Protestant Episcopal church has 3,140 ministers and 273,082 members. The Roman Catholics have 4,873 priests and claim 6,009,000 members, though they count many who are really in no church and many in Protestant churches. We observe that the main strength of the Methodist church is in the North, while the Baptists are strongest in the South. They have 712,765 members in the South, while the Baptists number 1,253,156. As to church property, the Methodists are in advance of all others. The census of 1870, puts down their property at \$69,854,121; the Baptists \$41,607,198. Episcopal, \$36,514,549; the Presbyterian, \$33,265,156, and the Roman Catholic, \$60,985,566. Not has their progress in the cause of education been less extraordinary. The Wesleyans have 3 theological seminaries, 9 colleges, and 900 day schools. The M. E. Church North has 3 theological seminaries, 27 colleges and universities, and 89 academies and institutes. The M. E. Church South has 2 universities, 17 male and 30 female colleges, with 12 academies—making a total of 1072 institutions of learning under the control of their conference. In looking at these aggregated results of Methodism one is much inclined to agree with our Methodist brethren, who regard John Wesley as the greatest man of his day and the system he projected as the most remarkable religious movement of the world for the past three centuries. Whatever of error may have attached to their system, they have preached saving truth, and we thank God for all the good they have done in the world.

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