

**Raleigh Christian Advocate,**

RALEIGH, N. C., MAY 5, 1886.

Rev. F. L. REID, Editor.

EDITORIAL CONTRIBUTOR:  
REV. W. S. BLACK, D. D.

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REV. F. L. REID,  
Raleigh, N. C.

**The General Conference.**

The Ninth General Conference of the Methodist Episcopal Church, South, convenes in Richmond, Va., to-day, Wednesday. It is a delegated body. It embraces thirty-nine annual conferences, reaching from Maryland to California, embracing a membership of nearly a million. It is composed of 264 members, one half clerical and the other half lay members. It brings together a representative body of men. It numbers among its members most of our leading clergymen and many of our most distinguished laymen. This fact, together with the fact that it is our only legislative body and meets only once in four years, makes its assembling to-day an event of unusual importance in our church.

The General Conference meets under peculiarly gratifying circumstances. The past quadrennium has been the most remarkably successful one in our history. The membership of the church has increased during the quadrennium from 860,717, in 1881, to 990,994, in 1885, an increase of 130,277. Our foreign missionary collections have increased from \$103,000 in 1882 to \$230,000 in 1886, more than doubling in the past four years. The Publishing House, too, runs into the port of this General Conference with flying colors. The Nashville Advocate has nearly doubled its circulation, the other periodicals have grown wonderfully in circulation, a large number of excellent new books have been issued, no new debts have been made, the outfit has been greatly added to and improved, and the old debt has been reduced to such a figure that it is perfectly easy, and will soon be paid. Our Church Extension has succeeded finely, and all our connectional officers come up cheerfully and with good reports. We have great cause for gratitude and thanksgiving to Almighty God for the success that has crowned our labors in every department of work. "Let us come before his presence with thanksgiving and make a joyful noise unto the rock of our salvation."

The work of the General Conference will be to see what changes are necessary in the polity of our church and to provide for them; to review our missionary work for the past four years and to provide for its continuance and increase during the next four years; to review the work of our Bishops and to elect a sufficient number of new ones to meet the demands of our church; to look into the work of all our connectional officers, and to elect such as are necessary for the next four years; to look after our publishing and educational interests, and to provide such legislation as may be necessary for all our varied interests. More interest seems to center about the election of bishops than anything else. This is a very important matter, but we feel confident that, under the guidance of the Spirit, the Conference will find the right men; and that, too, without being misled by or consulting the devices of designing men, the nominations of the secular press, or the tricks of the ecclesiastical demagogue.

The Church will watch the proceedings of the body with peculiar interest. It would be well to pray as well as watch. We congratulate the Church upon the favorable, auspicious circumstances under which this Conference meets, and we cheerfully greet the members of this distinguished body, giving them no better assurance than that the people at home feel perfectly safe with the great interests of the church in their hands.

Mr. GEORGE FENTRESS, now of California, formerly of Raleigh, N. C., spent several days in this city the past week, visiting his father's family here. Bro. Fentress is a delegate to the General Conference in Richmond from California. His old friends here gave him cordial greetings, and are glad to find him in such honorable position in our church.

**Two Codes in Contrast.**

The *code duello* and the Revised Code of North Carolina are in conflict with each other, it seems. By the *code duello* we mean that barbarous custom, which used to be right common, of fighting a duel to vindicate one's honor. In other words the *code duello* says in substance: if one gentleman insults another, they must go off with a couple of friends and, like two great fools, stand up and shoot at each other until one or both are killed, or one is satisfied that the other is a gentleman. This is called "an affair of honor." It would be more correct to say an affair of dishonor. The law of North Carolina very wisely and strongly prohibits such folly. The Revised Code of North Carolina, section 1012, says:

"If any person shall send, accept, or bear a challenge to fight a duel, though no death ensue, he and all such as counsel, aid and abet him shall be guilty of a misdemeanor, and moreover be ineligible to any office of trust, honor or profit in the State, any pardon or reprieve notwithstanding."

Section 1013 of the Code says: "If any person fight a duel in consequence of a challenge sent or received and either of the parties shall be killed, then the survivor, on conviction thereof, or abettors shall be considered accessories before the fact."

The above is suggested by seeing a statement in the papers last week that one gentleman, of Asheville, N. Carolina, had challenged another gentleman, of the same place, to fight a duel because the one had reflected upon the other's honor in discussing the stock law for Buncombe county. Both these gentlemen were members of the last Legislature. The challenged party declined to fight a duel with the other, and in doing so evinced decidedly more courage and good sense than did the man who challenged him.

Now, let the law be enforced. If the Judge and Solicitor of that district perform their duties as sworn officers of the law, they will see to it that challenger and the gentleman who bore his challenge, and all who counselled, aided and abetted him, are properly presented and indicted for this violation of law. If a barefooted negro should go into a store in Asheville and steal a pair of shoes, he would be arrested, bound over to court and in due time sent to the penitentiary, and thus suffer all the penalties for larceny. And this would be proper and right. With equal promptness and propriety should the parties above mentioned be presented and indicted, and then people everywhere will believe that the law is made to be enforced alike against rich and poor, high and low. We shall watch the course of the Solicitor of that district with peculiar interest.

**An Hour With Other Editors.**

The Dan Valley Echo, published at Leaksville, N. C., has been enlarged and deserves a good patronage, which we hope it has.

The Statesville Landmark, we regret to see, is doing all it can against prohibition. The columns of that excellent paper and the talent of its clever editor are worthy of a better cause.

SOME MEN ARE like the dog in the manger—if they cannot succeed themselves they try to keep others from doing so. The Nashville Advocate mildly puts the following bit of advice for their benefit:

"If somebody proposes to promote your brother beyond the measure of his merits or abilities, you need not cooperate; but beware lest you in your recoil from such cooperation, do a worse thing—namely, degrade a good man by your excessive disparagement."

THE STIRRING editor of the Holston Methodist is wide-awake and says what he thinks. He says:

"In matters of legislation we need caution and conservatism; but these are not the only virtues that should be exhibited by a General Conference; we need enterprise. Extremes of radicalism and fogysism should be avoided. A church may change too rapidly, producing in its members a sense of insecurity; if it does not change at all, it dies. The right to think has not passed away with the age of miracles. Men still carry heads on their shoulders; and the fact is *prima facie* evidence that God intends them to use them."

The Biblical Recorder says: "The music in the First Baptist Church, Columbus, Ga., is improved by the addition recently of two or three violins and a flute. What next? This is carrying the theatre into the church with a vengeance. What next? Why, a menagerie and an educated mule of course."

If our Baptist friends do get the menagerie and the mule in their churches, we hope their "close communion" propensities will induce them to keep them "all to themselves."

THE ASSESSMENTS are a source of trouble to many good people. The Florida Christian Advocate touches up all classes in the following pointed paragraph:

"Some brethren are greatly worried over their assessments; they think they

are too large, and starting out with this idea, they expect failure, and are not disappointed. Again, some think their assessments large, but intend to raise them, if possible, and succeed. But once more, there are a number who limit their duty and the liberality of their charges to the giving and collecting of what is assessed. This ought not to be, for it is the duty of every pastor to get all he can for every collection."

WHILST THERE ARE many people who are idling away their time, yet there are many who are killing themselves for want of proper prudence and recreation. The Philadelphia Times says:

"Hundreds of Americans are breaking down under high-pressure application to the duties of the desk in the very prime of their lives, who would live to a green old age if they would display a little common sense in the matter of physical exercise. Secretary Manning is a conspicuous type of hundreds of similar cases which come under the personal observation of nearly every observing person. It is a pity that this class of people do not wake up to the fact that if life is to be worth living, a small portion of it at least must be spent in some kind of invigorating physical exercise."

**Editorial Mention.**

HON. W. M. ROBBINS is to deliver the literary address at Davidson College at the coming commencement.

REV. W. L. CUNNINGHAM, of Person St. Church, Raleigh, was nicely "pounded" by his people recently. He eminently deserves such tokens of appreciation.

REV. T. W. GUTHRIE, P. E. of the Charlotte District, has been sick for a week or so. We regret to hear of his illness and hope he will soon be entirely well again.

REV. E. L. PELL spent last Sabbath in Raleigh en route to visit his mother at Greensboro, N. C. He preached an excellent sermon at Edenton St. Church Sunday night.

THE BALANCE DUE on our new church in Winston, N. C., has been raised and the dedication will soon take place without even a collection. We congratulate all concerned on this happy state of things.

REV. DR. W. S. BLACK and wife and Hon. D. W. Bain and wife left Raleigh last Tuesday to attend the General Conference in Richmond. Rev. Dr. N. H. D. Wilson went on Monday after his Quarterly Meeting at Franklinton. We suppose that our other delegates are there by this time.

MINISTER JARVIS has written a letter home from Brazil, in which he says: "In reference to myself, I am glad to say I am in fine health, and Mrs. Jarvis is much better. We have found the climate, country, and people all we could desire. The Emperor, Empress, and, in fact, all the royal family and Government officers, we have found to be plain, sensible, free from any foolish ostentation, earnest in their efforts for the advancement and prosperity of their country, and always extending a hearty welcome to those entitled to it."

**Death of Rev. W. H. Watkins.**

The Rev. W. H. Watkins, of the N. C. Conference, who has been afflicted with consumption for several years, died in peace at Albemarle, N. C., April 27th, 1886. He was a pure, good man, and we deeply sympathize with his bereaved wife. Rev. P. F. W. Stamey kindly furnishes us the following sketch which makes any further notice of the deceased at our hands unnecessary:

REV. W. H. WATKINS, the subject of this sketch, was born in Richmond Co., N. C., June 25th, 1847, and died at his home in Albemarle, Stanley Co., N. C., at 9 a. m., April 27th, 1886, aged 38 years, 10 mos., and 2 days.

He professed religion and joined the M. E. Church, South, under the ministry of the Rev. Joseph Wheeler, November 15th, 1868—commenced preaching in the year 1873, and was junior preacher that year under Rev. M. V. Sherrill on Lileville circuit. During the fall of 1873 he, together with this writer, and several other members now of the N. C. Conference, all of whom now survive him, joined Conference at Goldsboro, N. C.

His first circuit was Stanley, which he traveled in 1874. In 1875-6, Columbia circuit. In 1877-8, Mt. Olive circuit. In 1879-80, Williamson circuit. The second year of his ministry there he took measles which, in all probability, laid the foundation for the disease which so soon brought an end to his earthly existence. In 1881-2 he traveled Enfield circuit. In 1883 he was stationed at Plymouth, and while there his health gave way in August. He rested about 2 months, and then resumed partial labors again until the close of the year. In 1884, he was sent to the Littleton circuit—his health gave way again after preaching on the first Sabbath in June. He remained in charge however until the close of the year, but employed the Rev. W. W. Rose to do the preaching, but Bro. Watkins went with him to nearly all the appointments superintending the work—making short talks occasionally—praying and instructing penitents, and visiting among the people.

In the fall of 1884, during the session of Conference at Wilmington, he was superannuated, and soon thereafter he

came to Albemarle, where he remained until the day of his death.

Bro. Watkins was a successful preacher. His sermons were sound, logical and impressive. He was a good preacher, a fine pastor, and an untiring worker. He was very successful on all his fields of labor in bringing souls to Christ; and in building and repairing churches and parsonages he had but few equals. He was beloved by the people he served, and many were the messages of love and sympathy he received from them during his sickness.

In the year 1875, Feb. 4th, while he was in charge of the Columbia circuit, he was happily married to her who now mourns her loss, Miss G. P. Hearn of Albemarle. Rev. T. Page Ricard officiating, with whom he lived as a dutiful and affectionate husband, and whom he loved so ardently, and about the last rational expression that fell from his dying lips was, when asked by his wife, "Do you know me?" "Know you? Do you think that I ever could forget you?" But death has separated their short union here, and let us pray that they may live together in the bright climes of the "better world."

As a Christian, Bro. Watkins was a model one. No one can lay aught to his charge. He made both saint and sinner feel, while in his presence, that he was a man of solid piety. During his entire sickness his conversation was of a spiritual nature. He would get almost shouting happy when I would tell him of a good meeting.

The gospel he preached to others sustained him all through his afflictions. He spoke as calmly of his approaching end as one going to sleep. He did not fear, but welcomed death. Of course he desired very much to live to preach the gospel again if it had been God's will, but when he saw he could not live he prayed to die. He often quoted Paul. "For me to live is Christ, but to die is gain." He wished to die just like one going to sleep, and if possible on a beautiful bright morning. The good Lord granted his request. I never saw a more peaceful and easy death.

He died without a struggle; and on a bright and lovely spring morn. While the rays of the morning sun were falling in golden tints upon the green foliage of the trees, and upon the green grass and beautiful flowers, and when the birds were praising the Creator of the universe in chirp and song, he breathed his last. Oh! what a lovely morn was that upon which our dear brother died!

He and I entered the N. C. Conference at the same time, and finished our Conference course together. But little did I think then that in the space of 12 short years I should help to close his eyes in death, and perform the painful service of preaching his funeral, and carrying him to his last resting place.

I felt very much attached to Brother Watkins. I shall miss him! We know his faithful companion and devoted wife, who stood by him and helped him in the great work of saving souls, will miss him. His aged parents will miss him; his friends and relatives will miss him; yes, the church he so faithfully served, and especially those to whom he ministered in holy things in his various fields of labor, will miss him; and poor sinners will miss him too.

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

"Soldier of Christ, well done!  
Praise be thy new employ;  
And while eternal ages run,  
Rest in thy Savior's joy."

P. F. W. STAMEY.

For the Advocate.

**Our Georgia Correspondence.**

**The Conflict of Centuries.**

BY REV. G. G. SMITH.

Dr. Chas. W. Miller was my personal friend. He was a big brained, true hearted, somewhat fight-loving Kentuckian. With no very good early opportunities he had made good use of those he had. He found himself confronted in Kentucky by Campbellism, which is a cheap kind of Rationalism, with Hyper-Calvinism and with Catholic Sacramentalism, and perhaps a phase of Methodism which annoyed him, which we may call, without disrespect, second blessing-ism. In battling with foes as he thought them, he endeavored to go to the bottom, and young as he was, to grapple with the great problems of evil and God. He wrote a book which he only published after he received his death wound. It was called The Conflict of Centuries, an unlucky resemblance to Beecher's "Conflict of Ages." The book was, as we know, sharply reviewed, and few of us forget the pain we felt when the sick man turned so bravely on his reviewer, who was, we thought, as free from any personal feeling as possible. Since then Dr. Anson West has taken the extreme left as Miller had the extreme right. I have not seen West's book, but I read Miller's with great care. I do not agree with him, but I do not purpose to combat his views. I design merely to exhibit them, and I think an exhibit will be sufficient to show that the problem that Leibnitz and Edwards and Biedsoe and Young tried in vain to solve, remains unsolved still.

**THE OBJECT OF THE BOOK**

is to discuss in some three hundred and twelve pages two of the profoundest questions of theology and of religious philosophy. "Sin, its origin, its nature and its effects." The Doctor introduces his book by the somewhat daring figure of one who is about to cleanse a piece of sculpture from all that mars its beauty and present it as it is. This he is to do with the great question of Evil and God.

**THEORIES OF SIN.**

He enters at once in *melius res*. Drawing freely from the mastery work of Julius Miller he presents the different

views of those who have grappled with the subject of Greeks and Orientals as well as the philosophies of modern times. The Greeks explained evil by fatalism. The Orientals by Dualism—the Philosophy of Leibnitz by limitation, the Materialists by sin resultant from appetite and the control of the sensuous nature. Dr. Miller rejects each of these theories.

He then gives a summary of the

**THEOLOGICAL THEORIES.**

These he divides into two classes—Anti-Augustinian, and Augustinian views. The Theological Historians have generally divided the first three centuries of the church into separate eras, but Dr. Miller considers them as if they were all alike. He, however, when he begins to give an account of their views exhibits their diversity. Justin Martyr, he says, asserts that our sins result not from depravity but from evil influences, and so Irenaeus Clement of Alexandria, had different views and thought we were fallen—Oregon that our hearts are burdened by our own, but Tertullian Clement and Jerome that men are born depraved though they are not guilty. I think it would not be difficult to show that while the fathers differed with each other that they all agreed that a child needed regenerating grace. It was not to be expected that in the few pages he devotes to these statements that they should be full and accurate—the views of

**AUGUSTINE**

he states more at length. The teachings of the great Bishops of Heppo are well known. He taught the entire loss through Adam's fall of all that was good from human nature, and he believed not only in corruption but in imputed guilt. The corruption was washed away in baptism, the sin by election. Dr. Miller agrees with Augustine in the fact of the fall, but claims that through Christ the effects of it are done away.—Denying that the corruption of our nature is washed away in baptism, unwilling to admit that it exists, he explains its absence in another way.

He objects to the Augustinian idea of entailed corruption by saying if the nature is corrupt then regeneration did not take place and could not take place. Universal corruption forbids the idea of antecedent regeneration. The views of

**PELAGIUS**

Dr. Miller now presents. He does not agree with Pelagius, but thinks him a wise and good man, and thinks he was nearer right than Augustine. He says Pelagius denied positively that there was any moral corruption and said Adam's sin only injured himself. Men are born without sin or virtue, and can be saved without the gospel. Grace is not needful, nor is baptism.

Dr. Miller objects to the view of Pelagius that there is no moral corruption. He says there is, but that it is engendered by the subject himself after his birth, or descends from his immediate ancestry. Pelagius would himself have disputed that position.

**DR. MILLER'S OWN VIEW.**

Dr. Miller now makes his own statement as to the effect of Adam's sin. Adam's fall brought, he says, death to our bodies, and an enfeebled moral and physical constitution to all. To what extent this moral enfeebling goes he does not say; nor does he give any reasons for this view he holds.

Perhaps the fullest presentation of his real views are given in his statement of three of the Remonstrants, Arminius, Lineborch, and before them of Cassiau. He represents Cassiau, an Eastern monk, as holding the middle way between Pelagius and Augustine. He taught that man's will was free, but grace was needed because the race was universally depraved. The effect of the fall as Cassiau presents it, was that through it man became mortal—that the soul was weakened in its power for good, so that men needed grace, but he does not say for what.

This view Dr. Miller says accords with Scripture and with consciousness. The Doctor now gives us a summary of the creeds. The view of the Lutheran was that of Augustine. So the views of the Reformers as formulated at Concord—so the Hillderburg Catechism. So the Galilee, the Belgian and the Scotch, and the English Confessions, while not distinctively stating it, all these creeds, according to Dr. M., imply that infants are guilty and condemned and may be damned.

**ARMINIUS.**

Arminius, he says, taught that infants were not condemned, and he recognized no moral pollution, sin or guilt in infants, involving condemnation. But he does not give the view of Arminius as to the fact of depravity, or the sinward tendency. If Arminius believed that our depravity results from the hearts engendered by constant transgression, or if he denied the fact of moral corruption at birth, Dr. M. does not say so. He simply presents him as denying the statement that a man is condemned for anything he did not do.

**LINEBORCH.**

He says of Lineborch, after giving his views, that "this statement is full, luminous, and accordant with revelation and reason."

What is the statement? 1. It is admitted there is an inclination to sin, but that this inclination is not sin, until it culminates in positive violation of law—nor is 2. This inclination moral corruption, for children are examples to adults, who must become like little children to enter into the kingdom of heaven.

**MR. WESLEY AND MR. FLETCHER.**

Having fully endorsed Lineborch, who denies that the fall of man had anything to do with the corruption of his nature, Mr. Wesley endorsed this view. As I said in the beginning my purpose is not to controvert Dr. Miller's views, but to state them as fairly as I can, and I shall not enter any discussion as to whether Mr. Wesley is properly repre-

ented or not. The question simply is, How does Dr. Miller represent him? He admits that Mr. Wesley's early writings would deny him a place among such Remonstrants as Lineborch, and alleges that Mr. Wesley changed his views later in life, and produces some extracts from Mr. Wesley's letters to prove this position. The first fact presented to prove this change of views is that in 1758, a year after Mr. Wesley's treatise on Original Sin, which Mr. Wesley pronounces the most elaborate of all Mr. Wesley's works, was written, said: "What is the first part of the new birth? Baptism? It is the outward sign of that inward and spiritual grace, but no part of it at all. It is impossible, it should be. The outward sign is no more a part of the inward grace than the body is a part of the soul." The reader can decide whether or not the evidence that Mr. Wesley changed his views on original sin or not. Here, however, says Dr. Miller, was a radical change in his views, quickly made it is certain, but if made, certainly radical. In 1773, some 15 years after the treatise was written, Mr. Wesley says: "Nothing is sin strictly speaking but a voluntary transgression of a known law of God."

If the doctrine of his book on original sin contradicts this almost axiomatic statement that there can be no guilt, in a transgression of law made, without volition or knowledge, then Mr. Wesley had changed his views.

But Dr. Miller asserts that in the articles of religion published in the prayer book of 1784 Mr. Wesley evidenced that his views were decidedly changed. The 7th article as it is there gives Mr. Wesley's views on the subject of depravity they are certainly not the views which Dr. Miller holds as true, and very few Methodists can find in them anything to object to. Perhaps if Dr. Miller had seen a copy of the original service book brought over by Dr. Coke, a copy of which the Rev. P. A. Peterson has in his library, and which I have examined, he would have seen in the baptismal service, which Mr. Wesley gives, an evidence that though his views on other subjects underwent a change, that not even Augustine himself held more advanced views on the fact of human depravity. The service as we at present have it, is strong enough in its utterances, but it is far stronger than

**FLETCHER.**

His statement that John Fletcher believed that children were born pure from corruption, will be rather new to those who studied Fletcher's appeal to "morality of sense and reflection," in which, by elaborate argument, he endeavors to prove the doctrine of total depravity. Mr. Fletcher he quotes as saying that Christ has the pre-eminence, he brings a general justification, and a universal seed of life; "And if Adam's sin were atoned for and forgiven him, does it not follow that although all infants are by nature children of wrath, yet through the redemption of Christ there are in a state of favor or justification." Quoting these and other extracts from Mr. Fletcher, Dr. Miller says they show that Mr. Fletcher teaches that "Christ as a redeemer, restored to children the status supposed to have been forfeited in Adam, and that to impute that sin to children which they did not commit, would outrage all proper conceptions of Jesus."

It would be with Mr. Fletcher's views, he says, utterly absurd to assume that infants are born into the world with sinful and devilish natures.

**WATSON.**

Richard Watson, he says, taught that infants sustained on earth a vital relation to Christ which, being true, they are not aliens born with a sinful and devilish nature, deserving God's wrath and damnation.

**DR. MILLER'S CONCLUSION.**

The final conclusion to which Dr. Miller arrives is, that for four centuries the church taught that sin was simply transgression of a known law. 2. There was no moral pollution transmitted by Adam. 3. The dogma of infant damnation was unknown. 4. That in the 5th century the view of Augustine were advanced and endorsed. 5. That the doctrines of Augustine were imbedded in the Creeds at the Reformation. 6. That the Bible doctrine, that there is no original sin, was presented and defended in the 15th century by the Arminians. 7. That Mr. Wesley reached the same conclusion after he published his treatise on original sin, and was followed by Fletcher, Watson, Clarke, and others. I have gone over these elaborate chapters to see what are the positions held and defended by Dr. Miller. Some things are clear—others to me somewhat obscure. It is evident in his view—

- 1st. That the guilt of Adam's transgression is not imparted to infants—that infant damnation is false.
- 2nd. That there is no moral pollution in children at birth except what comes from an immediate ancestry.
- 3rd. Infants are born in vital union with Christ, but have a proneness to evil, and though depraved are pure and in favor with God; they forfeit this favor only by actual transmission, and become depraved only by their own conduct.

That Dr. Miller finds support in both sound Scripture and sound reason for several of these positions cannot be denied. If any Arminian has ever disputed them, I never heard of him. I have found none who taught—

1. That the guilt of Adam's sin was ever imputed to an innocent babe because of it that the babe, unless elected to eternal life, was damned.
2. That there is no moral pollution, no inward corruption, is another thing and if Dr. Miller held to this view as he seems to do, it is evident that few of these he quotes from agree with him.

But we defer to another paper for further statement of these views. *Macon, Ga.*