

Anniversary Meeting of the Virginia Bible Society.—The 63d Anniversary of the Society, for business, will be held in the Lecture-room of St. Paul's church, on Tuesday, the 4th inst., at 8 o'clock.

The Anniversary Address will be delivered by the Rev. Dr. J. L. Burrows, of Louisville, Ky., in the Second Presbyterian church, (Dr. Hoge's) on Sabbath, April 9th, at 4½ o'clock. P. M.

Please Return.—Some person, we know not who, has possession of the bound volumes of the *Central Presbyterian* for 1861-1864, which belong to this office. Should this notice meet the eye of the borrower, he is requested to return them, as they are wanted for necessary uses.

Was it a Mistake?—The *Richmond Whig* says:

"The *Danville Border Express* announces several performances in that city by "Leo Wheat's Opera Troupe," from Richmond. There must be some mistake in the title."

May it not refer to some Sunday Church Opera Troupe? There be more kinds of Opera Troupes than one now-a-days. At least this is a report commonly believed in Richmond.—**CEN. PRES.**

Letter from Dr. Wm. H. Ruffner.

To the Rev. R. L. Dabney, D. D.:

Dear Brother,—My general answer to your article in the *Planter and Farmer* is gone into the secular papers, but I wanted to say some things to you where it would be "all in the family." If I should say some unpalatable things, please remember that you "began it," as boys used to say. Remember also that our Lord, whom we so poorly obey, said, "Judge not, that ye be not judged."

I have, upon occasion, made public speeches in some twenty or thirty counties of the State, and so far as I know courteous notices have been given of those speeches by newspaper writers, in all cases except three. Two of the discourteous notices were by the resident Presbyterian ministers where I spoke. This struck me as unusual in our Church, and as surprising in other respects. These brethren had offered me their hospitality, and one of them spoke tenderly of our past associations. I did not seem to have forfeited their confidence; yet because they differed in opinion as to how education should be conducted, they felt at liberty to make petty and amazing criticisms on some alleged grammatical errors in the extemporaneous addresses of myself and some gentlemen who spoke with me. This seemed very, very strange in well-bred gentlemen and Christian pastors. But when I read your attack upon me, I immediately remembered that those young brethren had been *your pupils*.

Now I suppose that what I have said here and elsewhere will offend you; and I fear that it will provoke a bitter rejoinder. I pray that it may not; but if it does, let God and the Church judge between us. I have written in sorrow, and not in anger; and our personal relations hereafter will be just what you choose to make them.

Dr. Brown has kindly given me leave to indicate to the readers of the *Central* some general sentiments I hold in respect to education, and which I freely express in my private intercourse. It will thus be seen that I am not a Robespierre or a Rochefort. And I know of no way of introducing my views better than by sketching the history of my own mind on this subject; and inasmuch as the *Ego* is now fully out, there may be no indelicacy in telling a little more about him. I sometimes say that I have been a life long advocate of public schools; which is nearly true, but not quite. My father, although a Virginian of the fourth generation, was, as you know, a German by blood, (not a "Yankee") and he brought me up in the faith of Fatherland—the faith of Luther and Zwingle, of Calvin and Knox, the faith of almost every Protestant state and nation on both sides of the ocean, viz: that "for the soul to be without knowledge is not good;" and that the kingdom of Christ and the kingdom of Caesar were both so concerned in the training of the young, that both should give it their care and their money, as well as *stir up parents*—the original and responsible party. In this country the divorces of the two kingdoms produced separate action, and I may now remark, produced antagonisms which have not yet been reconciled.

Until I became a minister my mind was turned chiefly to the public or civil importance of virtue and intelligence among the people, which in those days was constantly dwelt upon. When I entered the ministry in 1848, our famous Presbyterian parochial school system had possession of the Church, and like a good servant I at once became interested in ecclesiastical education; but my devotion to this system was very short, and never for one moment fully agreeable either to my judgment or my feelings. I went from the Chaplaincy of the University of Va., to a church in Philadelphia, which was then our ecclesiastical metropolis. My church, of 1,200 sittings, broke down my health, and I resigned in less than two years, and returned to Virginia in 1853. My older friends will remember, perhaps sorrowfully, that whilst in Philadelphia I began a war on what I then regarded as a narrow and bigotted oligarchy which was trying to enslave the clergy and secularize the Church; and this theory of Church education was one of the instrumentalities for doing the work. And you remember, brother Dabney, that about that time there was a pretty formidable "Southern Rebellion" against that centralisation of Church power, and that soon after my return to Virginia, Dr. Stuart Robinson and your colleague, Dr. Peck, aided by Messrs. Breckinridge and Broom, Dabney and Ruffner, &c., &c., established the Ishmaelitic "*Critic*" in Baltimore, and what a lively time we had? No two of us agreed upon all points, but we all were agreed upon this, that we meant to *think for ourselves* in matters of Church policy.

Well, the story is too long to be told in full; but during the fight I had the most singular mental episode of my life. While spending a night with the late Major Robert Grattan, of Rockingham county—you remember his strong intellect—I was stating to him my objections to Church education. He replied, "your reasoning is perfectly sound, and it applies equally to *State Education*." I never had thought so, but I was in a humor that night to be convinced, and I here confess that Robert Grattan were identical, and that it was my duty as a then active warrior, to attack State Education as I was attacking Church Education, and try to bring society back to the primitive way of *individual effort, or nothing*. I went home and immediately wrote out the arguments used by Mr. Grattan, and sent the piece as a contribution to the *Critic*. The article was anonymous, and perhaps nobody but Dr. Robinson ever knew the author. It would be great folly in any one belonging to our generation, to be twitting his neighbor on inconsistency of opinion in regard to public affairs during the last twenty years; but I suspect if you had known I had done this thing you would have battered me with it before now. But maybe not.—Somebody attacked the piece in the next number of the *Critic*, and I could not say a word in reply; for by that time I was back, or nearly back, to my old position, out of which I have never budged from that day to this.

In 1866 (I think it was) the question of having a public free-school system in Virginia was brought up for debate in the Franklin Society of Lexington. I prepared myself carefully, and made notes of my intended speech. Those notes I now have, and when I was elected to my present office four years after, and they were of service in preparing the argument which I submitted in thirty days after my election. I was opposed to establishing a school system until the time people of the State should come into possession of the government; but the body of this speech was as strong in favor of public free education as I was capable of making it.

I mention this for two reasons: One because you have *doubted my sincerity*, and another because, in the opening of that speech, I gave briefly the history of my mental operations in reference to the proper parties in education. I stated what I here wish to state, namely, my matured views in relation to the respective duties of the three great parties in education, namely, the *parent*, the *Church*, and the *State*.

My engagements may prevent me from continuing the subject immediately, but when I do so, it will be seen that this personal narrative formed a fitting vestibule to the system of views I shall present.

W. H. RUFFNER.

Union Theological Seminary.

EXAMINING COMMITTEE.—Rev. Drs. Brown, Bullock, and J. H. Smith, and Messrs. C. White and R. J. McDowell. The committee meet at the Seminary on Thursday, April 6th.

An address to the Society of Inquiry will be delivered Tuesday, April 11th, 7½ P. M., by Col. J. T. L. Preston, of Lexington, Va. The annual address to the Board, the Alumni, Faculty and students, will be delivered Wednesday, 12th, at 11 A. M., by Rev. Dr. O. R. Vaughan, of Raleigh, North Carolina.

Delegates to the General Assembly.

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| <i>Presbyteries.</i> | <i>Ministers.</i> | <i>E ders.</i> |
| Mecklenburg, J Douglas | | H K Reid |
| | Wm McDonald | D H Hill |

RECENT PUBLICATIONS.

THE SOUTHERN PRESBYTERIAN REVIEW for April—Published in Columbia, S. C. Conducted by an association of Ministers.

- Contents:
1. The Suffering Seaboard of South Carolina.
 2. Lay-Preaching.
 3. The Royal Seed.
 4. Theism.
 5. The Demission of the Ministry.
 6. The Gratuitous Imputation of Sin.
 7. The Professional Study of the Bible.
 8. Ecclesiastical Status of Foreign Missionaries.
 9. Critical Notices.
- These are topics of much interest, and we anticipate a treat in the reading; after which there is more to be said.

BLACKWOOD'S MAGAZINE for March. Through the Leonard Scott Publishing Company, N. York.

Contents: The Dilemma—Part XI. Secondary Education in Scotland. Some Aspects of Friendship, is a rambling article, giving quotations from Jeremy Taylor, Lord Bacon, and others. To Maimey (M'Aymez) Stanzas to a dame of fifteen, who wishes to abbreviate herself to May. Eton College, an interesting account of the foundation of this old institution, by Henry VI., who planned, and watched over the building, and the chief feature of whose idea was 'the college in distinction from the school—the religious corporation of provost and fellows, for whom he built his chapel, and to whom he secured various privileges of special indulgence from Rome.' Little Bobby, a sketch in Paris. Some Gentlemen in the City is a sketch of the rise of the Goldensterns, Conrad Lloyd, Emmanuel Baggs, and others of the more prominent London financiers. Powers of the Air. The opening of Parliament.

THE FARMER AND PLANTER for April is on our table with its usual (or, rather, more than usual) variety of subjects. Among them is an extended communication from the Rev. R. L. Dabney, D. D., in which he discusses the question of free school education by the State, and especially in its connection with the negro population. The readers of this vigorous article will no doubt have different opinions concerning the views advanced. In some of them, at least in some aspects, there will probably be a general concurrence. As to others the public judgment will be divided; while some agree, others will strongly dissent.

As this subject, on various accounts, falls into the hands of Dr. Ruffner, Superintendent of Public Instruction, it will be seen from an article in this paper that it is his purpose not to have the discussion all on one side.

EDUCATIONAL JOURNAL—The April number is out, and contains much matter of general interest and special value to teachers. Among the contents are original articles by Professor Charles D. D. of William and Mary College, Mr. W. Lee O. Stevens, Major R. W. Jones, president of Martha Washington College, and Mr. Samuel A. Wallis, besides an able article on "National Education," by Professor Max Muller, editorials, etc.

Religious Intelligence.

FROM THE SOUTHERN STATES.

Revival in Moorefield, West Virginia.—The pastor, Rev. George W. White, writes under date of March 27th, and though the letter was not prepared as a communication, we know not how to present the contents more appropriately than given by the writer. He says:

We have been blessed with a gracious outpouring of the Spirit upon our congregation. It came gradually, fell gently but steadily and copiously, and still continues to refresh. The first evidence of its coming was in the large and attentive congregations, both on Sunday and at our weekly prayer meeting. Within the few preceding months there had from time to time been added one or two to the church. This increased interest justified me in appointing special services which immediately developed a very deep and pervading spirit of inquiry. These special services were discontinued three weeks ago, but the spirit of religious inquiry did not cease. Yesterday our congregation was witness to a scene of tender solemnity which it is not our privilege often to behold. Thirty-five were added to the church, thirty-three of these on examination, embracing the most interesting characters, mostly varying from seventeen to thirty years of age. Seven are heads of families; one a venerable father of 68 years, three or four under 15 years; eight were baptized. There would have been several more, but they were hindered by high water and sickness. And still quite a number are seriously considering the great question, of whom I trust a good many will soon confess Christ.

If you think proper you may make an item for your paper of these facts. It is a cheering fact in these dark days of corruption that God is signaling his grace unto the churches—thus illustrating as he so often does, that "when we are weak then are we strong." Four months ago the Christian heart of our community was never more depending; and we never so felt the prevalence and power of inquiry. But God heard the prayer of his people who were driven to Him by fear of the threatening evil, and the "great mountain" of opposition has become a "hill." The happy influence is seen and felt all over the community. The same blessing was granted to the Methodist church, and even large numbers were added to its communion.

Let the churches be looking for the Master's presence. As was the case with poor, despairing Mary, (John xi.) He is often near and ready to bless when we are weeping in sinful doubt. I do not like premature notices of these things, as is the practice of some of our papers, but if you think there is anything to encourage God's people in this letter you may use its contents for information.

Second Presbyterian Church, Petersburg, Va.—A correspondent gives information that there is evidence of a good work in this church. For some years they have held morning prayer meetings a week before the April communion. It is delightful to have the pastor and brethren of the Tabb Street church unite with them in this service. At the communion last Sabbath twelve were added upon profession, and the meetings are continued this week.

Alexandria, Va.—A correspondent of the *Christian Observer* says: "It may perhaps be a pleasure to you to learn that our church is in a very prosperous condition. Since the installation of Mr. Dinwiddie, formerly of Lexington, Ky., who is greatly beloved by his people, in the fall of 1874, over one hundred have been added to our membership. At our last communion two weeks ago, thirteen, ten on profession, all adults but one, were added. To God be all the glory."