

John Heard, Esq., W. F. Nicholson, Esq., R. H. Hubbard, Rev.
E. P. Holmes, Dr. W. J. Gaines.

Adjourned to 7:30 p. m.

WEDNESDAY EVENING SESSION.

The president called the Convention to order and requested Rev. E. L. Martin to lead in prayer.

On motion, it was voted that in discussing the program the gentleman opening shall have whatever time he wishes, and those discussing the paper be restricted to five minutes, and that the discussion of one subject be restricted to 30 minutes after the opening address.

“National aid to education” was ably discussed as follows by Rev. C. T. Walker:

It has been well said that the safety and well-being of the general government depends greatly upon the intelligence of its citizens. Like the prosperity and perpetuation of a government like ours—of the people, for the people and by the people—demands a well instructed citizenship. The census of 1880 shows that there were 3,500,000 white persons in this country that could not write. One million white adults who cannot write. That there are 3,600,000 colored persons in the United States over 10 years of age who cannot write, and 1,022,151 colored male persons who cannot write. Georgia has a population of 1,542,180, and she has 169,505 who cannot write. The statistics shows that in the great city of New York there is only one voter to every five in South Carolina who cannot write. The last census shows that there are 6,239,958 people of this country above the age of ten years, who cannot write, which is about one-eighth of our entire population, and that 4,715,359, or 75 per cent of these illiterates are in the recent slave states. Alabama has 120,858 illiterate voters.

Georgia has 145,087 illiterate voters and 116,516 of these are colored and 28,571 white. North Carolina has 145,000 illiterate voters. South Carolina has 117,000. Mississippi has 111,545 illiterate voters. Louisiana 102,932. There are 1,354,974 illiterate voters in this country and 944,424 of that number are colored. This shows the vast ignorance of a large number of the voting population of this country. There must be a remedy for this malady and the remedy must be the education of the masses. Ignorance is the prolific mother of weakness, the bane of society, the mother of bigotry and superstition. Men who are clothed with the power of franchise should possess sufficient intelligence to know their rights and the required amount of manhood to demand them. Ignorance destroys manhood, creates a dead mind. It is an evil that produces crime, pauperism and misery. The ignorant is easily deluded and manipulated. The colored man is not responsible for his ignorance; it is the effect of slavery which was a curse upon our national escutcheon. It is the duty of the national congress to pass the Blair educational bill, for by so doing they will do more to build up an intelligent citizenship than all the legislation that could be enacted in a generation. Inasmuch as the several states are unable to move the illiteracy existing in them on account of financial inability, the general government couldn't do no nobler service than to appropriate national aid to dispel this illiteracy. Since it is true that intelligence and integrity are essential to the honorable success, and permanence of good government and since our government is made up of the individuality of citizenship; how important that the government should provide instruction for all of its citizens. George Washington, Thomas Jefferson and John Q. Adams favored national support to education, and Mr. Washington said: “In proportion as the structure of a government gives force to public opinion, it is essential that public opinion be enlightened.” James Madison said: “It is universally admitted that a well instructed people alone can be permanently a free people.” When Napoleon passed over Prussia like a sweeping tornado, and left every thing in ruin, and destitution, the leaders called the people together to devise plans for their restoration to happiness and prosperity. They decided to educate the people, the masses, all the people, and as a result Prussia has become a most powerful country and humbled the successor of its conqueror. The south has not sufficiently revived from the ravages of war and devastation to provide instruction for her youths, hence the importance of the national government rendering assistance. Our government, unlike the Queen Regent of Spain, in emancipating the Cuban slaves, who gave