

Confederate Veteran.

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SOCIAL CONDITIONS IN THE SOUTH DURING THE WAR BETWEEN THE STATES.

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Religion

The suffering generated by the war was a stimulus to religion. The South, always a follower of the sternest traditions of the precepts of Christ, placed its trust in the Bible. "The Lord is my shepherd; therefore can I lack nothing." The Methodist and Presbyterian Churches cut themselves away from their Northern brethren and cast their fortunes with the Southern cause. The Southern dioceses of the Protestant Episcopal Church were never officially separated from the main body of the Church, yet from their communion were contributed some of the foremost men of the Confederacy. The Churches of the South entered so whole heartedly into the cause of the war that they were invariably closed by the Union commanders. Throughout the war many revivals, special prayer meetings, and fasts were held for the success of Southern arms. The people derived great comfort from religion. All regiments departing for the front were consecrated. Many clergymen joined the army as chaplains; others, as officers, led their congregations to the colors. The army was swept by religious fervor. Revivals, including the "Great Revival along the Rapidan," and frequent prayer meetings bore much fruit. Dr. J. William Jones, in "Christ in the Camp," mentioned that "in riding along the trenches by sundown, one sees almost every one hundred yards a company of worshipers met either to hear a sermon or to engage in a prayer meeting." At times the soldiers built stands and seats, and even erected log churches. No church bell called them to service, but only a bugle call or the singing of some familiar hymn. The numerous baptisms and conversions indicated strong religious feeling. The high and the low were effected. Lee, Jackson, and other generals were known to have strong religious convictions. Fremantle stated that he witnessed the baptism of General Bragg at the field quarters of General Polk. The religious wave was also felt by Jefferson Davis, who was baptized and confirmed at Richmond during the spring of 1863. In the war society of the South religion played a leading rôle.