

Correspondence.

LETTERS FROM CHATTANOOGA AND KNOXVILLE.

Chattanooga, Tenn., Jan. 20, 1864.

BRO. MEARS.—At last, after six weeks or more, the task has been performed. "Lookout Mountain" has been scaled, and I have at least looked toward, if not into, six States. It is said, with a good glass we can see portions of Georgia, Alabama, North and South Carolina, and a Ridge in Virginia, besides Tennessee.

From our rooms it is about five miles; you walk two on the plain, and you think you have only a mile farther to the summit of the mountain; but you trudge onward and upward, and you look up almost perpendicularly, take a long sigh, and rest a few minutes, at the White House. The word is again given, and over and around the rocks, by a tortuous road, climbing a mile up, and we have planted our feet on the great rock—the nose of "Lookout." And, oh! what an awfully grand scene of nature and art combined lies deep down before you! The Tennessee washes its Northern base, and majestically curves around Chattanooga, and forms a perfect S. The town is entirely exposed, while formerly it was well nigh hid and hemmed in by mountain and forest. Instead of these surroundings, a city of tents, Phoenix-like, has risen up in their places. "Round-top" is "Lookout" in miniature. Sixteen hundred feet above the Tennessee, it seems to touch the clouds, and stands in the midst of surrounding summits, as a great giant among pygmies. And how our troops, even under the brave "fighting Joe Hooker," ever scaled its heights, in face of the fortifications and fire of the enemy, can only be explained by the fact that "the God of Battles" was with our troops. Hooker, with his force, climbed along and up the side of the mountain, under a very thick cloud of fog, concealing them from the sight of the enemy. It certainly was one of the most splendid triumphs of the war. In like manner was the good providence of God marked in the battle on Missionary Ridge. The enemy occupied it with strong lines of works; they were driven out of both, and held what Bragg himself called still the very strongest position with the force they had. But instead of contesting fiercely our advance against them, they seemed to be paralyzed. Gen. Thomas remarked that it was only to be accounted for by the interposition of higher power: that God was in it. They were not expecting the bold attempt of our army to take the Ridge then. They seemed entirely unprepared for so daring a movement. And with every opportunity to fall back or retreat in good order, in some way they were chained right to one spot—were held spell-bound there until entirely routed and scattered. "The Lord of Hosts is with us." Of course, whatever we have said of God's reigning in these affairs, is not meant to detract from great and comprehensive generalship. By the way, "Lookout Mountain" is a noted summer resort. The boarding-houses and cottages form quite a villa, called "Summerville." Here we met Col. Blakeley, 78th Pennsylvania, guarding the property and the Mountain. Gen. Grant designs using the buildings for Summer Hospitals. It will be a delightful place for our sick and wounded soldiers.

News are very scarce here; the best thing that has occurred since the late battles, and withal the most exciting, is the completion of repairs to the railroad, re-building of its bridges, and coming in of the cars. There was the wildest excitement and joy at the approach of the first train—generals, commissioned and non-commissioned officers and privates, infantry and cavalry rushed down through every street to give a grateful welcome to the "old iron horse." The patients in hospitals heard his whistling, and you should have seen the cheerful gleam over all their countenances. To them it was a significant period. Not only was the long suspense in waiting for supplies broken, but "the good time coming" had come, when, according to promise, hundreds of them were to receive transportation home. Supplies are now rapidly coming in, and this point necessarily becomes the base of supplies for the Army of the Ohio; they are forwarding largely to Knoxville by river. The weather is now very mild and Spring-like—winter is over. There is, I trust, an end to all the sufferings of our wounded and sick, in consequence of the cold. There have been sufferings in the Army of the West, of which you know nothing, endured with even more patience than those of our fathers of the Revolution.

At last the Christian Commission and Chaplains have secured a church for holding religious services. You may ask why we could not have had one

long ago, and perhaps anticipate an answer that all had been occupied by our wounded and sick. But this was not the case. One church, and the most comfortable of all, was not thus used, though men were actually dying for want of shelter. All the buildings used, churches included, were miserable structures, affording no adequate protection. There was this one church admirably situated on the brow of the hill left unappropriated, simply because it was a Roman Catholic Church. Our Roman Catholic General Rosecrans detailed a safeguard for the building and posted a special order upon the door, to the effect that any injury, whatever done to the building, would be punished by death. And to this day, his order is still respected and there is still a guard pacing up and down in front of it. All along the lines Romanism must be revered thus, to the humiliation of Protestantism, and of nine-tenths of our soldiers, who must witness it with scorn and contempt. Certainly whatever may be said in favor of this man's generalship, such partiality detracts from his character as a man.

If I shall feel disposed to write again, my next will be from Knoxville.

J. L. L.

LETTER FROM KNOXVILLE.

Knoxville, Tenn., February —

REV. J. W. MEARS—DEAR BRO.:—Instead of turning my face homeward, as I expected three weeks ago to do, I find myself farther away than ever. A tedious trip of four days from Chattanooga brought me to this place. We left by boat on the 20th ult., with no clear prospect ahead—as to where we should finally emerge—at Knoxville or Richmond. General Foster, at Knoxville, had telegraphed to the boat on its downward trip, that true information had been captured to the effect that General John Morgan, with 3000 cavalry, was prowling along the river, and might at any point make a descent upon the boat. And with General Judah and many other officers, large quantities of commissary, quartermasters' and sanitary stores, we were on the return trip—a most promising party for capture. So the probabilities and vulnerable points of his attack were seriously discussed, meals were eaten, things in general said and done, both grave and cheerful, with more or less regard to the liabilities of a sojourn in the latter city. But the famous "aid" did not make his appearance, and so after grounding on the shoals 14 hours, running off the railroad track beyond London, "perils by land and by water," we reached this once happy and beautiful, but now much abused city. It has, now quite lost its magnificence. The alternate occupation by both armies, and the siege, have given it a sad and desolate appearance. Its location is fine, lying as it does on a high bank of the Holston, in the midst of very picturesque scenery. It gradually ascends from the river and forms a beautiful knoll, falling abruptly down the remaining sides.

It contained about 6000 inhabitants before the war. Loyalty was in the ascendant, though not so decidedly here as in the country around. There were more wealth and aristocracy and political training here. I am sorry to say that the ministry and churches were not with the majority. There are five churches: two Presbyterian, Baptist, Methodist and Episcopal. The Episcopal has been the only church building regularly held and used by the congregation. Dr. Humes, the faithful rector, is a loyal and able minister, and universally beloved. Moreover, he is an emancipationist. Rev. Mr. Hydon, pastor of the Methodist Church, now a post chaplain here, occupies the anomalous position of opposition to the President's Proclamation and fealty to the Government, and represents three-fourths of the loyal citizens. It may seem strange to you how loyalty to Government and opposition to its Administration consist, and how they can make a good Union people. But nevertheless they have suffered extremely, and it would be cruel in view of all the sacrifices they have made to suspect their professions. This is also the sentiment of Parson Brownlow, which indeed he helped to mould, who says he would again as gladly as ever maintain against Pryne the divinity of the institution of slavery. Yet he would be willing to sacrifice slavery for the sake of country. That is, destroy slavery, which is divine, to save the Government which is human. Parson though he be, he has not enough wisdom and piety to keep him from what would be, according to his logic, the blunder and sin of "doing evil that good may come." If he will insist that government as well as Slavery be divine, why do they not harmonize? Brownlow has undoubtedly done much for our cause in East Tennessee, by his paper and his speeches. "The

Knoxville Whig" is now regularly published and has very considerable influence among the masses. The two Presbyterian pastors were sent off with twenty-two of the citizens, through the lines on last Saturday. Rev. Mr. Harrison (O. S.) was the man who made himself notorious by saying in the pulpit, that he would "rather preach from a Bible printed in hell, than from one printed in Massachusetts." Rev. Mr. Martin, the minister of the church belonging to the Southern Synod, demonstrated his treason by taking up arms against us. His church was large and wealthy, and they have the finest building here. The majority were loyal and wished him to resign; if he had done so it would have spared the building from military occupation and held it open for worship.

Since the siege, there is much trepidation among the citizens. When our troops fell back on this side of the Holston, two weeks ago, there was much terror and excitement, people fled hither and thither, eager to sell their effects, and to go North. Since that time, little dashing movements have been made at Sevierville and Dandridgeville, twenty or thirty miles distant, and indeed, there has been a slight picket skirmish on the east, only six miles from this place. All these manifestations of danger together with occasional movements of regiments and divisions, through the streets by night, have so unmanned the people that they are liable at any moment to be thrown into the wildest commotion, nor is it any wonder after all they had previously undergone. The large body of troops under Longstreet are still at Strawberry Plains, fifteen miles distant, and it is thought by the wise ones, that we shall have stormy times here before many days. Generals Schofield and Stoneman are, we learn, on their way to this department. I hope the general that takes chief command, here will be "the right man in the right place."

There are about 2500 sick and wounded, about 120 deaths have occurred during the last month. They have suffered as at Chattanooga, very much for want of a proper diet and clothing. Hospital, as well as other supplies, have been very scarce. As yet, the army depends upon a couple of boats, and if we should have low water, there would be still greater suffering here. But the enterprising Col. McCallum from the Army of the Potomac, with one thousand workmen will have the railroad between Chattanooga and Loudon in good running order, by the middle of the month. Then, with river and railroad communication, our soldiers will soon live as patriots should.

There are but three delegates of the "Christian Commission" and two or three faithful chaplains to labor here. We cannot get sanitary stores through as yet. Of reading matter we have but a meagre supply. There are a very few chaplains in this department, and we should have at least ten more delegates to labor among the well and active, as well as among the sick and wounded. We have many more requests for preaching to regiments than we can supply. Who of the faithful and zealous will come over and help us? J. L. L.

THE GREAT WORK OF GOD IN THE ARMY.

Camp Covalescent, Va., 5th of Feb., 1864.

DEAR BRO. MEARS.—What an amazing influence do mothers wield! how potent for good!

I have been struck with the almost universal remark of the soldier, when asking for the way of life, or when relating his experience of the work of God in his soul, "Thou art a praying mother." In the very crisis of danger and of battle, when the wild storm sweeps over and around him, and his feelings and passions are on fire with the fierce and intense excitement, then dashes through his mind the scene of other days; and tenderly his heart murmurs the word—*Mother!* It is mingled in all his prayers and is the last word of affection, which next to the dear word "Savior," falls from the white lips of the soldier, dying on the battle-field or in the hospital.

"O Sir!" said a man whom I found yesterday in one of the wards of the hospital, calmly awaiting the issue of a sickness probably unto death, "I could die happy, trusting in Jesus, but for the remembrance of the years during which I have neglected my good old mother. Many years since, I left my home in England. I know not if my friends and my mother be alive. Blessed be God, I found the Savior six weeks ago, down at the chapel. He is now unspeakably precious to me. He is my only hope and joy. My only regret is that I did not earlier find him, and that I have not been a better son to my mother. I have written to her and sent enclosed in the letter my certificate of baptism and my pledge of total abstinence. That will make her happy,

if she is still alive, for I am sure she has not ceased to care for me. But O Sir! I wish I had been a better son and a better man. Tell them to pray for me at the chapel."

For days past, we have been permitted to stand and look upon the salvation of our God in this camp. A few evenings since, I remarked to our brethren, as we were about entering the chapel for our usual evening services, that I hardly expected that evening to witness such visible results of the Spirit's presence and power, as we had seen during previous evenings. Greatly was my weak faith rebuked. During the progress of the services there was a solemn stillness in the house, betokening deep and earnest feeling. We all felt that there was going on in the breast of many a strong man, a tremendous struggle, and that God was making men willing in the day of his power, to elect for the soul's everlasting advantage.

We all seemed to feel that the issues of that hour were fraught with vast consequences and would take hold upon eternity. The invitation hymn was given out and as we rose to sing, from all parts of the house came forward noble looking men and knelt and said "Sirs," "we would see Jesus." We have heard that "this man receiveth sinners," and we have come. Pray for us—pray for us!

And we did pray for them as the Spirit gave us power and utterance. And sure I am, the petitioning of earnest and effectual prayer took hold on the Throne and that there was rejoicing among the angels in the presence of God that night.

"Never," said a gentleman present from Boston, "never before, was I so near heaven."

And my heart thanks God that I am permitted to behold almost every evening a repetition of that scene. I rejoice to see such grand demonstrations of the power of the gospel over the passions and the depravity of the human heart. My confidence in the Gospel is strengthened. I do believe that the grace of God can do all things.

In one company was a man so passionate and so wicked that his officers were obliged to take away his liberty to do injury, at times, and bury him in the sand, with only his head above ground.

This man went to a soldiers' prayer meeting for the avowed purpose of creating a disturbance. He heard his comrades pray. They prayed for him. He was affected by their earnestness. The spirit of God smote him down. He fell upon his knees and cried, "God be merciful to me a sinner." He entered that meeting a tiger, he left it a lamb. He went back to his tent. On a shelf stood bottles and packs of cards. Into the fire forthwith went the cards and the bottles were flung far away. That man has since given satisfactory evidence that he is a genuine convert to Christianity.

Behold the power of Divine Grace!—Another Saul changed into a Paul.

Religious influences are so far potent in this camp of near ten thousand men as to suppress open depravity. I have mingled much with the officers and men, and I take extreme satisfaction in saying that I have seen no quarrelling, no passionate altercations, not a man under the influence of liquor, and but seldom have I heard an oath. Here, as elsewhere throughout the army, the Christian Commission has been and is doing a noble work.

It has maintained uninterruptedly for more than a year, religious services, and under God has gathered more than one thousand shepherdless sheep into the field.

Often will you hear the rejoicing convert and others say, "God bless the Christian Commission." Sure I am it is worthy of the confidence and the sympathy and co-operation of the churches.

My letter is running on to a greater length than I intended, and yet I would like to give a brief account of the meeting held last evening in the chapel, to me the most precious of all, and probably productive of the largest results of good. I shall never forget it.

During the day a thousand men were sent away, and with them a large part of our regular congregation. I hardly expected to see any coming forward.

I was permitted to speak, following in line of remark, Rev. Mr. Hawes, of Waterville, Maine, who had preached an impressive sermon, (and than whom I know of no man better fitted effectually to present the great truths of the Gospel to the heart and conscience of the soldier,) upon the coming judgment and upon the book of memory which will then be opened, reminding them that nothing is permanently effaced though forgotten, from the memory—that men will carry the record of their lives, the evidence, the judgment,

and the sentence for or against themselves, in their own characters, inscribed, as with a pen of fire, on the memory, when they go into the eternal world.

I showed them, as I was able, that it is the natural tendency of sin to perpetuate and punish itself; that it contains an inborn principle of growth and retribution; and that the sinner, passing hence to God, and left to reap whatsoever he has sown in the flesh, forsaken by God and without restraining influences, cannot but gravitate downward under the influence of evil; that there is nothing arbitrary, nothing unjust or unkind in God's treatment of the finally lost; that men carry with them their destiny of glory or shame when they go into eternity; that God could not if he would, save the wicked from that withering sense of contempt which they will feel when in the Great Day of Revelation, they shall stand and testify against themselves, and be confronted and confounded by the burning remembrance of their multifarious and manifold depravities, and when they shall cry to the rocks to fall on them and hide them and their guilt from the face of the Lamb—that God could not if he would annihilate from their minds the remembrance of their guilt in despising and neglecting the Saviour.

"Soldiers," it was said "come now to Jesus and he will deliver you from condemnation; with his blood, God will wash away the stains of guilt from your souls, which otherwise will witness against you in the Day of Judgment and curse and burn you in hell forever." It was a solemn hour. All were deeply in earnest as if the vision of the coming judgment opened and glowed upon us. All felt that immortal destinies were being fixed. God's wooing Spirit brooded over the scene and went from heart to heart, and more glorious results that night than on any previous evening we beheld, to the praise of Redeeming Grace. Many souls I doubt were borne into the life of God.

F. L. R.

UNION OF PRESBYTERIANS.

There is a general expectation of the union of the various Presbyterian churches of the United States, among the more intelligent laymen, and younger ministers of these churches. The union of the twelve or thirteen existing organizations into one powerful body, might be of great advantage to the cause of Christ, if these bodies really united to promote the interests of humanity and religion. But if they set up their denominational glory as the great object of church organization, the shameful history of one of the most powerful of these bodies during the last thirty years, shows us to what ignominious silence God's witnesses may be reduced, or to what jesuitical apologetics for sin they may seduce, by a supreme regard to the honor and glory of their denomination. We have yet to show whether God can safely trust us with the vast power of ecclesiastical union.

The Lord has done much to prepare the way for this union; so much that we must all feel guilty unless we meet his advances by corresponding exertions. He has shown us the blessed results of the union of the Synod of Ulster and Associate Synods in Ireland, resulting in a new evangelistic activity in Connaught, and the South of Ireland, to the Jews, and in India, and in the great Irish Revival of 1858. The union of the various Associate bodies now constituting the United Presbyterian Church of Great Britain, was the cause of such a breaking out on the right hand and the left, as promises to place that body foremost among the evangelizing churches in all the great cities of Britain. The union of the Free and United Presbyterians in Canada, and the provinces, works equally well: and that in Australia has been signalized by energetic efforts in behalf of temperance, the Sabbath, and missions to the Bush and to Polynesia. We live in an age of union, and know that the period draws nigh when one Communion shall embrace all Christ's children on earth.

The Lord has been showing us the terrible character of sectarianism in our political life. For sectarianism is neither more or less than secession from the one Catholic Church of Christ, on account of some imaginary grievance. In the distracted, weakened, despised, divided church, we see what our glorious Republic would be, did we grant the right of secession. There is no end to its operation. We know families of which the members will not hold communion with each other in family worship, because of some unintelligible adherence to documents they have never seen, and approval of acts of parliament which nobody now living ever saw; all the copies having been burnt during a conflagration a hundred years ago. God allows this *reductio ad absurdum*, as he al-

lows also the terrible calamities of political sectarianism, to awaken Christians to a sense of the sin, folly and danger of their present distractions, and sects.

The Lord has taken a great many stumbling-blocks out of the way of the union of the Presbyterian churches. The great stumbling-block of slavery has been removed. The leading controversialists in one of the principal divisions have either been removed from the church below, or permitted to make such exhibitions of their sympathies as effectually to neutralize their influence with the present generation, or led to penitence and expression of a desire to heal the breaches they have made. The temper of men's minds is no longer metaphysical and theological, it is humanitarian and practical; and under its influence the Old and New School Theologies are being recognized as complementary parts of one grand system. The union of Christians of different churches in the army prayer-meetings, and camp communion, is working a practical demonstration of the possibility of Christian communion as something higher and holier than our denominational boards and tables. Our Christian soldiers and chaplains will never again sink into sectarians. We have had a revolution in the Church, as well as in the State; and the sooner our church courts recognize it the better for them. The laity of the churches are rising into an unwonted activity, and the ministry, who would have scorned the idea of receiving instructions from their clerical brethren of another sect, come forward by hundreds in response to the appeal of laymen speaking not as sectarians, but as Christians. To a great extent the union is actually accomplished already in spirit and in fact—and little remains but for the church courts to recognize it—yet the little that remains is not therefore unimportant. A small isthmus may divide great oceans. Next week, I propose to consider what God will have us to do that we may reap the benefit of what he has done for the union of the Presbyterian churches.

R. P.

THE CURRENT OF OPINION.

The pro-slavery veterans of the North, like their brethren in the South, are about abandoning the contest. Two of the leading organs of this obsolete type of opinion in New York city are giving unmistakable signs of exhaustion, and of disgust with a cause in the advocacy of which they have devoted so much energy and ability, and have not hesitated to sacrifice every principle that true patriots and friends of humanity and religion hold in esteem. The *New York Herald* in its leading editorial of February 6th, says:

"We would therefore earnestly call the attention of Congress to the fact that there is only one way in which this Slavery question may be decisively and permanently settled by universal emancipation, and that now is the opportunity for this achievement. This way is pointed out in the Federal Constitution, and is simply an amendment of that instrument, declaring Slavery abolished throughout the United States.

"Here, then, the amendment suggested, passed by a two-third vote in each house of Congress, and ratified by the legislature, or by conventions of three-fourths of the States of the Union, will abolish Slavery at once and forever throughout the length and breadth of the land. And why not? The institution, so long as it exists, can never be anything hereafter except a source of mischief to the South; its evils, as a fountain of bitter waters, are all that is left of it. Let Congress pass the amendment indicated, with a reasonable compensation to loyal slaveholders, and ratification of the States will soon follow.

"Let Congress, then apply the remedy suggested, and before the end of the year, this vexing and perplexing question of Slavery may be settled constitutionally, decisively, and forever. And this is the only way to settle it. Now can there be a shadow of a doubt that the man who puts this ball in motion in Congress will be the commanding spirit of the Union restored?"

The *New York Herald* says:

"We have no desire to shield Slavery. We shall be glad to know that it is crippled—that it is extinct."

We cannot say that our respect for these organs of opinion is at all elevated in view of these most extraordinary expressions. But we rejoice in them as evidences, that a sense of the hopelessness of their cause has reached the profoundest abysses of Northern pro-slaveryism; the light of liberty is driving the impure birds of night from their darkest recesses and the most blind and selfish partisans are convinced that no more capital is to be made out of the once mighty institution. The ass is kicking the poor old perishing lion!

O what a light of beauty will that be, when we shall see Him as He is, and those tears be passed away, which have been our meat day and night, while they daily say unto us, Where is now your God?—Augustine.