

Correspondence.

GOOD DEEDS NEVER DIE.

BY REV. DANIEL MARCH, D. D.

Every world in the material universe is bound to every other by immutable law, and no atom is ever lost from the immensity of things created. The circle of waves produced by the fall of a pebble travels to the uttermost parts of the sea. The blow that I strike with my hand is felt around the earth and beyond the stars. Much more pervasive and enduring are those moral influences that form the character and fix the destiny of immortal beings. Every act of duty starts a wave of light and of blessing that shall roll and expand for endless ages. It is the sceptic's dismal philosophy which says "the good that men do in their lives is interred with their bones." In the service of Christ effort is success and a right purpose is victory, and no faithful laborer can fail to find many among the host of the redeemed to call him blessed.

Not many years ago, a European philosopher, unrolling the countless bandages of an Egyptian mummy, found a few grains of wheat in the black and withered hand. Curiosity led him to plant the kernels in the colder soil of the north. The germ of life which had been imprisoned three thousand years in the dark charnel of death, responded to the touch of warmth and moisture and light, and shot forth the green stalk and matured the ripened grain. And now, year by year, broad fields sown from the produce of those revived kernels of Egyptian wheat wave their rich harvests beneath the autumn sun, and thousands of lives are sustained by food, the fruitful germ of which was so long imprisoned in the house of death.

And so the laborer in any department of Christian service, by precept or by example, may drop the seed-corn of the divine word into the cold, dead heart of the world, and many seasons may pass, and he may see no signs that the seed sown in patience and in sorrow will ever germinate or even retain its life. He may go on year after year, faithful though despondent and sad of heart, making ten thousand unrecognized, unappreciated efforts for the good of others, and at last he may go down to the grave, feeling that nothing of all that he has done will live after him to bless the world or to cause his name to be remembered with gratitude. And yet the countless years of heaven alone may be sufficient to estimate the blessed fruit springing from that life of toil, of patience, and of disappointment. It may yet be found that the most needed and successful laborers in God's great vineyard of the world were they who were willing to toil on without apparent or applauded success, but simply because they believed that no right purpose, no well-meant effort could ever fail of its appropriate result or be forgotten before God. The great contest which truth is waging for the mastery of this world continues through all the ages, and the delay of a year or of a century is no indication that truth has lost its power, or that the divine purpose is defeated.

Two hundred years ago, John Flavel, of Dartmouth, in England, driven out of his pulpit by the persecuting Act of Uniformity, was preaching in an open field. With his wonted earnestness and affectionate fervor of address, he spoke of the dreadful curse resting on all who love not the Lord Jesus Christ. Among the listeners on that day was a youth of fifteen, who heard the solemn words of the preacher, and went away as though he heard them not. Some of noble birth and of high intellectual culture were so deeply affected that they fell senseless upon the ground. But that thoughtless young man only listened and looked on, as if he were a disinterested spectator. Soon afterwards he began a roving life upon the seas, and finally settled down for a permanent home, a faithless and a prayerless man, in America. Meanwhile, Flavel continued to preach the gospel which he loved, amid persecutions and many sorrows, and when the last joyful summons came, he went home to God in peace. And eighty-five years passed by, from that day of field-preaching at Dartmouth, and the boy of fifteen was now a man of a hundred years and still a wanderer from God. The quick susceptibilities of youth had died in his old and guilty heart long ago. No ordinary faith could have believed that the seed-corn of divine truth planted by John Flavel's preaching eighty-five years before, on the other side of the ocean, still survived and was destined to spring up and bear fruit unto life eternal. But so it was. It chanced on a certain day that he found himself alone in an open field belonging to his own farm, with no weeping multitude around him to awaken his sympathies, and no preacher's solemn voice to tell him of his sin. Moved, he knew not how, that old man,

in his hundredth year, passing over all the intervening space of time, felt himself back again in the field at Dartmouth, hearing the fearful words, "If any man love not the Lord Jesus Christ, let him be accursed." And the message of heaven, which the thoughtless youth so easily rejected, was mightier when speaking from the remembered past than when heard from the living voice. Then first the aged sinner found strength to roll the burden of the threatened curse from his heart, through the exercise of penitent and trusting love. He lived to the extraordinary age of a hundred and sixteen years, believing and rejoicing in the Saviour, whom, for a century, he had rejected. And the awakening call of duty, which roused him from the sleep of impenitence and unbelief, came from the remembered words of one who had rested from his labor for more than a half century. Such is the persistency with which the truth retains its life and germinating power, even when sown in the uncongenial soil of the depraved heart. And one such example of effort apparently lost, living and working for good long after the laborer himself has forgotten his work, may give us hope and encouragement as we sow the seed of life, beside all waters, morning, evening and at noon of day, withholding not our hand.

OPEN AIR MEETINGS.

No. II.

BY EDWARD PAYSON HAMMOND.

MY DEAR BRO. MEARS:—At your request, I am induced to jot down a few more thoughts with regard to the importance of united, earnest efforts on a large scale for the salvation of the masses in our land, who seldom, if ever, attend the house of God. In my last you will remember that I attempted to show, by the blessed results which attended the "Open Air Meetings" in Scotland, what might be done by the same agency in the United States.

I am aware that the season is too far advanced to attempt anything of the kind at present; but I am satisfied that if the candid and prayerful attention of some of the leading minds of the clergy and laity of our country could be fixed on this subject, and their sympathies heartily enlisted, vast results might be achieved.

OPEN AIR MEETINGS FEASIBLE.

But you ask—how could ten or fifteen thousand be gathered, to listen for two days to the simple gospel, which they can hear in any city or country church? I see no reason why the same means which were so successful to bring and hold together between ten and fifteen thousand in Huntley, Aberdeen, Perth and Glasgow, might not be crowned with a like blessing on this side of the Atlantic.

Suppose it should be known, far and near, that many Christians in the different churches in and about Philadelphia, were praying earnestly for the Holy Spirit to be poured out on Open Air Meetings, to be held in some large park in the vicinity of the city, and that over one hundred of the most earnest and devoted men from all parts of the land were to address the people who should assemble: that among these ministers and laymen were men like Rev. Dr. T. H. Skinner, Rev. Dr. Kirk, Prof. Park, Ex-Gov. Pollock, Rev. H. W. Beecher, A. A. Willots, the lamented Governor Briggs, and John B. Gough—would there not be enough of the rich and poor, the ignorant and the learned, who would find time during two days to come and listen for an hour to the simple word of Eternal Life?

But, you perhaps say, would a man like John B. Gough leave his lecturing, for which he receives a hundred dollars a night, to come from his beautiful residence in Massachusetts away to Philadelphia to preach the gospel? I answer, Yes! and I have good reason for saying so. In the first place, I know him personally to be an earnest orthodox Christian. While spending three days together under the same roof in Rochester, I took the opportunity to speak with him on this and kindred subjects. I found them dear to his heart. He knows what seasons of deep religious interest are, and loves above everything else, to see poor lost sinners seeking an interest in Him who came to seek and to save the lost. Besides, he does not lecture in the summer months.

Others, who are not so widely known, but whose hearts are full of compassion for the perishing, and who know how to wield with diverse power "the sword of the Spirit," would make willing sacrifices to be present; and, what is of far greater importance, I believe that, in answer to the united importunate prayer of God's people, the Holy Spirit would be poured out, and that as when "they came out of every town of Galilee, and Judas, and Jerusalem," "the power of God" would be present to heal.

With Jesus present, why might it not be said, as upon that occasion, recorded in Luke vi: 19, when the whole multitude sought to touch Him "there went virtue out of him, and healed them all?"

SUCCESS OF THESE MEETINGS IN SCOTLAND.

I never can forget the sight that I witnessed, upon the Glasgow Green, when thousands upon thousands were gathered for two days to listen to the gospel. Richard Weaver, the converted pugilist, and Reginald Radcliffe, were among the speakers. These two men have helped to conduct hundreds of open air meetings. The name of the former, anywhere in Great Britain, was sufficient to draw together, in the vicinity of any large city, as many as could well listen. On that occasion it was estimated that 15,000 were present. In order that all might hear without difficulty, two stands were erected.

Some of the churches in the vicinity, with the theatre of which I spoke in my last, were used for inquiry meetings. Much the same results followed the two days' open air meetings in Glasgow, as in Huntley. At night the City Hall was packed with three or four thousand solemn listeners.

At Perth, after one of the series of open air meetings, a large City Hall, holding three or four thousand, was filled nightly for weeks, and the work of the Holy Spirit spread through the city, and advanced into the country around with great power.

I speak of this to show that it was no spasmodic excitement moving the masses. Some of the most devout and judicious ministers of different denominations in all Scotland left their testimony on record that they believed the Spirit of God had been present with convincing power, to seal the truth upon the heart.

In Aberdeen, the great open air meetings were held during the middle of the week; but when Saturday came, though all whose names would be most likely to draw a crowd had gone to their homes, still it was estimated by the secular press that nearly 15,000 were present, and I well remember that hundreds were at times on that occasion in tears. From the momentum given to the work of the Lord by these meetings, a great awakening at once spread through the city.

It was not an unusual thing even on a weekday, to see large audiences in the open squares in Aberdeen, attentively listening to simple gospel truth, as it fell from the lips of some ministers, or perchance of some who had but recently learned "the new song." Rev. James Smith, of the Established Church of Scotland, told me that he had only to hold up a Bible and to sing a Psalm, to call an audience. A day or two after the open air meeting, a union religious service was being held in the North Church in the evening. The crowd was so large that many could not gain admission. One or two speakers addressed the hundreds about the door.

REMARKABLE CONVERSION IN ABERDEEN.

As sounded out upon the still evening air the words of the Lord Jesus, "He that believeth shall be saved, and he that believeth not shall be damned," a company of young men passing on the opposite side of the street listened only to jeer and scoff. On returning home that night, one of these young men could not sleep. Those solemn words still rung in his ears, "He that believeth shall be saved, he that believeth not shall be damned." In vain he turned from side to side, still those awful words disturbed his rest. A cold sweat stood upon his brow. He dared not sleep. He feared he might awake amid the wailings of the lost. He arose and dressed himself, and though it was midnight, he walked up and down the streets, asking the police where the man was who was preaching on the steps of the church. At length he found the home of Rev. James Smith and rang the bell. The servant refused him admittance, but he would not go till he had seen the minister. Between twelve and one o'clock at night, that wicked, dissolute young man, as Dr. Smith believed, looked with "saving faith" to the Lamb of God, and was by the regenerating power of the Holy Spirit made "a new creature."

The next morning he came to my room, with a beaming countenance, to tell of the wondrous change he had experienced. Will not this "brand plucked from the burning" praise God to all eternity that open air meetings were held in Aberdeen?

SCOTLAND AND THE UNITED STATES.

I have thus been led to speak of these great meetings, and of some of their fruits, to encourage the hope, in this country, that like results might flow from similar efforts. If the need of such meetings was felt by the best and most influential men in Scotland, where the Sabbath is so universally observed, and where the Bible is so much rever-

enced and read, surely we too, in the United States, need something of the kind. There is nothing either in the character of our inhabitants, or in the nature of our climate to militate against the proposed plan.

In my next I shall attempt to state a few facts with regard to the utility of occasional open air meetings.

THE SYNOD OF WEST PENNSYLVANIA.

EDITOR OF THE AMERICAN PRESBYTERIAN.—The Synod of West Pennsylvania held its annual meeting in this city, (Erie,) commencing its sessions on Friday, September 23, and adjourning at 10 o'clock Monday night. The meeting was the most interesting, instructive and useful of any that it has been our privilege to attend. This, no doubt, was owing in a measure to the peculiarly impressive circumstances by which we are surrounded as a nation, and the Church of God as a body; and this Synod as a unit, deeply sympathizes with the nation in her struggles to maintain her independence, her benign government, her sacred institutions, her union and her unity. As the prosperity and the valuable interests of the one are intimately blended by the word and providence of God, with the true prosperity and interests of the other, it was natural that the state and condition of our country, as well as the state and condition of the Church of God, should inspire and energize the religious patriotism as well as the pious faith and humble, importunate prayers of the members of the Synod. Never before did it seem more apparent to all of us that God in his infinite mercy most graciously "remembered his word on which he caused us to hope," and was present with us to guide our thoughts—to unite our hearts—to soften, subdue and sanctify our passions and affections. Our meeting was indeed, as our good Methodist brethren would say, a "love feast" to all of us. It is a matter of congratulation that the Synod was exceedingly delighted with the Christian hospitality extended to them during their short sojourn here; and pending the motion for adjournment they perpetuated their memories and experience by a recorded tribute of their glad thanks to the people, and of praise to God for his goodness and his mercy shown.

The subjects which, ecclesiastically, more particularly occupied the attention of the Synod, were missions, foreign and domestic; the education of pious young men for the ministry; publications, or a religious literature; and the spiritual condition and welfare of the Churches.

On the Sabbath the pulpits of five denominations besides our own were supplied by appointments of the Synod, in compliance with the fraternal requests of their several respective ministers and elders. This is beautiful in Zion. It is a sign and pledge of better things to come. May God speed the day when all religious bigotry and sectarian proselytism and exclusiveness shall be banished from the earth—when "with all lowliness and meekness, with long suffering, forbearing one another in love," all who call themselves Christians will "endeavor to keep the unity of spirit in the bond of peace."

Some of the resolutions adopted by the Synod were of course local in their nature, and so circumscribed in their influence and operation, that it is needless to report them generally. There were others adopted, however, which may command the attention of your numerous patrons, and secure a perusal by some. Such especially are those which follow on the state of the country. They have the right ring,—and are as follows:

The committee appointed to give expression to the views of the Synod on the state of the country, respectfully report:

1st. That in profound recognition of a higher than human power as ruling in the armies of Earth as well as Heaven, we join in the heartiest thanksgiving to Almighty God for the recent successes that have attended our arms.

2d. That we re-affirm and emphasize our abhorrence of the purposes and aim and animating spirit of the leaders of this wicked and causeless rebellion.

3d. That we press upon ourselves and people the duty of renewed and constant prayer for a national spirit that shall be "first pure, then peaceable," for complete and final victory, for the utter overthrow and final extirpation of armed treason, and for a peace that shall be approved of God as righteous, conducive to the best interests of humanity, and to the maintenance and ultimate triumph of the principles of the Gospel of Christ.

4th. That we deeply sympathize with those who have been called of God to climb their mounts of sacrifice and lay lives precious and dear to them upon the altar of patriotism, while we humbly recognize in the trials of the past and such discipline of sorrow as may still be appointed for us, the divine chastening of our sins.

5th. That we bless God for the heroism of our soldiers—for their fire and fortitude and faith—for their patriotism and prowess—their vigor, and valor, and victory.

6th. That we urge upon our congregations to continue, while the war lasts, to support by their liberal contributions and their most faithful prayers the United States Christian Commission, upon whose efforts to evangelize the army and navy of the Union has been set the seal of the God of Heaven.

In behalf of the Committee,
HERBERT JOHNSON, Chairman.

Very unexpectedly we were greeted with the presence of the Rev. Dr. Mills, who visited us for the purpose of stirring us "by way of remembrance," upon the subject of education of pious young men for the gospel ministry. His visit was opportune, inspiring and useful. The Presbyterian Church, in our opinion, is indebted to no man, more than to Dr. Mills, under the direction of God, for the rapidly concentrating and growing energy and efficiency which characterizes her courts and membership in relation to her own institutions. The secret of his success is the obvious similarity of his views and plans with the Bible model and apostolic precepts and examples.

After listening to his statements and address the Synod

Resolved, That in dependence upon the grace of God, we all as ministers of the gospel will preach upon this subject; and as officers-bearers in the Church, will exert our influence to secure greater vigilance and activity, in seeking out and persuading pious young men to devote and prepare themselves for the gospel ministry—as also to urge our respective churches to increasing liberality in their annual contributions to this justly important department of Christian benevolence.

The closing session of the synod was an intensely interesting one. The expressions of love for the church—of confidence in God—of love for each other individually, the confessions, the promises and pledges made, and the concluding prayer, all combined to render the hour of adjournment solemnly pleasant and full of hope for the future. We could not but deeply feel the inspiration of the sentiment of the Christian poet, as it lifted up our hearts to God, with his, as he sweetly sung,

"His grace will to the end,
Stronger and brighter shine;
Nor present things—nor things to come
Shall quench the spark divine."
GEORGE A. LYON, Stated Clerk.

WESTERN MINISTERS.

MR. EDITOR:—The following article is from the pen of the wife of a Presbyterian minister in Illinois. A republication may be useful at the present time, when so many of our ministers and missionaries at the West are maintaining such a severe struggle with poverty. About the time it was first published a clergyman in New England preached a sermon to his people on Home Missions. At the close he read this article. The effect was that instead of obtaining, \$250 or \$300, as they had generally done before, they obtained *eleven hundred dollars*. Perhaps other ministers may do the same thing and possibly with the same result.

To the EDITORS OF THE INDEPENDENT:—Some time since, in your paper, I read an article entitled, I think, for the paper is not before me, "The Wealthy Clergymen of New York City." Although not surprised at the statements, I have been unable to get it out of my mind. It sometimes comes right between me and duty and often between me and peace. I wish some one would write to your paper an account of the poor clergymen of the West, as a sort of balance to that piece. It is true that one half of the ministers do not know what the other half are suffering. They travel in the West, stop in our large towns, call on their brethren, who in such places are generously supported; but they see and know nothing of other brethren scattered all over these vast prairies and along the line of every railroad—faithful, devoted men, soldiers of the Cross, loyal to their Head and King, obtaining a bare subsistence—very bare. Their salaries, always small, are quite unequal to the present high prices of food and clothing. A box of clothing from sympathizing Christians in the East used to come to them like a ray of sunshine to warm the soul and relieve the heart of anxious care; but these are now turned into other channels, and the pastor dispenses with his quarterly and his newspaper, his wife dismisses her servant, the children are deprived of the means of education, and yet they try to keep their courage up and their armor bright. Sometimes his parish extends fifteen or twenty miles. Over this area he walks or rides in mud, snow and sunshine—in summer among the prairie flowers in their sweetness and beauty—always busy sowing the good seed along the way at the private residence, in the school-house, comforting the sick and weary, himself often more comfortless than they. His wife must always be present at church, at the Sabbath-school, at the various religious meetings and benevolent societies, which depend so much upon female influence and example, and at the bedside of the sick and suffering. She must be intelligent and devoted, "use hospitality without grudging," be a model housekeeper, and keep her children well instructed and tidy. The rising sun smiles on her at her task, and the weary hours at night find her at work on the well worn garments of the little sleepers. Nor can she remit her labor on account of the age, although it steals the bloom from her cheek and the light from her eye. Add to these the perplexities of an uncomfortable,

scantily-furnished house, and the oft-returning ailments peculiar to this climate, and none but the Father above can know or appreciate the extent of her sacrifices and sufferings. Her husband sees her strength failing, and his heart is sad. He looks about for relief. How gladly would he adopt some plan to recruit her wasting energies! But poverty is inexorable, and she becomes a ready victim to some prevailing epidemic, and goes to her rest. Friends mourn, and call it a "mysterious Providence" that takes her away when she is so much needed.

He too becomes exhausted with his labors, and needs repose. Then it is that the eye-of-hope grows dim, the heart sickens, the courage dies, and in sadness and suffering he pines for the dear voices and tender sympathies of a far-distant home. The foreign missionary, himself enfeebled, or his wife an invalid, returns to his native shore, cheered with the hope of renewed health and vigor. But these men can have no far-thing without at once sacrificing the slender support on which the very existence of their loved ones depends.

We read in the papers that "Rev. Mr. —" is contemplating a voyage to Europe for his health; that "his people have presented him with \$1,000 to defray his expenses, and supply the pulpit during his absence." What paper ever heralded a notice of like favor to a poor minister, especially at the West? He is not so wild as to dream of a voyage to Europe, but a journey of three or four weeks, and a reunion of family ties would be very grateful.

I might tell you of my own struggles, of my husband's labors and discouragements, of the sum total that measures our expenses; that I have an aged father and mother in New England, whom I can never hope to see on earth, and how I endeavor to repel this bitter thought; but I will not say one word about them, for I suppose I encounter no more difficulties than I have reason to expect while passing through an enemy's country to my heavenly home.

But there is another side to this picture. Though I am poor, and my lot in life is humble, what is it to me, since "God is my portion." What though others live in magnificent houses, in the midst of blooming beauty, and inherit large estates? I have "a house not made with hands eternal in the heavens." My Saviour has gone to prepare for me a mansion which will surpass in grandeur all the conceptions of earth, and I am heir to an inheritance that passeth not away.

What though they consume life in gorgeous apartments, and recline unwearied on soft couches to rest, while I toil from early dawn till late at night? When the six working days of life are over, I shall lay my weary head on Jesus' bosom, and enjoy a Sabbath of eternal rest.

What though their servants are obedient to every wish? I even now receive the ministrations of angels.

What though they are enveloped in the choicest fabrics, of the best harmonized colors? When I lay aside this plain apparel, I shall be clothed in a robe of pure and shining whiteness, a golden crown on my head, and a harp in my hand.

What though they pass me unnoticed in the walks of life, and overlook me in their social gatherings? I shall soon be a companion of angels and the spirits of the just made perfect. I am already invited to the "marriage-supper of the Lamb."

What though admiring friends are basking in the sunlight of their splendor, paying them obsequious homage? I have a friend who is "chief among ten thousands and altogether lovely." I call upon him and he answers me. He is with me in trouble and delivers me. In all my afflictions he is afflicted, and he brightens every joy. He comes to me in my sadness and tenderly wipes the tear from my eye. He comes to me in the still watches of the night and reveals the secrets of his heart. He says he "will never leave me nor forsake me." "I shall be satisfied when I awake in his likeness." E. A. K.

Illinois, Jan. 30th, 1864.

SANDWICH ISLANDS.

Through the San Francisco Pacific, we have a letter from Rev. J. S. Green, of Makawao, S. I. which represents the Islands as anything but quiet under the late coup d'etat by which the king, at the instigation of a Puseyite Bishop sent over from England to "enter into other men's labors," abrogated the constitution of the State. Under date of July 15, Mr. Green writes:

"You will see about the time this reaches you, the speech of the king at the opening of the Convention. I learn by letter that the discussions in the Convention, are exceedingly sharp. I have little doubt that shame will be the portion of each of the king's ministers, who have advised him to do so foolish and wicked a thing as to meddle with the Constitution. I hope we shall soon hear that he has dismissed from his service, these shameless ministers, and sought other and better men. We shall see what will be the result of this attack on the nation's Constitution.

"I believe that no Americans, save a few in the employ of the Government, are in sympathy with the king and his ministers in their attack on the Constitution. The French, too, including the Catholics, oppose any change being made. The English prelates, it is thought, favor change, expecting, doubtless to make capital out of it. The Lord disappoint them we pray, and save the nation from the devices of wicked and unreasonable men."

They that drive away time, spur a free horse.