

Correspondence.

OPEN AIR MEETINGS.

No. III.

BY EDWARD PATSON HAMMOND.

I promised in my last to collect a few facts and thoughts with regard to "occasional open air meetings." There are hundreds of goodly men in Great Britain who are ever watchful for opportunities to repeat the story of the Saviour's finished work. It is said that the Bishop of London takes his stand at Bishop Cross, and preaches Christ and him crucified to the crowds who there gather. Would it not look strange to see the Bishop of New York on the City Hall steps, telling the motley crowd that "Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners" even the chief? No doubt many would "murmur," as did the Scribes and Pharisees when "all the publicans and sinners" pressed around the meek and lowly Jesus to listen to his compassionate and life-giving words.

ST. JAMES' PARK. The Bishop of London, like our blessed Lord, love to be called "the friend of publicans and sinners." A walk through St. James' Park on any pleasant Sabbath day, convinces one that in that vast city of three millions, there are hundreds who fear not to imitate his example. It is safe to say that twenty or thirty separate audiences might often be counted in that park on a Sabbath, listening attentively to the words of eternal life. Among the speakers may be seen gentlemen of high standing, whose names are familiar even on this side of the Atlantic. It would be at times impossible for a man to get through the park without listening to a sufficient amount of truth to save his soul.

In June, 1861, while I was driving with a gentleman in Grosvenor Square, he remarked that there was a crowd in St. James' Park, and proposed that we should go and see some of the open air preaching-services, which were usual on such public occasions. It might add interest for me to state, this gentleman's whole time and yearly income of seventy-five thousand dollars is devoted entirely to the service of the Lord. On entering the park we found numerous audiences listening, though on a week-day, to the Gospel. But I was soon astonished to see my honored host step upon one of the wayside seats, and holding up his pocket Bible, begin to speak to the passers-by of Christ and heaven. One after another stopped, till soon a large crowd were assembled. He "lifted up" Christ in a simple but impressive manner, which at once arrested and riveted the attention of all within sound of his voice. It was most interesting to study the change upon the countenances of his hearers. At first, by their looks at least, "some said, what will this babbling say?" But ere long their careless or contemptuous appearance was changed to one of deep anxiety. A short hymn and prayer closed the service.

But then began the most interesting and important part of the meeting. Numerous Christians were ready to go among the wounded and point to the Lamb of God. This gentleman, who ranks among England's nobility, though intensely interested at the sight of anxious inquirers, treated the whole matter as one of common occurrence. But was there not joy in the presence of the angels in heaven over sinners repenting? Will not God in answer to prayer raise up such men in this country—men who shall be willing to obey the command of our risen Lord and "go out in the highways and compel them to come in?"

A recent number of *The Revival*, a paper published by Messrs. Morgan & Chase, in London, gives an interesting account of the manner in which the Gospel was preached at a public execution a few weeks since, at Leeds, in England. I venture to quote it almost entire. To the one who prayerfully inquires, "Lord, what wilt thou have me to do?" it is full of instruction.

"PREACHING AT THE EXECUTION AT LEEDS.—The two wretched murderers, Sargisson and Myers, were executed in front of the Armlay jail, Leeds, on Saturday morning, at nine o'clock. As this was the first execution there, the crowd was immense, certainly over 50,000, and by some said to be much larger. This assemblage occupied two or three fields in front of the prison, and afforded a rare opportunity for preaching and tract distribution. Nor were laborers wanting to seize the opportunity. Without definite arrangements beforehand, upwards of thirty Christian men were drawn together to work for their Master, including the eighteen town missionaries, with their large banners provided by the Open Air Mission, which was first stationed in one part of the crowd and then in another, the six texts on it being read by thousands of people. We preached consecutively at three or four stations. The addresses were generally short and

to the point. The people were warned and entreated, and Jesus was held up as the only deliverer from the penalty due to the murderer and every other sinner.

"The addresses of some of the brethren, who themselves had sunk deep in sin, were peculiarly suitable. Some one in the crowd called out, 'Let's hear fiddler Joss,' meaning Joshua Poole. He stood up, and used expressions like the following, 'Some o' ye know me; I used to carry a pack o' cards and a book o' dominoes in my pocket, and fifty-seven songs in my head. Now I carry a Testament in my pocket (holding it up) and Christ in my heart. There's gamblers here this morning. I used to kick 'em up (imitating the tossers), but I've given that up now. Some o' ye seek your happiness in drinking, but happiness does not grow in a beer shop. Now I'll tell ye what religion does. It makes a man happy seven days a week. I used to belong to the laughing club, but I gave it up because they paid nothing in sickness. I've now joined the wheat club, and mean to stick to it.' Then followed earnest, telling appeals. Great order prevailed through the crowd. The people generally paid much attention to the preaching, and many cheeks were wet with tears. What a sight it was to look at such a sea of upturned faces. How earnest did it make the preachers in speaking to those whom they could reach. The Rev. Dr. Atlay, the vicar, had a special meeting in the church at a quarter to nine.

"It is impossible to say how many tracts were distributed, perhaps 25,000 or more. Three were printed in the town for the occasion. One entitled 'He that is hanged is accused of God' (Deut. xxi. 23); another, 'What is your sentence?' and the third was a touching prayer intended to be used on behalf of the convicts. Two striking placards were also well posted all over the town. One containing the last words the criminals would hear (from the burial service), and the other asking whether these men were sinners above all men because they suffered such things, with an appropriate answer. I don't know who devised these placards, but they were singularly appropriate, and were read by thousands.

"It was curious to notice the inscriptions on the leather tourists' bags, in which several of the brethren carried their tracts. One had 'God is love,' in gilt letters, and another, 'Joshua Poole, converted fiddler. Praise God.'

"I preached in the open air in the Vicar's croft on Friday evening, (where the town missionaries hold services on Sunday throughout the summer), and afterwards attended a meeting of the Young Men's Christian Association, and was pleased to see so intelligent and devout a body of young men met to welcome their new secretary, Mr. Smith. May their influence for good be felt all over this vast town with its population of 207,000 souls.

"G. KIRKHAM."

AN ILLUSTRATION AT HOME.

But we need not cross the ocean to find examples of successful open-air meetings. In a recent interesting publication—"THE DAYS THAT ARE PAST," by Rev. Thomas J. Shepherd, pastor of the Buttonwood Street Presbyterian Church, Philadelphia, it appears that the Rev. JAMES PATTERSON, the first pastor of that church, in the year 1816, carried on, with an abundant blessing, "periodic Sabbath services on the common." I cannot forbear making a few quotations from this volume.

"The interest began with the appointment of a prayer meeting on Monday evenings, for the special purpose of supplicating revival influences. These meetings became so thronged and so solemn that every evening in the week was soon occupied, and preaching services were intermingled with those of prayer. For ninety successive nights these services were protracted, with some extravagance it may be, but with manifold evidence of a power more than man's.

"At the outset some of the cautious church members were troubled and perplexed. Among them was Mr. Markoe. He had never witnessed, had never imagined such scenes. For a time, he was in doubt as to the character of the work. In the subjects of this strange influence, there were probably some prominent excesses of feeling and of action, but the fruits of a precious revival of religion beginning to appear in the clear and strongly marked conversion of many persons, he condemned and mourned his hesitation. With an honesty and nobleness that become him well, he arose in the crowded church, declared the change in his views, and pledged himself henceforth, with heart and soul, to enter into the work."

The record states that during that year, 192 made profession of faith in Christ, and that Mr. Patterson saw the number of communicants rise from fifty to eleven hundred. His heart continually yearned for the perishing masses. His passion for saving souls found in the crowds that listened to his words a powerful stimulus. For five successive summers he continued to preach Christ to the "throng of Sabbath-breakers that were wont to stroll in the fields near his church." At each of these services, thousands gathered around him and heard that Gospel which elsewhere they never heard. From these services to those in the church, the transition of interested hearers would be easy, and abundant evidence exists that many who became consistent, earnest members of the church, owed their first impression to the field preacher's pungent appeals.

THE RECENT INTERFERENCE With the Work of the American Board at the Sandwich Islands.

It is a thing of course for the Romish Church to send its agents into every important field occupied by Protestant missionaries. In this that church is consistent with its avowed principles, for it denies to us Christian privileges, and is the declared enemy of our religion. Accordingly, the Romish missionaries forced their way, thirty years ago, into the Sandwich Islands, although our laborers then covered the whole ground; and did not scruple to use the naval power of France to overcome the reluctance of the Hawaiian government.

As, however, the Romish mission has never gained a controlling influence in the Island government, and as our struggle with it has been only among the people, we have not hitherto had much to fear from it. It is even a question, whether so much of just that sort of antagonism was not useful, on the whole, both to the missionaries and to their converts.

At any rate, the work of Christianizing the Islands advanced steadily, through the blessing of God, until, in the year 1863, we completed the religious organization of our churches, and devolved on them the responsibility of self-government, and also, to a great extent, of self-support. The Hawaiian government, as such, though Protestant in its legal character, had no inconvenient entanglements with either denomination previous to the year 1862, and the ministers of religion, both Protestant and Romish, felt that they had the freest scope for the exercise of their sacred functions. Indeed, nothing seemed wanting for the religious accommodation of all classes of the people, from the king down to his lowest subject, except an Episcopal clergyman of evangelical sentiments and good abilities and character, to reside at Honolulu, where a small number of people of foreign origin, and the king who had been in England, and his queen whose father was of English birth, were supposed to prefer the Episcopal form of worship. To meet this state of things, the Foreign Secretary of this Board, a few years since, advised an excellent bishop of the American Episcopal Church to procure the sending of an evangelical presbyter to Honolulu, and there was some conference on the subject, but no one was sent.

Not long after this, at the commencement of 1860, a movement was made from the Sandwich Islands to obtain such a clergyman from England. Dr. Armstrong, then President of the Board of Instruction, and Mr. Wylie, Minister of Foreign Affairs, acting under direction from His Majesty, wrote to the Rev. William Ellis, in London, asking him to take measures for securing an Episcopal clergyman for Honolulu, stating that the king would guarantee him a thousand dollars, annually, towards his support, and grant a lot of land for an Episcopal church. It is understood that the new presbyter was to be made chaplain of the royal family and private tutor of the young heir to the throne, who, however, died not long after. Mr. Ellis had once resided at the Islands, and was desired to procure an evangelical clergyman such as he believed would be adapted to the situation, but not one of high-church proclivities, for such an one would not have the sympathy and support of the other evangelical ministers on the Islands. Such an Episcopal clergyman was then needed, and would strengthen the cause of Christian piety on the Islands, and receive a cordial welcome from all the American missionary brethren.

Mr. Ellis placed the letters in the hands of the Secretary of the "Colonial Church and School Society," and the committee of that society, approving of the object, submitted them to the Bishop of London, who expressed his entire concurrence in the proceedings, and his readiness to aid in carrying them out. And application was actually made to one or two suitable individuals, but without success.

The Consul General of the Islands in London is an Englishman, but was never at the Sandwich Islands. He also had been written to by Mr. Wylie, it must be presumed in strict accordance with the letters addressed to Mr. Ellis, but he at once put himself in communication, not with either of the great missionary societies in the Church of England, but (as Mr. Ellis says) with individuals belonging to the "section of the Church of England characterized by extreme ritualism," with a view to sending a bishop to the Islands, "with all the paraphernalia," as he expresses it, "appertaining to his office and functions." On learning this from the Consul, Mr. Ellis objected—and here too we use his own language—"that such a procedure would be a great mistake, as the Bishop, if sent, would probably fail, while a respectable pious clergyman, who would co-operate with

the Christian ministers already there, would prove a real blessing, especially to those who cherished attachment to the system of the Church of England, of which, except as one of the various forms of Christianity, the king must necessarily be ignorant."

Mr. Ellis' objections were not regarded, while the endeavor to send a mission to the Islands, to consist of a bishop and three presbyters, was prosecuted to a successful issue. It was the original plan to add two more presbyters from the United States, making a mission of six in all, but this part of the plan, for some reason, was not carried into effect.

The Prudential Committee do not bring this remarkable interference with our work at the Sandwich Islands before the Board from a sectarian point of view, but solely in its relations to the prosperity of the missionary work. This new mission is really a great innovation upon the usages of Protestant missions, and is the practical assertion of a very dangerous principle. We know of nothing like it, unless it be in Western Asia. The onsets of the Church of Rome we can bear, but "a house divided against itself shall not stand." Every Protestant denomination of Christians, every missionary society, has a deep interest in the case. The American Board has been more than forty years endeavoring to elevate a race of barbarian pagans, on those remote Islands, up to the level of a civilized Christian community, and for this purpose it has sent forth a hundred and fifty laborers, male and female, and expended considerably over a million of dollars. It now—after it has succeeded, and can point as the result of its labors and expenditures to a Christian nation recognized as such by the Christian nations; to a self-governing Christian community wonderfully transformed in manners and morals; to the missionary work so far accomplished there, that if the churches we have planted and organized are let alone, they can live and thrive with but little more of our aid,—if now, in this hour of our victory, after so long and arduous a conflict and so great an expenditure, it shall be judged right and proper for a body of professed allies to come upon us, with the evident intent, if it be possible, of taking entire possession of the field,—what a hindrance and discouragement that would be to prosecuting these great and costly missionary enterprises!

It is well, for the calm and candid discussion of this case, that it involves the Christian honor of no one of the great churches of Christendom, of no one of the great missionary societies. For we have the declaration of the late excellent Archbishop Sumner, in a letter to the Foreign Secretary of this Board, corroborating our other testimonies, that this mission had its origin with "certain individuals," who "formed themselves into a committee for the purpose of taking advantage of the proposal of the king of Hawaii, and with the ultimate view of establishing a bishop on the Polynesian Islands." Nor had the good Archbishop himself even heard of the plan, until he was informed of it by the Foreign Secretary of this Board, some months after the self-appointed committee had commenced its operations.

Gradually, in the progress of the missionary work, there has been developed and established a LAW OF CHRISTIAN COURTESY, for the government of missionary societies,—our great common law. All Protestant societies have found it for their advantage to observe it: And it is vitally for their interest, and for the interest of all the several churches for which they act, and of Christ's kingdom, to observe it strictly and to discountenance every violation of it.

The plea set up for sending an English bishop to the Sandwich Islands is, that such a bishop was requested by the king of the Islands. But we have the correspondence, and we know, that his request was simply for an Episcopal presbyter to reside at Honolulu. If—many months after the self-appointed committee in England had set the wheel in motion—the young king was persuaded to give his assent to the plan of sending a bishop, if he even wrote to the Queen of England, as is affirmed on somewhat doubtful authority, that may serve to account for the fact that Earl Russell gave his license for the consecration of a bishop, and that the Archbishop of Canterbury and the Bishop of London felt bound to consecrate him; but it in no degree justifies the previous acts of the committee, nor would it have been regarded, as we fully believe, by either of the great missionary societies of the English Church, as justifying a mission that, by its numbers, constitution, prestige, and the intensity of its ritualistic spirit, was evidently designed to supplant, on those Islands, the institutions and influence of the missionaries sent out by this Board.

The movement by the parties in

England, not excluding Bishop Staley and his associates, was no doubt entered upon with very inadequate and mistaken views of the number, character and labors of the American missionaries, and of the great religious and social changes which had resulted therefrom. A work published in London by the Consul-General in the interest of the new mission, with a commendatory preface by the Bishop of Oxford, did not hesitate to pronounce the American mission at the Islands to have been a failure!—though the authorities, to which the author frequently refers, were enough to have taught him better, and of course left him inexcusable for his ignorance.

Bishop Staley, soon after his arrival at Honolulu, with his three presbyters, (which was in the autumn of 1862), published in a sermon what he calls the "leading features of the church-system," which they had come "to establish among the people of the Islands." These may be described very briefly, in nearly his own words.

"The worship of the people, he says, was to be 'guided by Holy Scripture, as interpreted by the ancient fathers, implying by that term those chiefly of the first five centuries—the purest ages of the Church.' They were to be taught, that their infants were, by baptism, 'made members of Christ, children of God, and inheritors of the kingdom of heaven.' And when the baptized children arrived at 'years of discretion,' they were encouraged to believe that they would 'be strengthened by a new gift of the Holy Spirit, imparted to them by the imposition of hands,' in 'the holy rite of confirmation.' Being thus 'initiated into full communion with the Church,' they were to be deemed fitted to 'approach the Blessed Sacrament of Christ's body and blood.' The baptized were also to be taught, that they were not to wait till they were 'converted by some sudden, irresistible impulse,' but to regard themselves 'as already, by baptism, grafted into Christ's church,' and not only bound, but 'able to crucify the old man, with his evil deeds, by the strength already imparted from above.' If their consciences were 'burdened with sin,' they were to be encouraged 'to come to the minister, and open their grief,' and 'receive the benefit of absolution.' The Islanders, under the instruction of the American missionaries, are wont to call one day in seven the Sabbath, but 'most falsely and mischievously,' in the opinion of Bishop Staley; for the church provides an order of prayer to be said daily throughout the year." "Such," he adds, are some of the leading "features in that church system we come to establish among the people of these Islands."

The Board will at once see, that the doctrines involved in this "church system" could not possibly be "established among the people of those Islands," and become prevalent, without a dangerous revolution in their religious opinions and habits, nor without going far to dispossess us of the field we have struggled so long and expended so much to win.

It is proper to add, that the office and work of our brethren as Christian ministers, as well as their churches and native ministry, are ignored by the Reformed Catholics, (as they call themselves,) as much as they ever were by the Roman Catholics. They never meet our brethren as divinely authorized Christian missionaries, and the natives see it.

Thus far, they have found it hard to interest the people. Excepting a few extraordinary occasions, their audiences have everywhere been small, even within the precincts of the court. Their worship is too showy, too like the Roman Catholic, for the religious taste of the people. Still this mission, having come with a virtual commendation from Queen Victoria, and having been most cordially adopted by the late king, and falling in with the tastes and tendencies of the present reigning family, is exerting an influence in the government, which occasions much uneasiness. The Minister of Foreign Affairs, the Minister of the Interior, one of the Justices of the Supreme Court, the Attorney General and the Governor of Maui (a native,) have joined the Reformed Catholic Church. The only other cabinet minister is a French gentleman, and he is a Roman Catholic. Bishop Staley, though remaining at the head of his mission, has been made chaplain to the king, and a member of his Privy Council.

The time allotted to this Special Report has allowed no extended quotations from the correspondence, nor a statement of the matters of detail; but should the case be referred to a committee, to report thereon during the progress of this meeting, that committee will find an ample and carefully prepared historical account of the mission, now under consideration, in the Twentieth Chapter of a new work on the Hawaiian Islands, which will be placed in its hands.

At the close of the chapter just mentioned, will be found the noble protest of the Earl of Shaftesbury against a similar attempt, and by the same class of persons, to send a bishop and six presbyters to the capital of Madagascar, where the London Missionary Society had long and successfully labored. The protest was made at a meeting, at which the Earl presided. It is now understood, that the mission was not prosecuted,—as it may be hoped the one sent to the Hawaiian Islands will not be. The Committee cannot but regard the mission of Bishop Staley as fraught with far more evil than good to the Protestant community on those Islands; nor can they believe, that their brethren of the Episcopal Church, whether in England or in this country, when once they understand the case, will desire its continuance in its present form.

RESOLUTIONS OF UNION PRESBYTERY, EAST TENNESSEE.

We have already given a summary of the proceedings of this Presbytery at its late meeting in Spring Place Church, near Knoxville, Sept. 2d, 1864. At that time the Presbytery resolved to resume its connection with the Assembly of our church, which had been interrupted since the secession of the Southern churches at Cleveland, in 1857. We believed at the time of the secession, that the churches in E. Tennessee, although carried away with the rest, were not cordial in the movement, and especially that the membership of the churches was largely in sympathy with the General Assembly. In the late meeting of Presbytery, although there were but three ministers, no less than ten elders were present, showing where the sympathies of the people are.

We give the subjoined resolutions at the request of the Presbytery:

WHEREAS, Presbytery, at its last regular meeting, held in New Market, 1863, passed the following resolution, to-wit: Resolved, That this Presbytery will neither license, ordain, nor receive from another Presbytery, any man who does not sympathize with the South in her present struggle for independence, or who holds that slaveholding is sinful and ought to be abolished; and

Whereas, This resolution is an arbitrary and unwarranted stretch of power, and an usurpation of the prerogatives which belong to the Lord Jesus Christ alone, as the supreme head of the church, inasmuch as it imposes tests or terms of licensure, ordination and membership, which are novel and without any warrant either from the word of God, Confession of Faith, or uniform practice of the Presbyterian church, but is in direct conflict therewith, and is therefore subversive of the good order, peace and purity of the church; and

Whereas, This resolution is a shameful and inexcusable apostasy from the principles of patriotism and universal freedom to which the Presbyterian Church in its long, varied and honorable history has steadfastly adhered; and

Whereas, This resolution may, and doubtless does, express the sentiments and views of a large majority of the ministers belonging to Presbytery, yet the same is heartily condemned and severely censured by a very large majority of the churches under its care; therefore,

Resolved, That the said resolution be and the same is hereby deemed and held to be inoperative, null and void.

Resolved, That we deeply regret and lament that so many of our brethren have been so far forgetful of the imperative demands of patriotism, justice and humanity, as to range themselves on the side of wrong and injustice, and against their country and freedom; and we sincerely hope that they will reconsider their action, be brought to see their great error, and abandon principles which are evidently at war with Christianity, civilization and humanity.

The above resolutions were unanimously adopted.

RETURNING TO THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY.

Whereas, Presbytery is convinced that its interests are not likely to be promoted by a continuation of its connection with the United Synod of the Presbyterian Church; therefore,

Resolved, That the connection of Presbytery with said Synod be, and the same is now hereby dissolved.

Resolved, That this Presbytery, at the kind solicitation and request of the General Assembly of the Presbyterian church from which it withdrew in 1857, presented through the Rev. J. W. Elliott, does now return to that body.

The resolutions were adopted unanimously.

HOME MISSIONS.

On applications received from the churches they serve, the following ministers were commissioned by the Presbyterian Committee of Home Missions. Seven of whom were under commission last year.

- Rev. H. B. Scott, Central College and Genoa, Ills.
A. D. Moore, Dauphin, Pa.
W. J. Johnston, Lena, Ills.
Danl. Higbee, Washingtonville, N. Y.
Benj. Franklin, Brighton, Mich.
John Gleas, Scott and vicinity, Iowa.
B. Russell Tyrone and Sugar Hill, N. Y.
H. Baker, Harrisburg, Pa.
Jas. M. Stevenson, Jersey City, N. J.
Alanson Schofield, Quincy and California, Mich.
J. H. Phelps, Winterset, Iowa.
W. J. Nutting, Unadilla and Plainfield, Mich.
Huntington Lyman, Matheron, N. Y.
Armon Spencer, Williamson, N. Y.
George C. Wood, Jacksonville, Ills.
W. H. Hendrickson, Winchester, Ills.