

Correspondence.

OPEN AIR MEETINGS.

BY EDWARD PAYSON HAMMOND.

No. VI.

The question has been asked, Can the right sort of men be found to speak to the masses in the open air? This at first may appear a difficult problem to solve. But experience proves that men well adapted to the work will, with proper encouragement, spring up on every hand.

In years gone by some crazy fanatics have collected crowds, which have made disturbance and been dispersed by the police. This has made it necessary for some of our city governments to pass ordinances forbidding promiscuous speaking in the open air, at the corners of the streets, and in parks. Thus those whose zeal for souls would often have led them to gather the people who stood by thousands in parks and on commons on the Sabbath, cannot do it without the trouble of consulting the city authorities. More moral courage has thus been required to initiate the work.

But let, for instance, our large Presbyteries of New York city, follow the example of the Presbytery of Glasgow, which requires their ministers to take their turn in preaching on "Glasgow Green" to some of the thousands who wander there. Let them receive the protection of the police, or rather make sure of no interference from that quarter, and preach in the Central Park, Sabbath after Sabbath, during the summer months, and soon there would be no opportunity resting upon those who should go to the highways and hedges to compel sinners to come to the Gospel feast. Let this be done, and a few earnest men go forward in the work, and speakers would not be wanting all over the land to follow their example. The truth of this has been illustrated on a small scale in this country and Canada, and on a large scale in Great Britain.

When a man of good common sense, with the love of Christ in his soul, yearning for the salvation of sinners, speaks to his fellow men of Christ and his finished work, there is no danger of a failure. I have seen very many men whose pulpit ministrations were but ordinary, speaking in the open air "in demonstration of the Spirit and of power." And there are multitudes of ministers and laymen who, if they were once in the work, would find no difficulty in speaking to large masses. Yes, "the common people" would hear them gladly.

OPEN AIR MEETING IN CHICAGO.

An interesting scene in Chicago illustrates the truth of this statement. Several thousand people assembled at the head of Michigan avenue, one Sabbath P.M. in June, to hear the Gospel. The first meeting closed in about an hour and a half. But the people still lingered. Thus while some were talking with the anxious in an adjoining building, others continued to speak to the multitudes of passers by. Thus the public speaking and singing and prayer continued from about five P. M. till full eight at night. Of course a large number of speakers was required to carry on the work. At first it seemed as if the preaching could not be continued very long after the first meeting closed. But soon it was found that some twenty ministers from the country chanced to be present. They were at once drafted. It was very difficult at first to get them to speak to the crowd. But after being urged, they consented one by one. And all of them seemed to "speak as the oracles of God." I should think some twelve took part, who had not the slightest idea of saying a word when they came, and yet every one of them seemed to say just the right thing. Each seemed to be led by the "spirit of God." Indeed, I believe they were thus led, for much importunate prayer for an immediate blessing had been offered.

No doubt some souls that day were led to Christ. Some believe that, considering the many who came and went during those three hours, between five and eight thousand must have heard the word of life that day. Not a few of them were Germans, who know no Sabbath, and Romanists. No police were present, and yet there was not the slightest disturbance. The meeting was but poorly advertised, or many more might have been collected. But it certainly taught the lesson that ordinary ministers can speak with good effect, and with the blessing of God in the open air.

THE OPEN AIR MEETINGS IN HAMILTON, C.W., also help to prove the statement that has been made with regard to the ease of securing, in almost any town or city, efficient speakers to arrest the attention of non-church goers. During the mild days of autumn in 1862, special services for the quickening of God's people in the divine life, and for the awakening

of sinners, were held in that Canadian city. At first their large churches were not well filled. Especially the class, the most important to reach, knew little and cared less about the meetings. One night the preacher announced, that in order to secure the attendance of some of the "outstanding masses," he would speak at the corner of a small park for half an hour before the appointed time for service in the church, and as some ten ministers were uniting in the "special services," he expressed the wish that some of them might be present to take part in the out-door meetings. The next night the preacher, at the appointed hour, was at the place of meeting. But who think ye had he for an audience? One cabman! Not a minister that night was to be seen on the spot! After talking awhile with the cabman, some children on their way to the church were asked to come and help sing. Their sweet voices soon caught the ears of those passing to and fro. Before the time for closing quite a respectable audience had convened, and not a few for the first time were induced to attend the series of meetings in the churches, and some of them were among the anxious. These facts were made known, and the next night there was no want of an audience and of speakers for the meeting at the park. Several of the best ministers of the city were there and ready to take their part. This open air meeting was kept up nearly every night, except Sabbath, for three weeks. It was no unusual thing to hear six of the ministers following each other with earnest words at these meetings beneath God's celestial temple. Catholics and harlots there heard and believed and were saved. After these meetings commenced, the churches were always filled to overflowing. Among those who stood up in the great congregation and testified that they were first either arrested or brought under conviction at these open air meetings, was an English officer of high rank. After a week or two young converts, sometimes with a great blessing, told the story of their conversion.

On going back to Hamilton a year afterwards, the cabman seemed quite anxious to have me take his carriage. He took me to the open air meetings, and offered to pay him he said: "I got my pay last year at those open air meetings on the Gore, for I there found salvation for my soul."

Had not these good men come to the help of these recruiting meetings, they could not have been sustained. Night after night they spoke and spoke never heard one of them make a failure. None of them brought stiles with them, though some of them were "canny" pastors of sedate Scotch churches.

Do not the blessed results which attended the labors of these men, who for the first time spoke in the open air, in Hamilton, intimate, at least, that it would be no difficult thing to find plenty of good preachers to help carry on open air meetings for the "unexcused masses?" Oh! that we had in this country more faith in God's word, and in the mighty power of the Holy Spirit, which, under one open air sermon, led about three thousand souls to Christ!

During the progress of these open air meetings in Hamilton, an Episcopal lady, whose writings are much admired, sent me the following lines. Those who by God's grace have been enabled with that great apostle who often preached in the open air to say, "the love of Christ constraineth us," cannot fail to read them with interest.

"THE LOVE OF CHRIST CONSTRAINETH US."  
Why stand those living pillars there?  
Upon Jerusalem's broad towers,  
Unshrinking in the frosty air?  
Undaunted in the noontide hours,  
As towers are at the watchmen's post,  
Why stand they—the world disdaineth them,  
An answer on the breeze went past,  
"The Love of Christ constraineth them."  
Far o'er the bosom of the earth  
From polar seas—to myrtle bowers,  
Are they who've left their land of birth,  
Reigned the joys of home's sweet hours,  
What makes them count all things but lost!  
Wee! with affliction, paineth them,  
Why dying, smile they on the Cross?  
"The Love of Christ constraineth them."  
Why is it that we count it good  
In His best service to be found?  
To draw the water, hew the wood,  
So that we tread Immanuel's ground?  
They call us fools, who at the base  
Of human pride arraigneth us,  
And guilty of the charge we are,  
"The Love of Christ constraineth us."  
Why is it that the cheek pales not,  
Watching so long the little flock?  
Why is it that the arm falls not,  
Still ever pointing to the rock?  
Still drawing water from the well,  
The Saviour's flock disdaineth us,  
We gladly own the mystic spout,  
"The Love of Christ constraineth us."  
Whence comes that martyr courage rare  
And that to us unhidden springs?  
We are but weak, and can we dare  
To fight with dark, and fearful things?

An evil spirit, fierce and arch  
Rejoicing if he gaineth us;  
How can we to the battle march?  
"The Love of Christ constraineth us."  
Christ cometh—for His reign shall be  
From sun to earth; from moon to stars;  
Hark! heard ye not beyond the sea  
A sound of chariots from afar?  
Music is swelling through the sky,  
Cold earth no more detaineth us,  
Loud and louder swell our cry  
"The Love of Christ constraineth us."  
HAMILTON, November 23d, 1862.

THE RELATION OF THE SABBATH-SCHOOL TO THE CHURCH.

BY REV. DANIEL MARCH, D.D.

How shall it be defined? How understood? Is it subordinate, superior, or independent? Is it optional, accidental, or necessary? Is it equal, auxiliary, or antagonistic? Is it that of the agent, or the principal, the instrument, or the workman, the nursery to the household, or the recruiting station to the army? Would the Church die if its life were not renewed by accessions from the Sabbath-school? Would the Sabbath-school become secularized and lose its character as a Christian institution, if it were not sanctified by the faith and purified by the life of the Church? Would the preaching and ordinances of the sanctuary be deserted and the sacred claims of religion lose their power in the household, and the rising generation be given up to worldliness and unbelief, if it were not for the Sabbath-school to impress the lessons of God's word upon the minds of the young, and to give attention to the worship and ordinances of the Church? Is the Sabbath-school a school for children, and are we to expect the young to derive from it all the good influences which the truth and ordinances of the Gospel convey to those of mature years? All these questions, and many more, prompted by extreme and antagonistic views and feelings in reference to the province and efficiency of Church and Sabbath-school, have been answered both affirmatively and negatively. And while much light has been thrown upon the general subject of Sabbath-school instruction by the frequent and earnest comparison of diverse opinions, we have not yet reached a satisfactory definition of the precise relation in question. And if we find it difficult to define the importance of this institution, it will be equally difficult to define that which will be generally acceptable to all disputants. It will be equally difficult to define the reciprocal obligations of Church and Sabbath-school, when the relation of one to the other has been clearly expressed and mutually accepted. And it is for the want of such a definition, so accepted, that there has been doubt and controversy; there has even been distrust and jealousy between the best laborers in the same field and the most faithful servants of the same Master. And after all that has been said and written on this familiar theme, the only just reason for continuing the discussion, is the importance of attaining a common understanding upon a subject which so deeply concerns the spiritual welfare of millions and the full establishment of Christ's Kingdom in the earth.

And the one idea which will help us most in the attainment of our desired definition, is the essential unity existing between the agencies and instrumentalities for good in this world. The redeeming purposes of God aim at the accomplishment of one work, the spiritual enlightenment and salvation of the human race. And all subordinate influences which aid that work, have one source, and however various their mode of operation, they are one in their spirit, purpose and result. In common language, the Church is the name of the diverse, yet living, organized and divinely commissioned agencies, by which the religion of Christ is maintained, and the saving grace of the Gospel is proclaimed to the unbelieving world. The Church, therefore, is that which works for Christ, with all their diverse gifts and operations, is one. Its unity is that of the spirit and not of form; and the relation which exists between its different modes of operation is the same as that which exists between different parts of the same body, different cells of the same mind. The eye, the hand and the foot are essential to the completeness of the human frame, and what ever is done by either, is referred to the same living agent which controls every organ and speaks in every act. It is easy to understand the relation of one organ to another, because all combined constitute one body, and one is essential to the completeness of another. Seeing and hearing, speech and motion, are all acts of one organized life. Whatever is purposed, there is but one will. So of all the varied forms of Christian beneficence and instruction which are employed to enlighten and to save the world. They are all outgrowths from the same spiritual life which dwells in Christ's own body, his regenerate, sanctified and faithful people of every name, in every age, in all the earth. No one of the infinitely diversified forms of Christian activity is unessential, or independent of the rest, simply because all are the sacred and chosen work of the same people, fulfilling their divine commission to preach the Gospel to every creature. Bibles are printed in more tongues than were heard on the day of Pentecost. The religious press scatters its truths as leaves in Vallon; the poor, the orphan, the deprivileged and the afflicted are visited with gifts and messages of mercy; with help for the body and healing for the soul. The idle and the Sabbath-breaking are addressed at the corners of the streets and invited to the house of God. The wanderer is followed with the word of life in the waste places of the wilderness. The gentle ministries of love and instruction are employed in behalf of all who go down to the sea in ships, and all who peril their lives for their country upon the high places of the field. The camp and the hospital, the trenches and the prison, are visited with the commission of charity and the message of salvation. These are all appropriate, essential and honorable parts of the grand work which the Church of Christ, in all its branches, with all its agencies, has to do. And although this work may be marred by human imperfection, and some may engage in it from unworthy motives, still it is only because Christ has chosen people in the world, that the good cause is strong enough to command the service of imperfect instruments and thus to bring good out of evil. From the one living body of Christ's own people flow forth the streams of salvation of which Christ himself is the fountain head.

It is in accordance with these general and admitted principles, that we must define the relation of the Sabbath-school to the Church. When the two are rightly constituted, the relation is like that which exists between different members of the same body, or different processes in the same work of art. The same life lives in both; and both are subject to the command of the same will—the life and will of Christ the Head. Both aim at the same result, and share the fruit of the same success. The Sabbath-school, rightly constituted, in its body of teachers

and in its system of instruction, is the Church itself, fulfilling the divine command to train up its own children and those of its adoption, in the nurture and admonition of the Lord. Christian parents, upon whom the command is expressly enjoined, taking their appropriate place in the Sabbath-school, assisting and are assisted themselves in fulfilling a common obligation. Whatever increase to its own numbers or strength or vitality the Church may receive from the Sabbath-school, is not simply a gift from a rival or independent institution. It is the harvest springing from the seed which its own laborers have sown. It is the fruit of the success with which its own efforts and prayers have been crowned. The Church suffers when the Sabbath-school declines, simply because the two, rightly organized and conducted, are one; and the whole body must suffer the pain or the loss inflicted upon a single member.

The study of the Sacred Scriptures and the instruction of classes in the Sabbath-school are as truly ordinances of the Church as the preaching and worship of the Sanctuary. The selection and the supply of the whole body of teachers, whose duty it shall be to explain the promises and the promises of divine revelation every Sabbath day, is a responsibility which the Church cannot shun, and it is to be fulfilled with as conscientious a regard for the salvation of men, as the election of a pastor or the appointment of anyone to bear office in the house of the Lord. There is indeed no ordinance of the Church which needs to be watched and secured against all neglect and perversion with more zealous care than the instruction of the young in the great truths that concern their everlasting peace. It is no mere necessity to guard the pupil itself against all error and worldliness and unbelief, than it is to provide the children of the congregation with instructors who will teach conscientiously and prayerfully, and who will be in Jesus, and who will direct the young charge with affectionate earnestness and consistency to the Lamb of God.

It is undoubtedly true that unconverted men have sometimes stood in holy places, and spoken the word of life, and the divine Spirit has blessed the message which came from unsanctified lips to the salvation of men. And yet a church, that should select an unchristian man for its minister, knowing and believing him to be such, would itself forfeit the name of Christian. And so teachers in Sabbath-schools have sometimes learned the love of Christ themselves while attempting to do good to others. And yet if it is of no value, in the religious instruction of others, should be able to speak of the love of Christ from personal experience of its power. In directing the lambs of the flock to the great Shepherd, they should lead the way, and show that the path is familiar to their feet. And so the books, the lessons, the teachers, the various incidental illustrations, entertainments and exercises employed in instructing the Sabbath-school, should be chosen and judged in the same light as the preaching and ordinances of the Sanctuary, simply because in the Sabbath-school, the Church itself is educating its children and its members, and is determining its own character and the destiny of immortal souls forever.

The general principles thus far stated, admit of many important practical applications. Every individual Church should look upon its Sabbath-school as a portion of its own family; the child of its dearest hopes and affections. It is not to be regarded as the relation existing between them, but all shall speak of both as one. The stranger entering the Sabbath-school as a spectator, the new scholar, coming for the first time to take his place in a class, should see at once that the Church is there at work, with its officers and members, its wealth and respectability, its talents and cultivation, its living faith and fervent piety, its message of Divine truth and its zeal for the conversion of souls to Christ. The thoughtless and the worldly may hear the music of the choir, and the voice of the preacher in the sanctuary, and go away without assuming any responsibility in the Sabbath-school, individual and class. They are brought into personal contact with each other. Opportunities are offered to form friendships for life. And the Church should avail itself of this precious institution to gather many within its sacred enclosure who would otherwise wander from the fold of Christ and be lost in the moral wastes of the world. Sabbath by Sabbath, it should draw the young with bands of love, and lead them to the feet of Jesus, and sit there with them to hear and to teach his gracious words. The Church cannot draw the Sabbath-school too closely to itself. It cannot make the duty of giving religious instruction to the young too entirely and sacredly its own. It cannot pour out too many gifts and labors and affections upon the young, and consecrated work. Its supplies, whether from the household, the prayer-meeting, and the sanctuary cannot ascend too frequently or too fervently for the refreshing showers of Divine grace to descend on this garden of the Lord. And no instance can be found in which a Church, with all its membership, poured out its hopes, its efforts and its affections upon the Sabbath-school and failed to receive in return, the gladdening harvest of increased faith and multiplied numbers and continued prosperity. The seed of the divine word sown by faithful hands in the susceptible hearts of the young, is most sure to spring up and bear fruit unto eternal life.

If every individual member of the Church has a duty to discharge in giving religious instruction to the Sabbath-school. The life of the young, and the patient application of its holy truths upon other minds, are sacred ordinances which no one can neglect without injury to himself without failing of his duty to the cause of Christ. The holy covenant which every disciple makes with Christ and with his people in the profession of his faith, is an engagement to lead a life of Christian usefulness, to accept with gladness any opportunity to win others, old or young, to the service of the same Master. That obligation is the same to all, and however diverse the mode of fulfilling it, each individual has only to labor according to his several ability, and whatever outward results may attend his efforts, he will secure in his own heart the priceless reward of peace, gratitude and love.

And it is not simply the duty of the individual of a whole Church, possessing various gifts of time, health and ability, who is called upon to engage in Sabbath-school instruction. It is not the young or the poor or the ignorant alone, who may be benefited by taking the place of scholars in the school where the word of life is the only text-book, and Christ himself is the supreme Master. The whole congregation may profitably resolve itself into a school every Sabbath-day for an hour's united study of the greatest and most momentous truths that can ever engage the attention of man. The act of studying and teaching, is the best possible preparation of old and young for a profitable cause men do not profit from a school, if they derive so little from the Scriptures more they hear in their ordinary attendance upon the sanctuary. The preacher must address, if he can arouse the attention and command the convictions of hearers, who have not interest

enough in religious truth to examine for themselves, and see whether the things which he affirms are so. If it requires effort, if it causes inconvenience, if it demands self-denial for a church-member to attend the Sabbath-school, so much the better for him, for then it will do him the more good. He would gain the full amount of good which the Church and Sabbath-school combined are fitted to confer, he must hold himself ready to teach or to take his place in a class; to gather in new scholars or to visit the absent; to give time, effort and money according to his ability; to cheer the despondent, to persevere under discouragements, to conquer difficulties and in every way to enlarge, to enrich and to strengthen the whole system of religious instruction which is equally adapted to every member of the congregation, and which confers equal blessing upon old and young, teachers and scholars. The Church as a whole, should throw so much of its power, its faith, its piety, its desire for the conversion of men into the Sabbath-school as to save it effectually from all ungodly secular influences, and all unsanctified measures to promote its prosperity. The safeguard against such perversion should come from the authority of personal influence and the silent restraints and incentives of high spirituality in the Church as a whole, rather than from ecclesiastical interference. There will be little danger that the Sabbath-school will fall into unsanctified hands, or be turned aside from its true work, when every enrolled follower of Christ feels the same interest in this sacred and blessed institution, that he does in the other ordinances of the Church, and he is as willing to give time, effort and influence to secure its success. And if any Church-member would grow in grace himself; if he would have great peace and joy in believing; if he desires his religion to comfort and sustain him under trials, burdens and temptations; let him maintain a systematic and devout study of God's word; let him try to impress the great truths of the Gospel upon other minds; let him sustain by his habitual presence and labors, a system of instruction which has been blessed to the enlightenment and salvation of unnumbered thousands. If any one would scatter blessings for others with both hands as he passes swiftly along the journey of life; if he would lay up pleasant memories to visit him like angels of mercy and consolation in declining age and in the hour of death; if he would be welcomed at the gates of the heavenly city by those who learned the path of life from his lips, let him count it a privilege to hold an active membership in the Sabbath-school; let him be all in his power to enlist the greatest possible number in the earnest and habitual study of God's word.

III. The Church as a body, in all its membership, should draw the Sabbath-school to the sanctuary, by sending those going to the Sabbath-school. Let Christian parents and all church members of adult age, meet with the children to study the scriptures, and to join their voices in hymns of praise, and then all the children will gladly go with their parents and teachers to join in the worship and to give attention to the preaching of the sanctuary. If the parents go with the children to their service, the children as a matter of course will go with the parents to theirs. And so the service in the sanctuary and in the school-room shall be equally sacred and acceptable to old and young. Thus the sanctuary shall draw life, freshness and simplicity from the Sabbath-school, and the Sabbath-school shall derive solemnity, earnestness and spirituality from the sanctuary. The presence will not be solely to lead his sermons with lifeless abstractions, when he sees all before him in the sanctuary the same audience which he has just addressed with conversational ease and familiarity in the school-room. There must needs be a firm, united, persevering effort in all our congregations to remove the impression that Sabbath-schools are only for the young, and that the preaching and service of the sanctuary are for those of mature years. And there is but one way in which this most desirable result can be accomplished. Every individual Church must resolve itself into a school for the study of God's word every Sabbath-day. The resolutions of General Assemblies and the instructions of Presbyteries; the authority of Pastors and Sessions; and the debates of Conventions will effect nothing, unless the individual members of Churches, move voluntarily and unitedly in this matter, and by their presence make the gathering in the school-room equal in numbers, intelligence, influence and respectability to the audience in the sanctuary. The youth of eighteen must be made to see without argument, that, if they would keep company with the refined, cultivated and most esteemed of the congregation; they must remain in the Sabbath-school till their hairs are gray, and their eyes are dim with age. All our debates, essays, arguments and ecclesiastical action on this subject will end in words, unless parents and the adult members of our Churches, can be persuaded of their own free accord to join with the young and to give them the influence, their presence, their efforts and their influence to raise the Sabbath-school to the exalted position which it deserves to hold in intellectual cultivation and social respectability, as well as in benevolence and piety. And it would be well that every candidate for admission to any Church, should have the strength and sincerity of his love to Christ tested by the practical question, whether he is ready to take up the work of self-cultivation and usefulness to others at once, and to pursue it for life. If this course were adopted, and every Church-member were found in the Sabbath-school, with as many of the congregation as their example would lead, the result would be seen in a uniform, abiding and intelligent faith of all who profess to love Christ. Amid all the changes and conflicts of the world, they would continue settled and steadfast, grounded in the truth, and always abounding in the work of the Lord. And the children in Christian households, would grow up with increasing love for the Bible and the sanctuary, with profound regard for the instructions and ordinances of the Church, and with earnest desires to promote Christ's kingdom in the earth.

IV. Superintendents and teachers should labor to make the Sabbath-school in all respects worthy of the most sacred and intimate relation with the Church. They should endeavor to make it a school in which the great lessons of life and duty, are taught in a manner suited to the capacities of the oldest and the youngest, the most ignorant and the most cultivated of the congregation. Seeing that the subjects of investigation are always the highest and most sacred truths, the recitations and all the accompanying exercises, should be conducted with such earnestness and sincerity of heart as become the solemnities of the sanctuary and the holiest acts of spiritual worship. The law of kindness and the spirit of order should prevail in the school room, and secure earnest attention and a sacred propriety of deportment in all the exercises of the hour. While studying God's word, every pupil should have his mind deeply imbued with reverence for all sacred things, obedience to all rightful authority, earnestness and solemnity in all acts of worship, faith in all Divine revelation, except to all the demands of duty, and yet while everything is done in such a way as to secure the approbation of the pure and devout mind, the whole order of things in the school-room, should be conducted

with such life, freshness and variety as to win the hearts of the young, and to give hope, animation and simplicity to the piety of mature years. It should be impressed as the greatest lesson of life upon the minds of the young in the Sabbath-school, that the only right way of living is the Christian way, and that they should expect and pursue to take their peace and fulfill their duties in the Church of Christ as much as they expect to live. Every teacher should be able to explain the character of the Church, to expound its doctrines, to exemplify and honor its claims, in such a way as to draw the hearts of its pupils to that sacred society which bears the name of Christ and in the midst of which the true believer finds his chosen and congenial home.

So without raising the question of ecclesiastical precedence or authority, "The Relation of the Sabbath-school to the Church" should be defined by the harmony and success with which both united work for the Salvation of men. The members the Church as a body, taking their appropriate place in the Sabbath-school, can speedily raise it to their own divine standard of purity, faith and love. And the Sabbath-school, laboring only with such means and for such ends as the gospel approves, shall be a continual source of life, strength and growth to the Church.

GOD IS LOVE.

We rejoice that we are not without some knowledge of the character and work of love. We have beheld her grieving over and removing distress, delighting in happiness and scattering it abroad, contemplating excellence with joy and humble desire; planting the rose where the thorn grew, and making the waste a fruitful field. We can declare that were this spirit to have free course in the social universe, and everywhere effect her perfect work, there would remain few defects to deplore, and but little good to desire. But this does not enable us to grasp the truth that God is love, nor can our earthly language, though rich, express its infinite meaning. This love it is not possible that we should entirely comprehend. After we have taken from our knowledge of this principle all that is pure and true, whatever is great in self-sacrifice, wonderful in devotion and delicate in achievement, and have fused these golden particles into a single complete idea, we shall then possess only the faintest realization of that love which God is. Man's noblest conjecture falls immeasurably beneath absolute, infinite love. Neither can thought comprehend God. Created intelligence limited in all directions, grasping only small things, cannot measure Him who built all things; diseased and obscured it may not behold Him who dwells in light unapproachable. If singly we are unable to grasp these truths, we certainly shall not unite them in one conception. God is love, are therefore words too high for us.

But our lives would be strange histories, if that only were vital truth which was thoroughly comprehended. There is here laid upon us again, that every day necessarily, to believe. These wonderful words will yield their blessing when we have put them in the heart of an infinite belief. We can, to begin with, purify our conception of human love, purging away imperfection and sin, and as this thought rises in our souls, and builds in them a Sabbath of joy, we can repeat, God is love. We can then remember that outside and around us stretches the infinitude of being, and that God is the Spirit inhabiting immensity; with reverent hearts we can a second time repeat, God is love. We can say these words by comparison. A father imperis life to save an affectionate son, his equal; the infinite, eternal, and holy One descends to assume humanity and its burden for the redemption of a creature, revolted and vile. Having kindled in our hearts the flame of the purest sacrificial love we are capable of, we can go to Calvary and look upon Him who is suffering upon the Cross; beholding in mute awe the truth that "God so loved the world that he gave his only begotten Son that whosoever believeth in him might not perish but have everlasting life," a third time we may utter, God is love.

We may do this many times, till the truth sinks deeply into our hearts. Our days will then be serene and joyous, though His ways are obscure and many times terrible; though we may not sound His purpose, nor trace His going. And while life is unrolling before each its closely written, various scroll, disclosing sentences dark and perplexing, words of bitterest sorrow, lives so charged with pain that the heart almost bursts in looking upon them, we shall be borne through the perusal by the consciousness that He, who gave it us to read, is love. This belief will be the rapture of joy. It will afford songs in the night. It will, too, diffuse itself. As from the Apostle's soul it has gone to our hearts, so will it now not long fill a single soul with its melody, before it shall burst forth and cause other hearts to vibrate. The anthem will become universal; "the mountains and the hills shall break forth into singing and all the trees of the fields shall clap their hands." A. C. S.

CLAYVILLE, October 24.