

Correspondence.

OPEN AIR MEETINGS.

BY EDWARD PATSON HAMMOND.

No. VIII.

Recent communications from across the water show that constant efforts are made to carry the tidings of salvation to the masses.

A meeting of ministers and laymen a few weeks since in the city of London, was held "for the purpose of receiving suggestions as to the most desirable method of reaching the multitudes who in this great city are afar off and without God in the world."

At the special request of the chairman, Rev. Newman Hall, the author of "Come to Jesus," gave an account of one of the modes of procedure at Surrey Chapel. Though not referring exclusively to outdoor efforts, we have thought best to give the substance of his whole address.

He said—Reference has been made to the week-night assembly of working men in my chapel. It is a fact, lamentable, indeed, but nevertheless a fact, that of the tens of thousands of intelligent artisans of London—such as engineers, painters, carpenters, printers, smiths and others—not three out of a hundred ever go near a church or chapel. I pondered over this, and it occurred to me that it was just possible I might get them to come in their working clothes on a week evening to hear some instructive and profitable lecture, to which we might append a few words about God and his truth. I resolved to make the attempt. We commenced with a prayer lasting some three or four minutes, not longer; then the lecture was given, this contains more or less of the Gospel, but always having some references in it to the relationship in which the listeners stood towards God; then I would address a few words of exhortation or invitation. The spell was broken, and many who had not crossed the threshold of a place of worship for twenty years, came to these lectures at Surrey Chapel. Prejudices have been broken down, and the dislike to "parsons" and "preaching" abated. Crowds have attended, and many have acknowledged the benefit they have found. One man from Westminster, only a few days ago, applied for membership at our church. I said, "This is quite out of your way, you had far better go to Mr. Martin's, in Westminster, that will be close to you." "Yes," he said, "I know the distance is inconvenient, but I should not have thought of God at all if I had not been led to go to the week evening lectures for the working classes, and that being the case if you please, I would rather belong to Surrey Chapel."

Scattered throughout London you have a multitude of magnificent lecture-halls, in which you might give such addresses as I have described. You call these halls, churches and chapels; they are almost unused during the greater part of the week, and they would surely not be consecrated by being used for this or other benevolent purposes.

Our zealous town missionary holds a meeting every night in the summer within the railings in front of Surrey Chapel. You see we manage to utilize the outside of our place for Gospel preaching as well as inside. He has no difficulty in getting listeners. A congregation of two is sufficient to commence with, and as he begins a hymn or reads a portion of Scripture plenty of people gladly stop and listen. This goes on week after week and month after month. How many there must be who thus hear the word of life who otherwise would have been deaf to the joyful sound."

Another English authority says: "Preaching in the parks, too, is carried on with vigour; four or five groups, from afternoon till dusk, a constant succession of clustering hundreds, were last Sabbath to be seen in Hyde Park; and we doubt not, in the other parks, too, in almost every instance listening to the Word of Life. Occasionally an attempt is made to collect a crowd for other purposes; and we heard one individual contradicting and blaspheming at the close of an address; not, however, without an earnest entreaty from his next neighbor to 'receive the truth in the love of it.' Such opposition is proof that the Lord is working, proof of Satan's alarm; and, on the whole, there is a remarkable contrast to what prevailed a few years ago, when a political malcontent, or an infidel lecturer, found an audience in the parks, more readily than one of Christ's messengers."

"The Revival," just received, gives an account of open-air services held during these autumn months on Paddington Green, in London. A few sentences will give some idea of the nature of these gatherings.

The Young Men's Christian Association (North-West Branch) undertook open-air preaching each evening last week from six to nine o'clock. Many beloved laborers in the Gospel assisted on the different evenings, some coming from the north and east of London.

At the close of each open air service a meeting for prayer, etc., was held in Union Hall, near the Green. On Friday afternoon a young man called upon the Secretary of the Association, at Stafford rooms, according to the previous invitation, and said, "If what I have heard on Paddington Green be true, I am all wrong." A most deeply interesting conversation followed; and on leaving he expressed his gratitude, and said, although he had thought himself a fool in coming to speak to another about his soul, he trusted it had led him to see more clearly the way of salvation.

"We believe the Lord has given us much more fruit from these services than we have been permitted to see, and which the day will declare; but this has been abundantly sufficient to encourage all who have been engaged in this service to go forward, "always abounding in the work of the Lord, forasmuch as their labor is not in vain in the Lord."

All over our land, at certain seasons of the year, we read in the secular press of immense gatherings which assemble at State and County Fairs. With many, one chief object of attraction at such times has been the "race course" and its concomitants.

But who ever reads in this country of the Gospel being preached to the wondering thousands on such occasions? A London religious paper under date of October 6th, gives an account of the efforts made to hold up Christ at the "races" in Ayr in Scotland.

In reading the Acts of the Apostles, I have been astonished to notice how often they prayed for "boldness."

We think of Peter as one of the boldest of them all; and yet after they had been called to an account by the august Jewish Sanhedrim for declaring the way of "salvation through Christ," to all the people who ran together unto them and "commanded" "not to speak at all nor teach in the name of Jesus;" we hear them praying, "Now Lord behold their threatenings, and grant unto thy servants that with all boldness they may speak thy word."

Their prayer was at once answered "and they were all filled with the Holy Ghost, and they spoke the Word of God with boldness."

Some of those men whose names are mentioned in the notice below of the "races" in Scotland, I well remember. And I have heard their pleading for the constant indwelling of the Holy Spirit that they might "speak the Word of God with boldness."

I can never forget hearing some of these godly men's earnest pleadings at the throne of "grace, while rattling along in an omnibus on our way to the great open air meetings in Aberdeen in 1860. At least a dozen ministers and laymen were in the omnibus, and with windows closed, prayers of faith, which pierced the clouds, ascended up to God calling down "showers of blessings."

I have no doubt that either in some omnibus or in some "upper room," these men prayed as earnestly for the convicting and converting agencies of the Holy Spirit to make the "word quick and powerful" and for holy boldness to warn the careless. The writer says:

The annual "races" took place here, from 21st to 23d Sept., and as the Caledonian hunt occurred jointly with them, it was a time when iniquity came in like a very flood; but, praise the Lord, there was a standard lifted up against it all, and with grateful hearts we have to record that it was not in vain. The Lord was pleased to send the following evangelists to help, Howard Johnston, from London, Duncan Matheson, John Gilmor, T. J. Hitchcock, George Ross, and Douglas Russell. Dear Johnston, who is a noble soldier and sweet Christian, brought a large banner with him, twelve feet high, with texts of Scripture painted on it in large letters, and we planted it right amidst the twenty thousand people on the race course, and continued preaching Jesus beside it each day while the races lasted. On the last day it pleased the Lord to incline many of the people to stand and listen attentively. Many of them never turned their heads to look at the races—they stood eagerly drinking in the word of life; and a number of those who were conversed with privately on the course professed faith. The devil tried hard to bring the banner to the ground; but was unsuccessful. There it stood, preaching on the one side the awful truth, "The wicked shall be turned into hell," and on the other, "Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved." Some of the brethren had the honor of being pelted with clods of earth for their faithfulness in standing by the banner. We distributed about twenty thousand tracts, kindly given us for the occasion by Mr. Muller, of Bristol, and Mr. Bawley, of Dublin; and we believe there were thousands who will never forget what they saw and heard on the race course. Will those who read this have fellowship with us in this work, by praying that the Lord may use this testimony to gather in many of the precious souls who heard and saw the word into the fold of the blessed Jesus? Many Christians here have become Laodicean; oh that the Lord would arouse them!

The Morning (Glasgow, Scotland) Journal, of Oct. 15th, gives a report of a "soiree in the City Hall" given to Richard Weaver on the occasion of his departure from the city. Rev. James Gall, a minister of the Free Church in Edinburgh, who has for years been engaged in promoting open air meetings, and who has in those meetings led many to Christ, made an interesting statement regarding the success which had attended Mr. Weaver's labors when in Edinburgh.

No one had stirred Edinburgh to its depths as he had done, and nobody had been so blessed in bringing souls to the Saviour. There was not such a hall in Edinburgh as the one in which they were now met, but they had the Queen's Park there, where from 20,000 to 30,000 gathered together

to hear the Word of God from Mr. Weaver's lips, and not only were multitudes of souls immediately brought to Christ, but the brethren of the Carrubers' Close Mission had been engaged for weeks after he had gone in gathering the fruits of his labors. Mr. Gall said that before leaving Edinburgh he had been urgently entreated to endeavor to secure another visit from Mr. Weaver to that city, where he would be welcomed with thanksgiving to God for giving them such an evangelist. He closed with a practical observation as to the immense good which might be done if every living Christian would devote himself to the cause of the Lord in the same unreserved manner as Mr. Weaver.

Four years ago, with an audience of over 10,000, I stood for an hour on Sabbath morning, between the hours of eight and nine, in front of Holy Rood Palace, listening to this same Richard Weaver. Like Peter and John, he never fails to embrace the opportunity of telling "the people" the story of redeeming love—whether he finds them at the "gate of the temple," or within its sacred precincts.

During three years the Lord has permitted this humble, yet valiant servant, to speak often to great audiences in the open air. Many of the English papers have had occasion to speak of the glorious results which have attended these labors for the Master.

I trust these statements of what the Lord is now doing across the water, through the agency of open-air preaching, will stir the hearts of Christians here to follow their example.

SPEAKING FOR JESUS.

We all must speak for Jesus, Who hath redemption wrought, Who gave us peace and pardon, Which by his blood he bought.

We all must speak for Jesus To show how much we owe To him who died to save us, From death and endless woe.

We all must speak for Jesus, The aged and the young, With manhood's fearless accents— With childhood's lisping tongue.

We all must speak for Jesus, His people far and near— The rich and poor, on land and wave; The peasant and the peer.

We all must speak for Jesus, Where'er our lot may fall, To brothers, sisters, neighbors, In cottage and in hall.

We all must speak for Jesus, The world in darkness lies, With him against the mighty Together we must rise.

We all must speak for Jesus, 'Twill oft-times try us sore, But streams of grace to aid us, To our hearts he'll pour; We all must speak for Jesus, 'Till he shall come again, Proclaim his "glorious gospel," His crown and endless reign.

A WORD ON THE UNIVERSALIST CONTROVERSY IN AMERICA.

BY REV. E. H. GILLET, D. D.

At no period in the history of this country has the Universalist controversy attracted more attention than toward the close of the last century. It was in 1784 that the first edition of "Salvation of All Men," from the pen of Dr. Charles Chauncy, of Boston, was published anonymously in London. A second edition appeared in 1786, while other works of less note on the same side of the question were already in extensive circulation in this country. It was not till 1789 that the memorable reply of President Edwards the younger to the work of Dr. Chauncy was published, and at this time its authorship had become so generally known that Edwards remarked in his preface: "Dr. Chauncy's book is indeed anonymous, yet as I am informed that he and his most intimate friends have made no secret of the author's name, I presume I need not apologize for using the same."

But three years before the overwhelming reply of Edwards—of which an eminent theologian remarked: "It is a perfect answer to Universalism, as it was, is, and ever shall be"—had been given to the world, the positions of Chauncy had been controverted by an author of less note, but by no means of inferior ability. His volume was overshadowed by the reputation that invested the work of Edwards, and it has so far passed into oblivion as to have become a somewhat rare literary curiosity. Its author was Stephen Johnson, successor of Jonathan Parsons, the intimate friend of Edwards, as pastor at Lyme, Connecticut. He was evidently a good scholar and not lacking in profundity as a thinker. In 1782 a pamphlet advocating the doctrines of the Universalists had been issued in Boston, which he regarded "as an opening wedge of controversy." This served to turn his attention to the subject, and he proceeded to prepare his work. When it was nearly complete he learned that Dr. Chauncy's book—the author yet preserving his incognito—was soon to appear, and he delayed the publication of his own in order to answer it. This answer forms the third and largest portion of his volume, and in his preface he gives his own estimate of the work which he designs to controvert.

"It may not be amiss," he says, "to give a sketch of the general scheme of doctrine in it, which I take to be this. In respect to the doctrine of the Trinity it is Arianism; respecting that of imputation, Socinianism; in respect to the doctrines of grace, as commonly called, Pelagianism; in respect to the intermediate state between death and the resurrection, so far as I can collect the sentiment, it better agrees with the Muggletonians than the common Christian doctrine; in respect to the future judgment it is singular; it will be final and there will be no other public judgment, and yet it will not be decisive by unalterably fixing the states of good or bad men; the sentences will never be reversed by any future judgments; and yet will be temporary and not of perpetual and everlasting force; in respect to the future state after the last judgment, his transmutation state better agrees with the notions of some of the old heathens than with the Christian system, it being wholly unknown in the revelations of God. And in his doctrine of purgatory, he surpasses the Pope, clergy, and church of Rome itself, for his begins after the last judgment, when theirs is ended."

After such a judgment of the work, more vigorous than flattering or elegant, Mr. Johnson remarks upon the contempt which Universalists manifest for the judgment of orthodox biblical scholars. He does not flatter himself that any authorities which he may adduce will be regarded as of much weight, still he is willing to put the matter to the test.

"And I know," he says, "of no celebrated American author whose known ability and candor would more recommend him to their attentive notice than the Rev. Dr. Charles Chauncy, of Boston. I have accordingly selected a number of things out of his writings, in support of the common construction and faith; as one or two passages out of his sermons, 'Breaking of Bread in Remembrance of the Dying Love of Christ a Gospel Institution,' printed in Boston, 1772; several passages out of his 'Seasonable Thoughts.' But the passages are chiefly collected out of his sermons upon Justification, the Nature of Faith, &c., printed in Boston, 1765. In these sermons, in my opinion, is more sound divinity and conclusive reasoning, than in all the writings of Universalists I have ever seen and as I believe were ever written. If they hear him not, it is in vain to hope their conviction from any other."

In accordance with this purpose, the author presents repeatedly in the text the views he designs to refute, and in a foot-note remarks, "the Dr. says thus and so" in such or such a passage. The contradiction is sometimes very striking and palpable, so that the author of "The Salvation of All Men" is seen to be in direct antagonism with the Rev. Dr. Charles Chauncy, of Boston: The very fact that the volume of sermons by the latter, which Mr. Johnson quotes, were most elaborately prepared, and that they are so full and minute on the means of salvation, gives double force to the apposite quotation. Thus some years before the memorable work of Edwards vs. Chauncy appeared, and indeed before the authorship of "The Salvation of All Men" was more than suspected, Mr. Johnson had issued his work which might appropriately have been entitled "Chauncy vs. Chauncy," and which could scarcely have been other than extremely mortifying to the man against whose treatise it was directed.

REV. DR. COX, ON THE RECENT UNION MOVEMENTS.

The late agitation, in quarters more than a few, of the interesting topic of re-union of the twin branches of the Presbyterian Church in this country, cannot be other than profitable and auxiliary to the end in view; if conducted only with calmness and meekness of wisdom. James 3: 13.

The schism itself, as well as the means and the measures that led to it, I witnessed; deploring sincerely the result. I ever held it as improper; promising no good to the cause of truth and strength; especially as wholly unnecessary; improvised by "juvenile patriars," then so called; not exactly or at all at one, with the text of the Holy Ghost just quoted.

With the debates and controversies preceding it, and the men on both sides that figured in them, I was generally and often well acquainted; and have now no wish to recur to them, unless circumstances may modify duty and seem to require it at our hands.

It is a fact, too, that gradual changes have occurred, manifold and various, as we all know; and promising results for the better, perhaps at no distant time. In all these we rejoice, and trust they foreshadow only greater good in their consequences. It is good to see the topic at all considered, with decency and Christian temper. If people never court or keep each other's company,

says the proverb, they never marry. And surely, when we think how all our American, and even the whole of our Reformed or Protestant Christendom, is dilacerated, fractionary, and so factionary too, with religionizing differences, disputes, divisions, collisions; sects, parties, schools, and all that, schism and at odds, pugnacious and exclusive, we may well grieve; regretting with shame the picturesque wretchedness, of what ought to be—not at all! Is truth self-contradictory? John, 2: 21. Is Christianity at variance with itself? What stumbling-blocks to the weak, the ignorant, the unlearned; as to the irreligious and the wicked also, who, unhappily for themselves, have souls! Says the great apostle, to the church at Corinth, I Cor. 11: 18, as if it was too anomalous and abominable to be anywhere credited, of a Christian Church; I hear that there be divisions (schisms) among you; then adds, for the climax of wonders awful; and I partly believe it! What would he hear, what believe, what say, or do, were he here on earth, to see us and our miserable petty and selfish schisms, at this day, of light, liberty, and—brag! No wonder the ambitious and shortsighted men of the world, among us, are for national schism—so many of them; poor, treacherous and infatuated schismatics, as they are; they may too justly recoil on us, and say—"How otherwise, Reverend Sirs, could we follow or imitate 'THE CHURCH,' that glory in the midst of us!"

Old Dr. Alexander and old Dr. Richards, now both re-united in Heaven, as we think, were each wont to say—the men who make these schisms, are not remarkable either for meekness, or for wisdom, or for much experience, or for great usefulness—as if the master loved to use them, and crown their ministrations with his own blessing; making them good to multitudes of souls! So we must think, so some of us—remember!

All that I wish at present to add, being now such an one as Paul the aged, even if I never resembled so great and so good a servant of Christ in any other quality, is that at present I think, as many others do, that some of us may be in RATHER TOO MUCH HURRY, to do that which requires time; to effectuate what cannot be properly precipitated. I may follow this with some more papers, showing memories, reasons, illustrations; showing—never, as I hope, a bad or inexorable temper, in reference to the past—as I recollect it, or the future—as I pray God and man that it may be ever ordered and conducted in all.

SAMUEL HANSON COX. LEWIS, N. Y., November 7, 1864.

I quote in substance what they said.

A HOME MISSIONARY'S EXPERIENCE IN MISSOURI.

One of the most faithful, courageous, and persevering of our Home Missionaries in Missouri, well known to many Philadelphians, from his visit to this city, as delegate to the General Assembly of 1863, writes us a brief account of his own and his people's trials from the guerrillas which infest the unprotected portions of the State. Some of the details of rebel atrocities which he gives are exactly after the pattern of the Sepoys and rebels of China, and will not bear putting in print. We give so much of his letter as we can, being desirous that our readers may be better acquainted with the sore trials and the heroic endurance of our beloved brethren on the border, and may have unexceptionable testimony to the murderous spirit which animates those who are fighting without any other purpose but to annoy those whom they cannot conquer.

The letter is dated November 7th, but is followed with a post-script, which should not be overlooked, dated the next morning.

"We have passed through perilous times again. Day and night have we apprehended danger. Bushwhackers have visited our community time and again. Almost every family of the church have been robbed; all three of the elders have been robbed, and some of the families have been robbed as many as three times this summer and autumn.

"For weeks, we lay down every night, expecting that bushwhackers would be upon us before morning. We have learned what a great blessing a quiet night's rest is. Five young men from the Church joined the military this fall, and ten from — Church, to which I give half my time.

"The bright hopes we had last spring of advancing Christ's kingdom the present season, and building up churches, have all been disappointed. We are set completely back to where we were at the close of 1862. What a fatal blunder Mr. Lincoln made in his policy towards Missouri. If he had only listened to the radicals, and not to conservatives and rebels, how different it would have been with us! The measures of the radicals,

which were so effectual in '62, in putting down bushwhacking, have had to be adopted again, and the very same radical men who run the guerrillas out then had to be put again in power, and will run them out again. But what have we lost? What have we suffered? Have you seen an account of the unheard-of barbarity of the Centralia massacre? Major Johnston, who was in command of the Federals, and was killed, was buried in our church graveyard. He was (as were all the officers) scalped. Some bodies were so mangled that they could not be recognized.

"* * * We have been at the mercy of such fends, and worse than fends, now for months. The military we have are no protection to us; they guard our larger towns and the railroads; the country and villages are given over to the tender mercy of the guerrillas.

"But a kind Providence has preserved us thus far, and we will trust Him to the end. I have a confidence, that I will live and see the end of these perils. And I have a hope there is yet a bright future for our very feeble but faithful churches in Missouri."

"Tuesday Morning, Nov. 8, 1864.—I write this as a postscript. I wrote the foregoing letter late last night, and went to bed. About half past one o'clock at night the guerrillas came and robbed us, taking all the money that I and Mrs. — had in our pocket books, and Mrs. —'s gold watch and finger rings. They robbed every Union family in the village."

VALUE OF HOME MISSIONARY BOXES.

FROM ONE WHO KNOWS.

November 14th, 1864.

Rev. J. W. MEARS—Dear Bro.—As a reader of your excellent paper, I wish to say a word in it respecting the great good that may be accomplished by the abler churches in the way of sending "Missionary Boxes" to the humble workers in needy fields. Now that the winter season is drawing on, there are ministers and their families living on small salaries, and in destitute regions, who are anxiously pondering the question how they shall be clothed and fed, and made comfortable during the coming cold months. They do not distrust the Lord, and yet it is not amiss for them to inquire in what way He may provide for their wants. And I often think if our stronger churches only knew how much good is bound up in a "box," there would not be one of them that would not make glad the hearts of some missionary families with these substantial love-tokens. It was my good fortune last winter to receive from the Ladies' Sewing Society of the First Church in your city, such a box, worth in money full \$200 to my family, and of far greater value in a spiritual point of view. Such aid cheers the heart and nerves the worker in his toil. It lifts a load of care off the mind of both preacher and his wife—and helps to strengthen their faith in God, teaches them, and enables them to teach others an enlarged lesson of the length and depth of true Christian charity.

All through the past year the "missionary box" has been a resort to clothe myself and wife and little ones; and oftimes I have had to reflect when going forth to preach, that nearly every garment I had on, was the precious gift of warm-hearted Christian love.

I wish to fall into no better human hands, as a poor missionary, than such as Paul described when he spoke of those women that labored with him in the gospel; and every "missionary box" that goes forth to bless the needy is only a fresh testimonial that women's love and labor, in ministering to Christ of their substance, is still a co-operative and efficient aid in extending the Redeemer's kingdom on Earth.

Yours fraternally, * * *

SYNOD OF WESTERN RESERVE—STATE OF RELIGION.—The narrative made out at the last meeting says: "While no general revival of religion has occurred within our bounds, there have not been wanting indications for good in regard to the spiritual interests of the church. Here and there the Spirit has descended upon a church, and large accessions as compared with the usual growth, have been made. Eight or ten additions are reported to one church as the fruit of an unusual interest, and to another church, ten or fifteen have united, where for many years there had been hardly any accessions; and this blessing followed upon the institution of the pastoral relation which the church had hardly known before. While in almost all the churches some additions have been made the past year, it cannot be said to have been a year of the right hand of the Most High in the awakening and conversions of men, but we may return thanks that God has not forgotten his Zion, but has shown us some tokens for good."

We are not to suppose that the oak wants stability because its light and changeable leaves dance to the music of the breeze, nor to conclude, that a man wants stability and strength of mind because he may exhibit an occasional plugginess and levity.