

Correspondence.

OPEN AIR MEETINGS.

BY EDWARD PATSON HAMMOND.

No. X.

In the history of the church, religious services beneath the canopy of heaven are no new thing. The Bible is full of examples of gatherings for religious purposes in the open air. What a sublime spectacle was presented at the foot of Mount Sinai, when hundreds of thousands were gathered at the giving of the law, when "there were thunders and lightnings, and a thick cloud upon the mount, so that all the people that were in the camp trembled;" when "Mount Sinai was altogether on a smoke, because the Lord descended upon it in fire; and the smoke thereof ascended as the smoke of a furnace, and the whole mount smoked greatly;" when "all the people saw the thunders and the lightnings and the mountain smoking, and removed and stood afar off, and said unto Moses, speak thou with us, and we will hear; but let not God speak with us, lest we die."

Again, what a grand sight was presented at Mount Carmel, when Ahab, in compliance with the command of Elijah, gathered "all Israel unto Mount Carmel, and the prophets of Baal four hundred, and the prophets of the groves four hundred;" when Elijah "came unto all the people and said, How long halt ye between two opinions? if the Lord be God follow him; but if Baal, then follow him." How must the solemnity have deepened when "the fire of the Lord fell and consumed the burnt offering, and the wood, and the stones, and the dust, and licked up the water that was in the trench!" No wonder that "when all the people saw it they fell on their faces, saying: The Lord he is the God; the Lord he is the God!"

One of the most interesting accounts in the Bible of a great mass meeting in the open air is recorded in the eighth chapter of Nehemiah: "And all the people gathered themselves together as one man into the street that was before the water gate. And they spake unto Ezra, the scribe, to bring the book of the law of Moses, which the Lord had commanded to Israel." It is probable the court of the temple was not built as large as in Solomon's time, and thus "all the people" gathered into the spacious broad "street that was before the water gate." Only at the door of the temple could the regularly appointed sacrifice be offered, but the law of God could be proclaimed, his name invoked in prayer, and his praises sung as well in one place as in another.

It appears that when Ezra was thus invited to expound the word, "he brought the law before the people, both of men and women, and all that could hear with the understanding." No doubt there were among the great audience little children, even as many as "could hear with understanding." Some of those who had invited Ezra to address the people, built a large platform, from which the speakers could be seen and heard; for "it is written" that "Ezra the scribe stood upon a pulpit of wood which they had made for the purpose;" or as it reads in the original, "which they had made for the word"—for the preaching of the word. Those who had the management of this great gathering wished to do all in their power to make the speaker's words effective. No doubt there were some good men who thought such proceedings most unbecoming to those whose sacred duty called them to the performance of the holy ordinances of the temple. But, nevertheless, the blessing of the Lord rested upon their labors.

As the meeting continued the first day "from the morning until midday," Ezra needed assistants, and these were not wanting; for "beside him stood" six, on his right hand and seven on his left. It appears also that the audience was so large that all the people could not hear from one speaker's stand, and so thirteen preachers and "the Levites" at a little distance "caused the people to understand the law." "And the people stood in the place, no running from one stand to the other. Great solemnity must have prevailed, for, during the invocation, "all the people bowed their heads and worshipped the Lord with their faces to the ground." And as the reading and expounding of God's word continued, it is stated that "all the people wept."

It does not appear to have been more sympathy, for it is declared that "all the people wept when they heard the words of the law." The sight of this weeping congregation at this point moved the heart of Nehemiah, who began to speak words of comfort. He was too wise a man, doubtless, to try "Peace, peace, when there was no peace." Most likely he made plain the way of pardon through Shiloh, of whom they had heard. Gen. ch. xlix. And so those words, "The

joy of the Lord is your strength," brought peace and comfort. The occasion of their joy did not arise from their having the fat to eat and the sweet to drink, but "they made great mirth because they had understood the words that were declared unto them."

Had some visitor from a distance dropped in upon them at this joyful stage of the meeting, he might have felt justified to carry back word to his people that such out-door meetings were devoid of all solemnity and only productive of levity and kindred evils.

Ezra was evidently one of those who could say "Knowing therefore the terror of the Lord we persuade men," and yet his preaching did not frighten away the people, for "day by day" the people gathered together, and Ezra "read in the book of the law of God." "And there was very great gladness." Had such words been written then, many, no doubt, would have joined in singing: The Lord has pardoned all my sin, That's the news.

I feel the witness now within, That's the news, And since he took my sins away, And taught me how to watch and pray, I'm happy now from day to day: That's the news; that's the news!

Christ's sermon on the Mount seems to have been heard by "the multitude" as well as by "his disciples;" for at the close it is stated that "when Jesus had ended these sayings, the people were astonished at his doctrine." Though he was so faithful a lawgiver, his alarming words of reproof did not drive the crowds away, for we read, that "when He was come down from the mountain, great multitudes followed Him." His preaching on this occasion, like Ezra's, only drew the people the closer to Him. Our blessed Saviour was not ashamed to speak to the people in the open air.

Matthew Henry says, "While the scribes and pharisees had Moses' chair to sit in, with all the ease, honor and state that might be, and there corrupted the law; our Lord Jesus, the great Teacher of truth, finds no better a pulpit than a mountain can afford—not one of the holy mountains of Zion, but a common mountain; by which Christ would teach that it is the will of God that men should pray and preach, everywhere, anywhere—provided it be decent and convenient."

Again we see Jesus preaching in the open air by the "sea side, and great multitudes were gathered together unto Him so that He went into a ship and the whole multitude stood on the shore." (Mat. xiii.) He loved to speak to the masses wherever He could find them. Though often "the Pharisees and Scribes murmured, saying, this man receiveth sinners and eateth with them," He could say "I come not to call the righteous, but sinners to repentance."

In reading the book of Acts, one can but notice how eager the apostles ever were to seize upon every favorable opportunity to hold up Christ. "Now thanks be unto God who always causeth us to triumph in Christ, and maketh manifest the savor of his knowledge by us in every place." "They went forth and preached everywhere;" "the Lord working with them and confirming the word" and being "workers together with Him." No wonder that a continuous awaking followed their efforts.

What a glorious scene that must have been at Jerusalem when thousands upon thousands hung upon Peter's lips! For eight days the disciples had "continued with one accord in prayer," waiting for the fulfillment of "the promise of the Father." No wonder then that, in a few days after this great open air meeting, the inspired record tells us that "many of them which heard the word believed, and the number of the men was about five thousand."

The account in Acts iii, of the open air preaching at the "Gate of the Temple" is full of interest and instruction. A poor cripple had been healed, "and as the lame man, which was healed, held Peter and John, all the people ran together unto them in the porch, that is called Solomon's, greatly wondering." When Peter saw it he at once seized on the opportunity to preach. Christ to the gathering crowd. He turns their thoughts away from man to the Lord Jesus, and in a few moments when once their attention is fixed, he boldly charges them with having "killed the Prince of Life," and exhorts them to repent and be converted; that their sins may be blotted out. "Howbeit many of them which heard the word believed."

If as recorded in Rom. xv., "Whatever things were written aforetimes, were written for our learning," then should we not lay to heart these scriptural lessons on open air preaching? Do not these Bible examples and many more which might be adduced, form an argument in favor of more systematic and energetic effort in behalf of the unexcavated masses?

Each of us, however humble, can do something to spread the light of the gospel among the dark places of the earth, and though we may not be able

to assist in gathering the neglected within sound of the gospel, we can at least pray for them.

The light is ever silent: Not silent of the heavenly silences; Not even the darkness still, nor so still; Too swift for sound or speech it rushes on Right through the yielding skies, a massive flood Of multitudinous beams: an endless sea, That flows but ebbs not, breaking on the shore Of this dark earth, with never ceasing wave, Yet in its swiftest flow or fullest spring-tide, Giving less sound than does one falling blossom, Which the May breeze lays lightly on the sward. Such let my life be here; Not marked by noise but by success alone; Not known by bustle but by useful deeds; Quiet and gentle, clear and fair as light: Yet full of its all-penetrating power, Its silent but resistless influence; Wasting no needless sound, yet ever working, Hour after hour upon a needy world!

HORATIUS BONAR, D. D.

BROWNING'S DEATH OF ST. JOHN, THE EVANGELIST. THIRD PAPER.

Unbelief is the height of folly and perversity. It is the rejection of a treasure of light and love without which man must perish, and which he has but too little time to put to good use in his brief life. The dying evangelist thus continues to speak: I say, the acknowledgment of God in Christ Accepted by thy reason, solves for thee All questions in the earth and out of it, And so far has advanced thee to be wise, Would'st thou improve this, to improve the proof? In life's mere minutes, with power to use that proof, Leave knowledge and revert to how it sprung? Thou hast it: use it and forthwith die!

If man were not pressed by great practical necessities; if he had not a burdened conscience to be relieved; if sin were not everywhere in the world; if we had nothing to do but speculate, or dream, or romance; if the condition of our fellow-men were not one of such suffering as to demand the zeal of all the Wicherns, the Bosts, the Fliedners, the Muellers, and the organized efforts of all the churches and missionary and tract and Bible societies in the world increased a hundred fold, then we might with some show of reason devote the "mere minutes" of life to improving and reproofing what is already sufficiently proved, and is so indispensable to man's welfare as the Gospel. Such is the fair and doubtless designed inference from the words of the poet.

The morbidity of this speculative craving is further exposed by the Evangelist. It arises not from want of proof but from very abundance. This he shows as follows:

For I say, this is death and the sole death, When a man's loss comes from his gain, Darkness from light, from knowledge ignorance, And lack of love from love made manifest; A lamp's death when, replete with oil, it chokes; A stomach's when, surcharged with food, it starves; With ignorance was surely of a cure.

The simplicity of the uneducated mind is more favorable to just impressions of the truth than the subtlety of the more cultivated. The man who, under his early impressions of awe in contemplating the works of nature, inquires "of the might concealed" behind these appearances, receives a satisfactory answer in the written word. An intelligent Will originates and governs all: "In the beginning God created the Heavens and the earth." This is answer enough.

But when he finds might still redoubtable might, Yet asks, "Since all is might what use of will?" "Will, the one source of might, he being a man, With a man's will and a man's might, to teach In little how the two combine in large, That man has turned round on himself and stands, Which in the course of nature is, to die."

Admirable description of the withering, crippling, self-destroying course of the unbelieving speculator! Who are so engrossed in self-inspection, and so indifferent to the great and pressing facts of human existence as he and his class? And yet the most conclusive answer to his questionings is: so near that it should have anticipated them—in the complete structure of his own being! So with the grander and dearer subject of divine love. A simple mind not mazed and disordered by the subtleties of an idle and selfish spirit, asking if behind the will and the might, in nature there be love as real as they, rests with comfort in the assurances of the written word, that God is Love; not that, when beholding that love every where, He reasons, "Since such love is every where, And since ourselves can love and would be loved, We ourselves make the love, and Christ was not!" How shall ye help this man who knows himself? That he must love and would be loved again; Yet, owning his own love that growth Christ, Rejecteth Christ through very need of Him? The lamp o'erawms with oil, the stomach Loaded with nature, and that man's soul die.

Still pressing his perverse objections, though somewhat changing his ground, the unbeliever compares John's Gospel, and the whole story of divine love, to that of Prometheus and the gift of fire to men. The fact is in the fable, cry the wise, Mortals obtained the boon, so much is fact, Though fire be spirit and produced on earth.

John's "tale" is like the Titan's; mortals have the general elevating influence of the Gospel undoubtedly, but it was produced on earth, and the evangelists have veiled the truth in fabulous statements. The Evangelist answers that men by thus arguing of the Gospel forget The very primal thesis, plainest law,—Man is not God, but hath God's end to serve. A master to obey, a course to take, Somewhat to cast off, somewhat to become.

If all that the Gospel brings is already in man and his circumstances, if he is self-sufficient, if divine love, like the Titan's fire, is an earthly production, then man is god, "First, last, and best of things." How the unbeliever defies himself in rejecting God, is most effectively shown in the following lines: Man takes that title now if he believes Might can exist with neither will nor love, In God's case—what he names now Nature's Law.—While in himself he recognizes love No less than might and will: and rightly takes. Since if man prove the sole existent thing Where these combine, whatever their degree, However weak the might or will of love, So they be found there, put in evidence,— He is as surely higher in the scale Than any might with neither love nor will, As life, apparent in the poorest midge, When the faint dust-speck flits, ye guess its wing.

Is marvellous beyond dead Atlas' self: I give such to the midget for resting-place! Thus, man proves best and highest—God, in Rock, Love. And thus the victory leads but to defeat, The gain to loss, best rise to the worst fall, His life becomes impossible, which is death. Man must know his place—he is neither God, as the unbelieving idealist would make him, nor beast, as the unbelieving materialist would make him. We recognize the only grounds of real progress, when we admit this position of man, whereas, if we insist upon it that all historical communications of religious truth stand on, no better foundation than the story of Prometheus and the myths of the early Greeks, we confess ourselves chained to one spot, incapable of progress, either gods or nothing. Acknowledging himself to be mere man, by such confession, says the poet

Straight he falls Into man's place, a thing nor God nor beast, Made to know that he can know and not more: Lower than God who knows all and can all, Higher than beasts which know and can so far As each beast's limit, perfect to an end, Nor conscious that they know, nor craving more; While man knows partly but conceives beside, Creeps ever on from fancies to the fact, And in this striving, this converting air Into a solid he may grasp and use. Finds progress, man's distinctive mark alone, Not God's, and not the beast's; God's, they are, Not partly, is and wholly hops to be. Such progress could no more attend his soul Were all it struggles after found at first. And guesses changed to knowledge absolute, Than thought wait his body, were all else Than it the solid earth on every side, Where now through space he moves from rest to rest. Man, therefore, thus conditioned, must expect He could not, what he knows now, know at first.

What he considers that he knows to-day, Comes but to-morrow, he will find mistaken, Getting increase of knowledge, since he learns Because he lives, which is to be a man, Set to instruct himself by his past self. —We must surely expect something greater, nearer the truth, than those early efforts of the religious nature, called myths. We must expect progress even within the limits of Revelation. If men stubbornly cling to the imperfect methods and attempts of unenlightened reason, or even to those of an earlier divine economy, to the exclusion of the better light and perfect plans of the Gospel, they must perish.

The pattern on the Mount subsists no more, Seemed awhile, then returned to nothingness; But copies, Moses strove to make thereby, Serve still and are replaced as time requires. If ye dare, the newest vessels, reach the type: If ye dare, the ultimate of your head, Never to reach the ultimate of angels' feet, Indulging every instinct of the soul, There where law, life, joy, impulse are one thing.

This closes the poet's argument in the mouth of the evangelist. Space will not allow us to give the argument of another personage which he introduces at the close of the piece, or to add a few general remarks with which we shall conclude our criticism.

WESTERN COLLEGE SOCIETY.

The twenty-first Annual Meeting of the Society for Aiding Western Colleges, was held in the Second Presbyterian church in Newark, N. J., on the 14th and 15th ult.

The sermon was preached by Dr. Cleveland, of Lowell, Massachusetts. The Report was read by the Secretary, Dr. Baldwin, and was adopted by the Board. The deliberations of the directors were continued during the day and evening of Tuesday. The past year has been one of great interest and importance in the operations of this Society. The receipts have been over \$60,000, a much greater amount than has been realized in any former year. A large proportion of this sum has been specially contributed by the particular friends of several of the colleges to complete their Endowment Funds. With the successful accomplishment of the effort to endow the older institutions that have been the objects of its care, the most important part of the former work of the Society is completed. It must now turn its thoughts and exertions more earnestly towards the

future. The new States and Territories must be provided for; and with the return of peace large portions of the South where literary institutions have hitherto languished under the blighting influence of slavery, will call loudly for just such aid as this Society was formed to secure. How can this work be most wisely prosecuted? How can the strength of Congregationalists and Presbyterians be most fully developed and harmoniously concentrated for the performance of their portion of the work?

These questions now engage the attention of the officers of the College Society and they are commended to the thoughtful consideration of the readers of this paper, and of ministers and Christians generally in connection with the two denominations that have hitherto co-operated through this society in the work of aiding Collegiate Education.

HOME MISSIONS.

On applications received from the churches they serve, the following ministers were commissioned by the Presbyterian Committee of Home Missions at their last meeting, twenty-eight of whom were under commission last year:

- Key. P. S. Davies, Birmingham, Pa.
W. J. Webber, Austin, Nevada.
Moses Robinson, Point Pleasant and vicinity, Iowa.
John M. Brown, Minonk, Ill., Presbyterian Missionary.
T. Hempstead, Fairbury, Ill., Rock, Iowa.
G. D. H. Hebard, Iowa City, Iowa.
A. M. Heizer, Winterset, Iowa.
T. B. Jervis, Burr Oak, Mich.
Timothy Morgan, Gentryville and vicinity, Mo., Presbyterian Missionary.
James W. Stark, Berlin, Wis.
E. Thompson, Hartford, O.
J. Collins, Somers, N. Y.
L. R. Booth, Seymour, Ind.
P. Griffin, Carleton, N. Y.
Louis F. Laine, Canisteo, N. Y.
James A. Laurie, Lowville and Arlington, Wis.
A. C. Bishop, Warrensburg, N. Y.
W. B. Evans, Granite Church, Md.
Jas. M. Alexander, San Leandro, Cal.
S. H. Clark, Baraboo, Wis.
L. W. Dunlap, La Grange, Mo.
F. M. Dimmick, Omaha City, Nebraska.
Saml. Newberry, Council Hill, Iowa.
W. R. Palmer, Attias, Ind.
Chas. S. Le Duc, Hastings, Minn.
J. E. Long, Hubersburgh and Spring Mills, Pa.
W. H. Adams, Brooklyn, Pa.
J. Brownlee, Baldwin City, Black Jack, Palmyra and Prairie City, Kansas.
O. S. D. W. White, Clinton, Iowa.
C. W. Wallace, Coshocton, O.
D. E. Abbey, Apalachin, N. Y.
Mr. Waldemeyer, Nauvoo and Appanoose, Ill.
J. L. French, Bampton and Batavia, Ohio.
R. G. McCarthy, Manchester, Mich.
P. Bevan, Mt. Vernon, Mt. Lebanon, Greenville, Ind.
J. Jenkins, Butler, Va., Minn.
George T. Everest, Au Sable Forks, N. Y.
John S. Craig, Presbyterian Missionary, E. Tenn.
A. N. Freeman, Brooklyn, N. Y.

CANDID VIEWS FROM ACROSS THE ST. LAWRENCE.

The Montreal Witness, a paper which, in its bearing towards our civil troubles, has from the first been sound and generous, publishes the following communication from a Canadian on "The Right of Asylum, or the Rights and Duties of Foreigners."

"Even in those countries which every foreigner may freely enter, the sovereign is supposed to allow him access only upon this tacit condition, that he be subject to the laws;—I mean the general laws made to maintain good order, and which have no relation to the title of citizen, or of subject of the State. The public safety, the Rights of the nation, and of the Province, necessarily require this condition; and the foreigner tacitly submits to it as soon as he enters the country, as he cannot presume he has access upon any other footing."—Vattel, Book 2, cap. 8, Sec. 101.

By the Extradition Treaty, it is provided that we shall, upon requisition in due form, deliver up to justice all persons who being charged with the crimes of murder, or assault with intent to commit murder, or piracy, or arson, or robbery, &c. &c. Now let us suppose the case of thirty persons, Canadians, making a raid into the neighboring State, and robbing the banks of one of their towns, murdering one or more of their citizens, firing loaded pistols at the peaceful inhabitants, and stealing their horses to escape upon. Will it be pretended that under the Extradition Treaty, we would not be bound to deliver them up to justice? But if our citizens would be liable to be surrendered to justice, is it not true that foreigners are subject to the same laws?

"In all cases where the territory of one nation is invaded from the territory of another, whether the invading force be composed of the refugees of the country invaded, or of the subjects of the other country, or of both, the government of the invaded country has a right to be satisfied that the country from which the invasion has come has neither by surerance nor reception, knowingly aided or abetted it. She must purge herself of both these charges, or otherwise if the cause be feebleness of her government, the invaded country is arranged in redressing her own wrongs, by entering the territory, and destroying the preparations of war therein made against her." In 1838 the Canadian rebels found shelter on the American shore. In consequence we seized the steamer "Caro-

line" lying in American waters, and burned her. In 1828 the mustering and equipment of Portuguese rebels on the Spanish authorities was considered by Great Britain as a casus fœderis. She accordingly sent troops to assist the Portuguese.

We are now to decide whether we shall follow the golden rule of doing unto others, as we would be done by. The raiders, whether Confederate soldiers or not, have committed an offence against a nation with whom we are at peace. When they crossed the frontier into Canada they ceased to be soldiers and became subject to the laws of Her Majesty. Under the broad folds of the Union Jack they could rest securely so long as they respected the laws of the protecting power. They knew full well that it was unlawful to violate the neutrality which we are bound to maintain.

Thinking men see in this St. Albans raid a well laid scheme to embroil us with our neighbors, and create a diversion in favor of the Southern cause. Desperate men resort to desperate means. Is it wise or noble for us to risk a war for such a cause? If we are to have war let it be for some great principle—for a purpose other than that of a cat's-paw for the creation of a power founded upon the declaration that slavery is a divine institution.

FREDERICK DOUGLASS ON EMANCIPATION IN MARYLAND.

Mr. Douglass, by especial invitation spoke in Baltimore on Friday evening of last week. In announcing his purpose to do so, at Rochester, on the Sunday evening previous, he spoke thus jubilantly:

"What a wonderful change a few short years have wrought! I left Maryland a slave, I return to her freeman! I left her a slave State, return to find her clothed in her garments of Liberty and Justice, a free State! My life has had two crises—today on which I left Maryland, and today on which I return. I expect to have a good old fashioned visit, for have not been there for a long time, may meet my old master there, who I have not seen for many years. I heard he was living only a short time ago, and he will be there, for he is on the right side. I made a convert of his years ago! He was a very good man with a high sense of honor, and I had no malice to overcome in going back among those former slaveholders, for used to think that we were all parts of one great social system, only we were at the bottom and they at the top! The shackles were around our ankles, they were also on their necks. The Common Council and city authorities have promised to be present at the meeting in Baltimore. I shall be glad to see them. I shall return to the with freedom in my hand, and pointing her free Constitution, and as the old branch was a sign that the waters of the flood were retreating, so will the freedom which I shall find there be a sign that the billows of slavery are rolling back to leave the law blooming again in the purer air of Liberty and Justice." Mr. Douglass lectured in Washington on Thursday evening, repeating Baltimore effort, which was on "The Mission of the War." On this occasion a presentation was made to Col. Beaman, organizer of the negro regiment of Maryland.

Mr. Douglass was to have paid a visit to Talbot county on Saturday, to see old master, Capt. Auld, who is a eighty-seven years old, and such of kindred as the late internal slave trade had not consigned to Southern plantations. His brother Perry, who he deeply loved, is somewhere in South Carolina. A number of white citizens called on Mr. Douglass on Friday.

MEMORABLE DATES.

An old man was sitting in his room one Sabbath afternoon. His Bible before him, opened at the blank space before the title-page, upon which were written some dates of days and years. He was so absorbed in contemplation of these that he did not notice the entrance of a neighbor, who asked what he could find to read with such intense interest where he only saw a dates. The old man replied: "Neighbor, could you but know what the dates stand for you would not be longer surprised." These were dates of all the principal occurrences of the old man's life. He pointed with finger to one after the other. "This is the date of my birth, of my christening, of my enlisting, my marriage, so on till at last he came to the date of the day when the Lord had effected called him, and since which he known himself to be a child of God, inheritor of the kingdom of heaven. And then he exclaimed: "Oh the dates of the riches, both of the wisdom and knowledge of God, how unsearchable are his judgments, and his ways finding out!"

Could a thousand voices raise, Or a thousand tongues employ, In thankfulness and joy, And still its happy songs should be heard, Hear what the Lord has done for thee, O My Advocate. I HAVE somewhere read (perhaps Hebrew tradition) that of the two of fallen spirits—the Angels of light and the Angels of Knowledge—the missed the stars they had lost wandered back through the darkness one by one to heaven, but the lighted on by their own lurid splendour. "Wherever we go, there is heaven and deeper and lower descending their shape and their nature, till formed and obscene, the bottom closed around them."