

confusedness of expository illustration, but he will seldom complain of their defectiveness of hortatory appeal, or of their inattention to the immaturity in knowledge, or the stolidity of spiritual taste, which may have characterized their hearers. Justin Martyr, in words in which we have already quoted, says, "They made sermons by way of giving instruction as to the excellent things which had been read, and of holding them up for imitation; and Origen says, "If their auditors were wise and intelligent, they discussed to them the profound doctrines of the gospel; but if their auditors were babes in knowledge and had need of the milk of the word, they withheld from them such matters as are deep and mysterious.

The resemblance which the modern Expository Lecture bears to the ancient Sermon or Oration, ought to draw attention to that species of discourse in districts where it is little known, and to heighten the taste for it where it is already so much relished. Expository preaching possesses the high recommendation of fixing the special attention of a hearer upon the word of God. If an audience could be made to listen each with an open Bible in his hand; if they could, as the preacher proceeds, be incited to trace, from sentence to sentence, and from doctrine to doctrine, God's own unerring testimony; and if they could, at the close of each service, be sent away to 'search the scriptures,' to 'compare spiritual things with spiritual,' to 'meditate upon the law of the Lord,' and to experience 'a longing of soul after God's statutes;' they would then, doubtless, be in the way to attain, in the highest degree, and the noblest excellence, the results of Christian instruction;—having their thoughts primely fixed on that which is emphatically 'profitable for reproof, for correction, and for instruction in righteousness,' they would, with the blessing of heavenly influence, be 'thoroughly furnished unto all good works.' A modern methodical discourse, when the doctrines of it are sound, and the spirit of it is devotional, and the practical appeals of it are faithful, will not fail, indeed, to 'feed the flock of God;' and it will not be the less successful that a *textual* discourse is virtually but an expanded exposition of scripture, and that even a pulpit essay, when stamped with the impress of truly evangelical preaching, abounds with scripture quotations and allusions; the Expository Lecture—the Oration which explains, verse by verse, or clause by clause, a section of the divine word—is what the primitive Christians appear to have thought most edifying, and well deserves more attention, on the part of modern churches, than it has yet received.

Poetry.

HYMN FOR CHRISTMAS.

BY MRS. HEMANS.

O! lovely voices of the sky,
Which hymned the Saviour's birth,
Are ye not singing still on high,
Ye that sang "Peace on earth?"
To us yet speak the strains
Wherewith, in time gone by,
Ye blessed the Syrian swains,
O! voices of the sky!

O! clear and shining Light, whose beams
That hour Heaven's glory shed
Around the palms, and over the streams,
And on the shepherd's head,
Be near through life and death,
As in that holiest night
Of hope, and joy, and faith,
O! clear and shining Light!

O! Star which led to Him whose love
Brought down man's ransom free.

Where art thou?—midst the host above,
May we still gaze on thee?
In heaven thou art not set,
Thy rays earth may not dim;
Send them to guide us yet,
O! Star which led to Him!

TRUST IN THE SAVIOUR.

BY WORDSWORTH.

Not seldom clad in radiant vest,
Deceitfully goes forth the morn;
Not seldom evening in the west
Sinks smilingly foreworn.

The smoothest seas will sometimes prove
To the confiding bark, untrue;
And if she trust the stars above,
They may be treacherous too.

The unrelenting oak, in pomp outspread,
Falls oft, when storms the welkin rend,
Draws lightnings down upon the head
It promised to defend.

But thou art true, incarnate Lord!
Who didst vouchsafe for man to die;
Thy smile is sure, thy pledged word
No change can falsify!

I bent before thy gracious throne,
And asked for peace with suppliant knee;
And peace was given,—nor peace alone,
But faith, and hope, and ecstasy!

Religious Intelligence.

METHODISM IN AMERICA.

AN ABSTRACT FROM DR. BANGS' HISTORY OF THE M. E. CHURCH.

THE introduction of Methodism into this country was attended with those circumstances which show how great events often result from causes comparatively insignificant. Like the entire structure of Methodism, it originated without any foresight of man, and without any previous design in the instruments to bring about such an event, or any of those previously devised plans which generally mark all human enterprises.

The first Methodist Society was established in the city of New York, in the year 1766. A small company of Methodists had emigrated from Ireland, and among the number was Mr. Philip Embury, a local preacher. Though they had been attached to Wesleyan Methodism at home, it appears that, on their arrival here, they came very near making 'shipwreck of faith and a good conscience.' They were strangers in a strange land; and not finding any pious acquaintances with whom they could associate, they gradually lost their relish for divine things, and sunk away into the spirit of the world. In this state of lukewarmness and worldly-mindedness they were found the next year, on the arrival of another family from Ireland, among whom was a pious 'mother in Israel,' to whose zeal in the cause of God they were all indebted for the revival of the spirit of piety among them. Soon after her arrival, she ascertained that those who had preceded her had so far departed from their 'first love' as to be mingling in the frivolities and sinful amusements of life. The knowledge of this painful fact aroused her indignation, and, with a zeal which deserves commemoration, she suddenly entered the room where they were assembled, seized the packs of cards with which they were playing, and threw them into the fire. Having thus unceremoniously destroyed their 'play-things,' she addressed herself to them in language of exhortation; and turning to Mr. Embury, she said, 'You must preach to us, or we shall all go to hell together, and God will require our