

Correspondence.

For the Christian Messenger.

Plain Letters, on a plain subject,
to plain folks.

(No. 3.)

"It is more blessed to give than to receive."—Jesus, Paul, and all christians.

My second letter alluded to the direful effects of covetousness on the individual by awakening in his heart a spirit of worldliness and envy, leading him to endanger the interests of eternity by being too much engrossed in the things of time, and to encroach upon the happiness of others through the boundless rapacity that reigns in his own heart. Closely allied with rapacity and springing from the same principle of selfishness is the spirit of extravagance. Extravagance is a compound of covetousness and selfishness, a coveting for selfish indulgence. How much misery is entailed on individuals by extravagance! This vice robs us of happiness by taking away our ability to give and by curtailing even the necessities of life. But few are extravagant in giving, while many are extravagant in withholding. But the former are more blessed than the latter. To find extravagance we need not go to the libertine, the gambler and the drunkard. It may be found in the higher walks of life. It hurries the individual to sacrifice everything to some form of selfish gratification and leaves nothing for God. It appears in so deceitful a garb as almost if not quite "to deceive the very elect." One involves himself in business beyond his means, another adds farm to farm, or builds a splendid mansion, and thereby is bound hand and foot, while a safe business, a smaller farm, and a less sumptuous, but more comfortable abode, would have left him free to promote the calls of benevolence. He cheats himself with the belief that wishes to give; but he has deliberately rendered himself unable. Thus his conscience is stifled and festers with corruption. The individual hides his Lord's money. He puts his pound in a napkin, his talent in the earth, his light under a bushel. His salt loses its saltiness so that henceforth it is good for nothing but to be cast out. He stands a barren fig tree, a withered branch, and a well without water. His strength is spent for nought, and his life is squandered. Like the idle servant, the cowardly soldier, and the faithless steward he shall tremble beneath the power of his master. How strangely on the judgment would the words sound in his ears. "Well done good and faithful servant thou hast been faithful in a few things, I will make thee ruler over many things, enter thou into the joy of thy Lord."

Parasimony is the opposite of extravagance though it springs from the same principle of covetousness. This ruthless enemy will empty the soul of happiness to fill the pocket with gold. It leads parents to rob their children of bodily comfort, of education, and of religious privileges, to the prospect when they themselves are gone, of leaving to those children a little heap of sordid dust, to create family feuds among posterity, to paralyze their industry, to corrupt their morals, and to hasten their decay. In leaving wealth to posterity, Solomon says:—"Who knoweth whether he shall be a wise man or a fool?" "Yet shall he have rule over all my labor. This also is vanity." If Solomon says this of the fruits of honest labor, what would he say of the treasures of covetousness, hoarded, and handed down, at the neglect of every thing that is most valuable to the rising generation? Whence come idleness, and vice, and ruin to families? We believe that, a feeling in the minds of the young that they are to inherit the property of their parents, and not to rely on their own industry and moral principle, is a fruitful source of these evils. Families nurtured in wealth, idleness and ignorance come to nought, while those reared in poverty, industry and intelligence will rise. We need not go beyond Nova Scotia to find illustrations of this. Who are the rising men both in town and country? As a general rule those who, have begun with these qualifications—poverty, industry, intelligence and moral principle. Let parents and guardians take notice, and be governed accordingly. May none be permitted to sacrifice the interests of their family at the shrine of covetousness. Let them make every sacrifice of material wealth to promote the mental, moral, and religious improvement of their children, and in all respects they will reap a large reward.

CHARITY.
Nova Scotia, Nov. 23, 1859.

He that giveth to a grateful man puts his money out at compound interest.
If pride were an art, the world would be full of teachers.

For the Christian Messenger.

Boston Correspondence.

MR. EDITOR,

I attended the Ministerial Meeting at Tremont Temple last Monday morning; there were only 23 ministers present, quite a number of the city pastors being absent. The reports given by those present of the state of religion in their respective churches were generally, of a highly interesting character, numerous accessions to their numbers having been realized during the previous month. The pastor of Tremont Temple gave the right hand of fellowship to 18 individuals the day before, and similar privileges, to a greater or less degree, were enjoyed by others in the vicinity at the same time.

Similar indications, however, do not exist in all the churches, several of them still remaining in a comparatively low state notwithstanding the untiring zeal and earnestness of spirit characteristic of their frequent devotional exercises. Some, it is true, seem to be fast waking to a sense of the great want of the times, and meetings for special humiliation, and prayer for the outpouring of the Divine Spirit are of frequent occurrence. There seems, indeed, to be an increasing desire on the part of many for a general revival of pure religion, and corresponding efforts are daily put forth, which we hope will be speedily crowned with the full measure of success.

The church at Bowdoin Square, over which the Rev. Dr. Murdock presides, has for some time been in a very low state, many having become almost discouraged, and ready to enquire, "Has the Lord forgotten to be gracious, and will he be favourable no more?" The pastor's mind has been deeply exercised under a painful sense of the existing state of things, and his earnest appeals to the consciences of his people have not been entirely in vain. A spirit of enquiry has been awakened, and meetings have been held for special prayers, and to deliberate upon the means best adapted to promote the cause of Christ among them. They at length decided to secure, in connection with their pastor, the services of the Rev. Mr. Earle, so favourably known to many in the Province as the active and successful evangelist. In compliance with their request he visited them last sabbath, and preached in the morning and evening. His sermons were plain, affectionate and forcible; if remarkable for anything it was for their simplicity and appropriateness. His power consists not in the eloquence of words, but in an eloquence of soul, evidently inspired by the influence of the Divine Spirit. The secret of his popularity and success is not to be found in his polished diction, rounded periods, or high-flown rhetorical flourishes; but in his deep toned piety and earnestness of spirit which convince all who hear him that his utterance are no idle words, but the spontaneous effusions of a heart deeply impregnated with a genuine gospel spirit.

He said his mind had been greatly exercised in reference to the present effort,—he had prayed for the blessing of God to follow it, and he felt that his prayers were already answered to some extent in his own soul. He was convinced that God was present in the meeting, and urged the brethren to engage heartily with him in the work. He felt confident that a time of refreshing was at hand, such as they had not experienced for many years; and that ere a fortnight should elapse the walls of Bowdoin Square church would echo with the melody of fervent praise, and many new-born souls would unite in the glorious anthem of Redeeming love.

How far these predictions will be realized, I shall endeavour to inform you in my next, and will close this with a brief notice of

THANKSGIVING-DAY.

This old and sacred Institution is annually observed throughout New-England on the last Thursday in November. Whether the general proceedings of the day fully justify its title or not is a question which I am unable to decide; but were I to form my judgment of the matter from my observations of the present one, I should certainly be inclined to the exercise of considerable incredulity. By the large majority of the people the day is spent in feasting and riot, and the night in revelry and frantic mirth; but few seeming to recognize the object for which the day is set apart.

I have just returned from the "Thanksgiving service" at Bowdoin Square. I was struck with the extreme smallness of the audience; dozens of seats were entirely empty, and but few were more than half-filled. The devotional exercises were conducted by the pastor in his usual grave and solemn manner; but in spite of my efforts to the contrary, I could scarcely resist the conviction that in his prayer he indulged a little in characteristic national vanity.

He dwelt strongly upon the greatness and glory of America;—her extensive resources,—her wonderful natural capabilities,—her proud independence and freedom,—her glorious political history, the superiority of her civil and religious privileges, and upon the innumerable blessings social and religious, which Providence had lavished upon her to an extent unknown to any other nation upon the face of the earth! Thus, in my humble estimation, thanking God for what he has never seen fit to bestow. A sermon was preached by the Rev. Dr. Neil on the duties which grow out of family relations; but want of space prevents me from giving even a brief synopsis of it.

Very truly yours,

J. C. HURD.

Boston, Nov. 24th, 1859.

For the Christian Messenger.

Bazaars.

A short time since, while perusing the columns of the *Messenger*, my eye fell upon a communication entitled Bazaars, in which a Subscriber proposes some ten or a dozen questions, promising, that if any of your Correspondents will satisfactorily answer them, he will cordially and his brethren and sisters, as far as his means and influence will enable him, in raising funds by a system, which to say the least, he at present appears to regard as a breach of propriety. Now I do not, by any means, profess to be skilled in solving hard questions; but upon a consideration of these, I concluded they might be answered without difficulty; and if I should be so fortunate, as to succeed in satisfying our friend's conscientious scruples, I shall feel amply repaid.

In answering his first question, I ask, would "A Subscriber" require the honest Christian merchant to retire from business; or the farmer to cease disposing of the varied products of the soil; artisans of every kind to leave their employments; causing the wheels of business to stand silent and motionless; merely because there are so many cases, in every sphere of employment, in which unprincipled persons dispose of articles for more than their real value? I feel assured our friend would answer in the negative. Now a Bazaar is nothing more than a sale of the products of industry and ingenuity; the results, to be devoted to religious purposes; and if any of us through mistaken zeal, supposing the end would justify the means, have resorted to improper measures, in order to realize proceeds for our cherished object, we think they should by no means be repudiated on that account; for we know of nothing which is good, which has not had in this sinful world its abuses. We should feel deeply, that any of us have thoughtlessly been the means of bringing into disrepute, a lawful system of raising funds; and endeavour in future, to conduct our Bazaars in such a manner, that Observers and Subscribers can have no such charges to bring against us. In the next place the writer does not at all approve of "children and youth being encouraged to spend their money in the purchase of pastry, cakes, confectionary &c" and I sincerely hope, that none of those who either get up, or patronize Bazaars, will ever do so, and all temptation to introduce such things would quickly cease. And I feel persuaded, they would come off victorious without them, for usually we have such a variety of useful articles, that we can, and ought to reject the useless. But if some should foolishly present the latter, let the young be encouraged to purchase the former; leading them to feel, while they are giving money for what is useful and comfortable, the means so disposed of, do not, as is often the case, fall into the grasp of those, whose only thought is for self; but are sacredly devoted to higher and nobler objects. (Again, would "A Subscriber" be unwilling for wives and mothers, even to step beyond their own thresholds; or have the noble principles of industrious expensive benevolence called into exercise? Would that more of their leisure evenings were thus spent; and not as they are often seen, in fashionable visiting, and trifling conversation. And we know, that a careful mother will not leave her family for two or three evenings, without providing for their comfort and safety while she is absent; and in so doing, she relieves herself from the charge of neglecting them. And, using "A Subscriber's" own words, "Ought not Christians to feel, that they are stewards of God's grace; and that they are under the highest obligation to sustain the worship of his house?" "Ought they not to act under the conviction, that it is as much their duty to do so, as to provide for their families?"

Surely the foregoing questions are the best answer we could have, to the one under con-

deration; for Bazaars are one of the varied means, which have been put in operation for that very object; and contributions made to them in a proper spirit, whether of time or money, are, I believe, as acceptable to God, as if the gift was under some different outward form. "Lotteries and post-offices" are but foreign, deadly parasites; artful inventions of the Great Adversary; who never sees anything good and useful prospering, without insinuating some counteracting influence; in order if possible to mar and destroy it. And I would here say to all who are friendly to Bazaars, to see to it, that all such vile excesses are nipped in the bud; for their fruit will be poisonous. If we wish the support and approbation of the wise and good; if we desire the approval of our Father in heaven in such undertakings; let us look upon all such anomalies with withering contempt; and encourage them not by our patronage. Again, it is certainly wrong "to pander to a vitiated taste;" but is it wrong to provide sustenance for those who require it, so that friends from a distance, instead of having to resort to houses of entertainment,—some of them very likely kept by rumsellers,—thus aiding them to supply the fiery poison for their victims,—may be provided for on the spot, and their Master's cause reap the benefit? And if many partake "who are deaf to the calls of religion and benevolence," they are not the donors, but those who set apart the reward of their expense and trouble to the cause they love. And is not the means obtained from other sources by the Christian, as often received from those "who are deaf to the calls of religion and benevolence," as from any other class; and would it on that account be unjustifiable for him to use it in his Master's service?

And more, would not that system which I am advocating, be one very effectual means of "teaching children that religious and benevolent objects have claims upon them, which they cannot disregard, and be guiltless; and that they ought to deny themselves innocent gratifications, in order to contribute to them?" On this plan, when they have any property at their disposal, they can be taught to lay some of it out for materials; and by their own industry and perseverance greatly increase their value. Then instead of retaining them for their own gratification, they can be encouraged to give them to be sold, for the furtherance of any and every good cause.

Nor do I believe it "would be a violation of any precept of Scripture, to require every church member to pay monthly, or quarterly" "as God prospers him" to meet the current expenses of the church to which he belongs." Nor do I believe that a Bazaar now and again for some special purposes in connection with that same church would be the slightest hindrance to such a measure; or any more a violation of that holy book which says, "The earth is the Lord's and the fullness thereof," and enjoins us that "whether we eat or drink or whatever we do, to do all to the glory of God." Finally we are asked "if persons are spiritually benefited by attending Bazaars; and if men are not made better, who, from principle, part with their shilling, dollar or pound?" I answer that any person who attends "with an eye single to God's glory," is spiritually benefited; if otherwise, he is certainly not; neither would he be were he within the walls of the sanctuary. And he who parts with property actuated by holy principles, is undoubtedly made better; no matter whether that property, so given, proceed from the exertions of the merchant, mechanic, farmer or the contributor to the Bazaar.

The writer has not the most remote idea, that Bazaars are the least hindrance to other systems of benevolence; and if "A Subscriber" can make it evident, that those who contribute most to them, are most zealous on other systems, I will cease to uphold them.

A CONTRIBUTOR.

For the Christian Messenger.

Interposition of Providence.

MR. EDITOR,

I feel that I cannot pass over as unworthy of record, the providential deliverance of my eldest brother from certain and instant death. A few days since, while repairing a gun which had not been used for several years, he put one end of the barrel into a stove, without the slightest suspicion of its being charged, and knelt on one knee waiting for it to heat, with the muzzle pointing directly towards his breast. He remained in that position until he thought it sufficiently heated for his purpose; he then reached over in order to get a wrench which was lying a little distance from his side, and during that only moment of safety, before he