

Correspondence.

For the Christian Messenger.

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

[No. 7.]

"It is more blessed to give than to receive."
"Ye cannot serve God and mammon."

In considering the comparative influence which is exerted on human happiness by benevolence and covetousness, let us leave the individual and take a wider view of the church and the world. Covetousness is a fruitful source of misery throughout the earth, and nothing can stay its progress but the benevolence of the cross. Surely the remedy is more blessed than the disease. Health is more desirable than sickness, and life than death.

Our first parents coveted the forbidden fruit, and when that desire was gratified,

"Earth felt the wound,
And Nature from her seat,
Sighing through all her works,
Gave signs of woe that all was lost."

Covetousness having entered perpetuates the ruin of the fall. The flood of water which swept off the antediluvians, is nought, compared with the flood of selfishness which still rolls its dark waves over us. Mammon thenceforth usurped the throne of God, and claimed the homage of the human race. Our first parents becoming imbued with this direful principle transmitted it from generation to generation. Covetousness appearing in a small rill in Paradise, has come down to us in a current ever deepening, widening, and flowing along with increased force, threatening to sweep away every plant of Eden, and change the earth into a desolate wilderness. The efforts as yet made by Christians to stay this current of iniquity, is like a company of children attempting, with a few pebbles and a little turf, to stay the mighty stream of Niagara. It would almost seem as if the inmates of the ark of God in their feeble efforts against the tide of selfishness and avarice are only borne downwards the more rapidly towards that iron-bound and inhospitable coast where shipwreck is inevitable. When we see covetousness binding the earth in chains of sin and ignorance and misery. We are led to exclaim "vain is the help of man. Our help cometh from the Lord who made heaven and earth." Our only hope lies in the comparative strength of the two contending principles of the selfishness of man, and the benevolence of God. Though the former seems now to prevail, yet we know that the latter is irresistible. Though the former may seem to boast the possession of all terrestrial things, yet the latter must prevail. There is but one God and He is a jealous God. He will not give His glory to another, nor His praise to graven images. Even Mammon, the most degraded, because the most selfish of all the false deities, must yield to the dominion of the God of Israel. Jehovah has declared "The silver and the gold is mine, and the cattle on a thousand hills." It was said even of Tyre, rich, yet boasting in her rebellion against God. "Her merchandize and her hire shall be holiness (that is, consecrated) to the Lord: it shall not be treasured up nor laid up; for her merchandize shall be for them that dwell before the Lord, to eat sufficiently, and for durable clothing."—Isaiah xxiii. 18.

The time is coming when mammon will not have a shrine nor a worshipper, but He whose right it is shall reign on the earth as He now reigns King of saints. But while we would keep our eye on that bright period, we would also contemplate the present state of the world. Let us each one enquire what am I doing to dethrone Mammon, and to set up the kingdom of Christ on earth? When the Saviour shall reign in the heart of each individual, then at the name of Jesus every knee shall bow, of things in heaven, and things in earth, and things under the earth, and every tongue shall confess that Jesus Christ is Lord to the glory of God the Father.

CHARITY.

Nova Scotia, Jan. 22nd, 1859.

For the Christian Messenger.

Economy versus Charity.

MR. EDITOR,

Your "Nova Scotia" correspondent inveighs loudly against covetousness; and deprecates the conduct of those who hoard up the shining sovereigns. Covetousness, we admit, is a sin comprised in the long category which excludes from heaven. "The love of money," we know, on highest authority, "is the root of all evil." And if there are those who bag the sovereigns, and delight in the sight of the yellow dust, only for the sake of beholding, we envy not

their sordid pleasure. Is the love of money, however, the crying sin of our land, which requires to be exposed in so many long columns and pages of your paper? We thought intemperance was the foul demon which first of all required to be extirpated, before we assailed other prominent vices. Besides, are not thousands violating the Christian Sabbath—backbiting and slandering their neighbours—using deception and lies in their dealings. Are not all these as basely employed as the man that counts his own sovereigns? But where, I would ask, Mr. Charity, where live those inveterate misers with their hoards of shining dust? In Cornwallis there may be a few, where potatoes never rot—where dykes never fail. In Annapolis, where are the golden russets, and nonpariels, and greenings and all, packed in small barrels—and cider too; there may be a surplus of the coveted coin. Still we are in doubt if that surplus will pay for so many columns—in so many papers, as you supply. Many of the other towns and counties are so poor, that, instead of coveting yellow gold, they covet much more a little governmental yellow-corn-meal, to expel starvation. No hoarding up there. The last sovereign has gone, and the last barrel of meal has been parcelled out, but not the last crying child has gone to bed without a supper.

Is it not possible, Mr. Editor, that your correspondent is on the wrong track? May not prodigality, not covetousness, be the crying sin? Is not the love of fine houses, and fine dress, and splendid horses, and handsome carriages, more injurious than the love of money? Injurious to those who have them, and injurious to those who pay for them. Many of those handsome mansions are not paid for—many of those costly dresses are still on the books of the shop-keeper, who is, in consequence, depriving his merchant of his remittance. Many of those large tracts of country with nominal Christianity, but is not the excessive shallowness of our grace a proof that while there is more surface, there is not more substance? How few are the men who, by earnest prayer, continual meditation, and close fellowship, have attained to eminence as fathers of the church in these latter days! Once the valiant men of Israel could scarcely be numbered, but where are now the mighties of the Lord of Hosts? The stars were once crowded together in glittering constellations, but now we may search the entire heavens to find a star of the first magnitude. I look upon my shelves, and run my eye along the works of Owen, Howe, Bunyan, Baxter, Ambrose, Burgess, Brooks, Preston, Gurnal, Sibbs, Ness, Mayer, Jenkyn, Manton, Char-nock, Durham, and scores of others; and I only wish that I knew of one living man whose name is worthy to be mentioned with theirs. Does not this arise from the hurry of our engagements, and our desire to be achieving a name among men? We paint, and grain, and varnish, and thus hope to make the world believe that we are real. O, that we looked more prayerfully to the essence and substance of the matter. We might then flash and glitter less, but our true light would be far more bright and clear. I would have you, my dear friends, ever panting to know the vitality and mystery of true religion. Take care to be much alone with yourself, and still more alone with God. Then may you go forth and labor with both your hands and all your heart, nor shall your soul lose its rest amidst all your engagements, if the grace of God shall thus dwell in you richly.

CURRENCY.

From the Watchman & Reflector.

Letter from Rev. C. H. Spurgeon.

ABRIDGED.

Revival in Ireland—Work of Grace in Mr. Spurgeon's congregation—Danger of Neglecting our own souls in our care for others—The Present as compared with the Past—The Fathers of our Religious Literature and the Men of our Day.

You desire to hear something from me touching the revivals in Ireland. I am not able to bear any witness with regard to them, except at second-hand, and, therefore, must refer you to the innumerable letters which have been written upon the subject by correspondents who have travelled through the country. Such letters have doubtless appeared in the Watchman. As the genuine character of the work, there is but one opinion, for even Mr. Gillfillan has retracted his evil sentence. I only wish that his repentance may extend to many other naughty words which he has written and spoken. The Presbyterian church is certainly no hot-bed of excitement, and the fact of the great prevalence of revivals in that worthy body in the north of Ireland is an irresistible argument against the charge that they are the flashes of fanatic fury. I must confess my intense affection for very much in the Presbyterian body; were its members but able to understand the very simple precept of baptism, they might, I think, challenge the most severe biblical scrutiny. There is one fault, at least, from which they are quite clear, namely, the evil of wild, disorderly zeal, and hence when they feel the kindling of an extraordinary flame, I am quite satisfied that it is no strange fire which burns upon the altar. Their doctrine is solidly Calvinistic, and their ministers are, for the most part, mature and well-taught men. They are not a people whose passions outrun their understanding, and they are too well accustomed to try the spirits, to be easily deceived. These good brethren were at first taken by surprise, and were somewhat afraid of the new Pentecost, but to a man, they now rejoice in the work as being gracious and Divine.

Thus far, we have reason to rejoice that the Lord's arm is not shortened, and that poor, benighted Ireland is at least in one of her provinces, illuminated by the Holy Spirit's light.

In my own church, for more than five years, we have had all the fruits of a revival without its excessive excitement. The number of converts seems to be as constant as if some Divine law regulated and controlled their influx. Each week brings its quota, until we have no room to accommodate the church at the communion table, and are obliged to meet in two bodies, that all may find a place. The daily prayer-meeting, at seven in the morning, has been maintained without cessation for two years. All through the winter-mornings of fog, with which this city of Gog and Magog abounds, the brethren have never failed to be present, although to do so they have had long distances to walk. Our Monday evening meetings for prayer are as well attended as the evening lectures, and the people plead with prevailing earnestness, and expect the blessing with joyous hope. We know what it is to walk in the full light of love and joy; never were a people more happy than we are. At some future time, when there are no other out-door facts to write upon, I mean to tell you of our eldership, of our catechumen classes, our theological seminary for young ministers, and other institutions, which I know will interest you, because of your love to our common Lord and Master.

There is great danger lest in looking abroad at the work of God, we should neglect our own souls. When we are gazing with curiosity at the phenomena of revivals, and the machinery of progress, we may very easily forget to cultivate the growth of grace within. The want of the times is neither length of profession, nor breadth of effort, but depth of real vital godliness. The religion of the Puritanic age was certainly more contracted than that of the present day, but did it not far excel ours in depth and force? We have broken down the banks which confined the stream, we have flooded large tracts of country with nominal Christianity, but is not the excessive shallowness of our grace a proof that while there is more surface, there is not more substance? How few are the men who, by earnest prayer, continual meditation, and close fellowship, have attained to eminence as fathers of the church in these latter days! Once the valiant men of Israel could scarcely be numbered, but where are now the mighties of the Lord of Hosts? The stars were once crowded together in glittering constellations, but now we may search the entire heavens to find a star of the first magnitude. I look upon my shelves, and run my eye along the works of Owen, Howe, Bunyan, Baxter, Ambrose, Burgess, Brooks, Preston, Gurnal, Sibbs, Ness, Mayer, Jenkyn, Manton, Char-nock, Durham, and scores of others; and I only wish that I knew of one living man whose name is worthy to be mentioned with theirs. Does not this arise from the hurry of our engagements, and our desire to be achieving a name among men? We paint, and grain, and varnish, and thus hope to make the world believe that we are real. O, that we looked more prayerfully to the essence and substance of the matter. We might then flash and glitter less, but our true light would be far more bright and clear. I would have you, my dear friends, ever panting to know the vitality and mystery of true religion. Take care to be much alone with yourself, and still more alone with God. Then may you go forth and labor with both your hands and all your heart, nor shall your soul lose its rest amidst all your engagements, if the grace of God shall thus dwell in you richly.

During the terrific gales of this week a ship returning from Australia with much gold and many passengers has been driven upon our coast, and nearly every soul on board has been lost. Here were weary laborers returning from a foreign shore to their old fatherland, rich with treasure, and they are wrecked in sight of shore. According to the Arminian theory this will probably be our portion in spiritual things, but we have a happier prospect when we turn to that glorious article of our faith, the final perseverance of the saints. Well may we tremble, for if left to ourselves we shall soon make shipwreck of faith, but equally well may we rejoice, for Jesus is with us, and will surely land us in safety. So long as He is secure, we are in no hopeless danger, for thus the record runs: "Because I live, ye shall live also." The Arminian teaches that he may fall away and perish. It is possibly true of the man who can believe such an error, but our faith lays hold upon the promise, and is not afraid of any failure in its fulfillment; "I give unto my sheep eternal life, and they shall never perish, neither shall any man pluck them out of my hands."

My closing remarks are suggested by the tendency to novel doctrine, latitudinarian sentiment, which is visible in the sermons and

speeches of some of your notable divines. I pray you be upon your watchtower, lest the good word of life be, by slow degrees, worn down to the taste of the depraved nature of man, under the extraordinary pretense of advancing it up to the standing of the times; as if the truth of Jesus was not the same yesterday, to-day and forever, and fitted for every age and every clime.

To advance in theology beyond the written Word is to go back. To laugh at ancient orthodoxy as narrow and antiquated, and to offer in its place fine phrases about the march of intellect, is to pull down a fortress of granite, and erect in its stead a bastion of ice, which the first day of summer shall dissolve.

Yours most truly,

C. H. SPURGEON.

Clapham, London, Jan., 1860.

For the Christian Messenger.

United States Correspondence.

MR. EDITOR,

The press of other indispensable duties has hitherto prevented me from sending you any account of what the press here styles the

LAWRENCE MASSACRE.

On Wednesday the 11th Jan., 1860, a large establishment known as the Pemberton Mills, in which about seven hundred persons, the larger number of whom were females, owing to the insecure state of its foundation, fell suddenly with a loud crash, burying amidst its ruins this multitude of unfortunate victims, a large proportion of whom were bruised, lacerated, mangled, crushed, and hurried into eternity without a moments premonition. The whole city was thrown into the most intense excitement, and every possible effort was put forth for several succeeding days and nights to rescue the wretched survivors, as well as the dead, from their perilous confinement. No sooner had the building fallen than the ruins were discovered to be on fire. The engines were soon at work, but in spite of their efforts, a large number perished in the flames who might otherwise have been rescued in safety. About three hundred have lost their lives in this horrible calamity, and hundreds more are in a state of indescribable suffering, a comparatively small proportion having escaped without injury. Many heartrending incidents in connection with this fearful catastrophe might be given, but my time being necessarily all taken up with my studies, I must forbear.

The following from the Boston Herald will doubtless be interesting:—

"The people have not recovered from the paralyzing influence of the frightful calamity at Lawrence; nor will they soon forget it. It will pass into history as the most fearful disaster of the kind which has ever been recorded. Our reporters have given graphic and painfully interesting accounts of the scenes of horrors they have witnessed. The circumstances attendant upon the calamity render it, in all its aspects, one of the most dreadful that the human mind can conceive of. The sudden crumbling of the mills, without a moment's premonition, carrying crushed and mangled bodies to the earth and enveloping them in ruins was surely horrible enough; but the searching flames which succeeded, licking around and shrivelling up and roasting alive those unhappy people, a majority of whom were girls of a tender age, add a climax to the horror, which humanity shudders to contemplate. According to the latest accounts, more than three hundred persons were in a moment either killed outright, or were afterwards burnt alive, or smothered to death, or were extricated in a state of dreadful mutilation to languish a few hours and then die, or to pass through an abridged life in pain and sorrow.

Who are responsible for the wholesale sacrifice of life? This fearful massacre? Tell us not that nobody is to blame. It is the culminating result of a system of sham building which has prevailed in this country. Those helpless girls at Lawrence are the victims of man's cupidity. Of his grasping, avaricious spirit; of the insane strife of hastening to be rich, which is accursed of God. Honorable and upright enterprise is beneficial to all. It does not seek to attain results without using means. But that enterprise which seeks only individual advantage, at the least cost, withholding requisite means for safety and proceeding upon a cheap plan; which regards not the comfort and lives of subordinates, is a curse and a snare. Those capitalists who have ordered cheap structures and those architects and builders who have lent their art and skill to those cheapeners of precious life, in their grasping greed, are more to be dreaded in a community than a pestilence. Yet have the public and the authorities submitted to these practices in pathetic silence, for a series of years. Awful and solemn warnings have been given every year; buildings have crumbled to shapeless ruins, in the midst of populous cities, in mid-day, and hundreds of lives have been sacrificed. The people are startled for the moment; the press makes its comments on the succeeding day and the matter is set at rest, until another building sinks and more lives are crushed out. Repeated warnings have hitherto had no effect.