

LETTER FROM REV. C. H. SPURGEON.

TO THE EDITORS OF THE CHRISTIAN WATCHMAN AND REFLECTOR:

In an early letter to you, I happened to notice the singular deliverance of a servant of Christ, Mr. Vanderkiste, who was preserved from famine, and finally restored to his family, though lost for days in the wilds of Australia. That letter has been read by him, and has elicited another, which will interest and edify your readers. Here it is:

Dungoy, Maitland, New South Wales, July 18, 1860.

DEAR BROTHER IN THE LORD,—A newspaper was recently handed to me by a friend, in which I observe a notice by you of the marvellous deliverance experienced by me, from imminently impending starvation. The notice altogether I value much, and especially the prayer for my welfare, with which you so kindly conclude it.

I will, if you please, furnish you with a notice for one of your discourses, and as I am not very likely to have the opportunity of addressing London audiences with your prestige, if at all, I should much like to convey through you, to some of those immense and precious auditories which you are privileged from time to time to address, the glorification of God, my Saviour, which His grace enabled me to render, even amid the desolation of starvation.

Then tell the dear people, from me—may Christ bless them—that starvation itself, the sinking in of the human eye by want, the howling of tempestuous winds, and the pattering of incessant rains in the great wilderness of the far South, the death-dirges of wild birds, and the prospect of bones picked by wild dogs, that the whole of these form but a scene amid which, when the Comforter, the Holy Ghost, shineth, the soul can raise a song of triumph, and cheerfully echo back the soundings of Jehovah's word, "Let the inhabitants of the rock sing, let them shout from the top of the mountains."

Tell the dear people, for their instruction, that if I die in my nest, it will be well indeed, if I die comforted with the comforts which Jesus gave me when death came stealing along the lone mountains, robed with the chill cerecloths, and featured with the grim visage of gaunt starvation.

Tell them, and let them glory in it, that it is just as easy to Immanuel to make a man's soul rejoice amid the paraphernalia of starvation, as amid the paraphernalia of patrician wealth, or palatial or princely glory.

What an all sufficient Saviour then have we, who can assuredly do both.

Believe me, yours in our one Redeemer,

R. W. VANDERKISTE.

It is worth while to have written the course of letters which with great difficulty and much irregularity I have sent to you, if my only reward had been this brotherly voice from afar. How sweet is it to feel that you have true brethren, the chords of whose heart can be touched, although we have never grasped their hand.

You know how proud many men are of their pedigree, and you will smile when I confess to the same weakness. I can claim no descent from the aristocracy of earth, but I have a direct, undeviating lineage from the aristocracy of heaven. I was not, however, aware that I could run back quite so far as the records now enable me to do. In the list of those persons who in Essex suffered in year 1677, for holding an unlawful conventicle and attending a meeting held at Dedham, stands the name of *Job Spurgeon*, who with two others was fined £2 11s. This parish of Dedham I believe to be the original seat of our family, which has never removed far from the spot, nearly all its members residing to this day within a few miles of the village.

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THIS DAY WITHIN A FEW MILES OF THE VILLAGE.

On the 22nd July, 1683, John Matthews, of Harwich, Job Spurgeon, of Dedham, Stephen Moore and Stephen Arnold, of Lawford, taken at a meeting, were committed to Chelmsford gaol, by warrant from Justice Smith. They were, after a few weeks, bailed out till Sessions, but on their appearance there, on the 3rd of October, they were required to give sureties for their good behavior, which refusing to do, they were re-committed to prison, where three of them lay upon straw about fifteen weeks, in the midst of a winter remarkable for extremity of cold; but the fourth, *Job Spurgeon*, being so weak that he was unable to lie down, sat up in a chair the most part of the time. The curious in such matters may see this record in "Besse's Sufferings," Vol. I., 205, 207. This good man was a Quaker, and is none the less worthy of honor for his sufferings for conscience sake.

We must not deny the early Quakers the title of confessors, because their representatives may have degenerated or outlived their vocation, or because they *could* run their heads against a great many unnecessary stone-walls, or because the share of vital truth which they possessed was sometimes incoherently set forth. Their baptism of blood still cries for a just vindicator, and if any should question their value as confessors *for truth*, they must on all hands be honored as confessors against *error*.

I imagine that I am frequently affected by this old Quaker blood, for I believe in the Holy Spirit's monitions to a larger extent than it were wise to speak of to a mingled audience. I know that I have had repeated warnings and suggestions, and often when I have essayed to preach in a certain town the Spirit has not suffered me to do so, while on the other hand I have done many things for no other reason, and with no other apparent justification than the inward moving of the Holy Ghost. This may be strange to others, to me it is a habit of life, and if once I feel the motion which I account to be Divine, no human argument can prevent my attempting to obey the message. Nevertheless, although I have the other Quaker peculiarity of abhorring an oath even before the magistrate, I am a Baptist to the core, and your humble servant,

C. H. SPURGEON.