

LETTER FROM REV. C. H. SPURGEON.

TO THE EDITORS OF CHRISTIAN WATCHMAN AND REFLECTOR :

DEAR BRETHREN,—Pray excuse me to my kind friends if I have been a little behindhand in my letters. I warned you at the first that this would be the case, and therefore you are not amazed at the irregularities which have occurred. I am a very busy man, and if I write at all, it must be by fits and starts.

I have just returned from Ireland. I have been delightfully reckoned up and fully discharged both on the voyage to the Emerald Isle and upon returning; but for all this I have had the happiest journey I ever made in my life. The kindness of the Irish people to me was something indescribable, and their readiness to hear the Word was pleasing in the highest degree. I am not quite proud enough to profess a large amount of modesty, but I was often made to feel my great unworthiness of the many thanks and tokens of affection which I received. All the nobility and gentry of Dublin listened to the truth, and, as you will be glad to know, a large number of Roman Catholics attended the services. I did not set myself to abuse the Pope, or cry down Episcopacy, but I preached up Christ's cross with all my might, and therefore all classes of men were drawn to hear. Love is a power which I can trust, and if the preaching of Christ will not win a Romanist, I am sure abuse never will.

A most singular review of my discourses appeared in the Roman Catholic paper, singular, because of the kind and generous spirit which shines through it. The writer made a grand mistake by misunderstanding a remark which I made upon the ultra-Calvinists of the day, who dare not invite a sinner to come to Christ; he concluded from this that I was an enemy to Calvinism, although I was preaching true Calvinism all the while. Of course, as a Papist, he could hardly be aware of the many leagues of difference between the evangelical Puritan and the hyper, hard-shelled fatalist, who makes the decree of God a sort of hot iron with which to brand his fellow-men with the broad black mark of damnation.

I am led here to observe that when I see such an error committed by an attentive hearer, I am not at a loss for a reason for the many reports which go forth concerning public men. I find myself at one time a Presbyterian, then an Antinomian, and anon, a renegade Calvinist. Verily, common fame is a common liar. I always reckon myself a very transparent personage, but some men will make mistakes, and other men will magnify the error till a full-blown prodigy of report stands forth before the public eye. Now this letter is all about *myself*, and I am therefore ashamed to send it. As a sort of recompense to you for your patience, I add a precious letter which has never seen the light before. It is a thorough lesson for me, and I hope it will also be useful to my brethren who read it. The original I met with in Kent; it bears the post-mark of Biggleswade, in Bedfordshire, and as you will perceive, is quaint and pithy, bearing internal evidence that John Berridge wrote it, for who else could say such good things in such a queer but forcible way? One of these days I will write you a brief account of grand old John, with a few anecdotes of my own preserving.

Exerton, April 25, 1778.

DEAR BROTHER,—I am coming once again to Plymouth, a long journey for an old man, and the car-

count of grand old John, with a few anecdotes of my own preserving.

Exerton, April 25, 1778.

DEAR BROTHER,—I am coming once again to Plymouth, a long journey for an old man, and the carriage costly, yet come I must, to pay respect to Mr. Heath; but to make travelling charge as light as possible, I shall fold myself up in half a sheet, and come post in a letter. I love to see Christians appear in miniature, and am laboring to contract myself, an arduous task indeed!!! For no sooner is one paring taken from self, but another piece of proud flesh springs up in its stead; and I feel as bulky,—as lofty as ever. Many *living* physicians have been consulted to lessen this bulk, but the *buried* doctors speak most to the point. John Baptist understood a Gospel pulse well, and says positively, “Jesus must increase but I must decrease.” (John 3: 30.) From him I discern that self-will is the Pharaoh, who hardens himself against Christ, saying, who is the Lord that I should serve Him? And the Lord’s batteries are planted of course against this great *I*. Once I thought that growing knowledge with good frames, must make children sprout up apace into Christ, but I learn from the Baptist, that good knowledge and good frames, however desirable, may turn a child rickety, and make his great *I* grow bigger still; yea, I learn also, whatever be my knowledge or frames, Jesus gets increase in my heart no further, than great *I* gets decrease. As I grow out of self, I grow into Christ, and no faster. Jesus rises and gains dominion, as self sinks. If, then, I wish for more of Christ, I must have less of self; and this tiger grows lean, not by feeding but starving; grows quiet, not by wheedling, but thumping. Hence I see the want of some daily cross, which Jesus kindly sends, to crucify self. Hence, too, I find a need of much prayer to take my cross patiently, and make it work effectually. And if a cross knife seems sharp and cuts deep, it is sent to pare off some large carbuncle, which is ever sprouting up from proud self. I would, therefore, look on Lord Will-be-will as my worst foe, insolent towards God, offensive to my neighbors, and venacious to my own heart.

May I give him no quarter, but beat him like a wild
 beast, so he is, and embrace every cross, as an ap-
 pointed means for taming this tiger. So you are
 preaching again, my friend says, and upon a rusty
 subject. True: my heart needs this preaching every
 day, and it will not be amiss for you, if it resembles
 your heart to strange treatment, and much you will
 meet with from the world and the church, before your
 warfare is finished. When you write to London, send
 my hearty love to Mrs. Newsom. Give my kind re-
 spects to your family. Grace and peace be with you
 all, and with your affectionate servant,

JOHN BRANIDON.

Mr. Robert Heath, Plymouth Dock, Devonshire.

Is not this the experience of a true Christian?
 May we all decrease in self each day. Thus prays
 Your servant for Christ's sake,

C. H. SPURGEON.