

LETTER FROM C. H. SPURGEON.

REASON FOR DELAY IN WRITING — CHRONICLE OF LABORS.

[In the annexed interesting letter received the present week, Mr. Spurgeon, in responding to the request of a venerable friend that he would furnish a fuller account of his own labors, gives, at the same time, the cause of the temporary suspension of his correspondence to the *Watchman and Reflector*. It is not wonderful that one so overburdened with toil in the service of his Master, should find it difficult to write steadily. Our readers will welcome the renewal of his letters, and especially the promise given below, of a series from the continent.]

MY DEAR MR. EDITOR:—Your patient subscribers have had to bear long with my silence, but I can honestly declare that it has been a clear impossibility for me to write until to-day. The fact is that I am fagged and weary; so weary that sleep does not refresh me, and nothing but a long repose will re-invigorate me. For nearly seven years I have rushed onward, preaching from ten to twelve sermons every week, presiding over an immense church, writing for the press, instructing young men, giving advice to quarreling churches and unsettled ministers, and doing a thousand and one things, all pleasant enough when enjoyed in moderation, but unitedly so heavy as to crush a man to the very earth. I have been thoroughly unwell, and quite unable to write to you. I purpose taking a long tour on the continent, and shall then be able to give you a more constant supply of letters, not upon the Rhine, which as your countrymen say is "tarnally chawed up," but upon any topic which may suggest itself to my mind while it is out at grass, and delivered from the collar.

Your venerable friend has asked me to give some account of my doings. Well, we will take the fortnight beginning with Sunday, March 18th, and give a hasty diary of engagements.

Sunday.—Preached in Exeter Hall to the usual packed and crowded house, upon the subject of death. The sermon is entitled, *Memento Mori*, and has had a very large circulation. While preaching ~~became so tired that I was~~ ~~not able to use up.~~ The Holy Spirit had wrought in me such an agony for the souls of dying men, that I was borne beyond myself, and at the conclusion was as much spent and worn as if I had been laboring in the sun for a whole day. Nevertheless in the evening my strength was restored, and again I endeavored to unfurl the banner, and wield the sword. The Sabbath was peculiarly a high day, and we look for very many fruits to the honor and glory of God. O, how delightful to sail with the wind; how different from toiling against the stream. Let but the heavenly gale arise, and it is a surpassing joy to be carried onward by its breath.

Monday, 19.—Had three hours' reading with the most advanced of my students, and then repaired

ing joy to be carried onward by its breath.

Monday, 19.—Had three hours' reading with the most advanced of my students, and then repaired to the chapel to meet deputations, preside at committees, and conduct the prayer-meeting. Our meetings for prayer are daily in the morning at seven; and on Monday evening at seven, the main body of the people come up to supplicate the Lord. The spirit of prayer in our midst has been maintained in a very eminent degree of fervency for the last seven years, and our success has been as clearly traceable to it as any effect could ever be traced to its cause. The daily prayer-meeting is nearly three years old, and has been sustained without pressure or pushing, by the spontaneous zeal of the people of God. I think continual prayer is much more really the work of the Spirit than those spasmodic flashes of excitement which startle for a time, and then die away in lethargy and forgetfulness. We have district meetings for prayer, presided over by the elders of the church in their own locality, the number of which would continually average twelve per week, and that every week in the year. Churches should never go back, but every institution should be permanent, and thus every advance would be a real, and not apparent gain. As far as I can gather, there are about twenty-five prayer-meetings weekly, officially recognized in connection with the church over which I preside, besides a very considerable number of meetings in private houses among the members. After prayer-meeting, saw several members and inquirers, and reached home soon after 11, P. M.

Tuesday, 20.—Left home at 7.30 in the morning, and was on my way to Diss, in Norfolk, a little journey of about 100 miles. Arrived at my destination at a few minutes after one, and found that rural town all alive with people from every neighboring village. No chapel could hold half the crowd who had gathered together, and the tent which had been erected had been dismantled by a high wind. The aforesaid wind was very riotous, blustering, and noisy, and seemed to have received a special commission to molest us on that day. After some debate I determined to try the open air in the framework of the dilapidated tent, and the following are the remarks which I sent home. "We had a wonderful day at Diss yesterday. The two largest chapels could not have held the people, even had they been crammed to the doors; I therefore preached out of doors. In a high wind, with your hair over your face, or tossing wildly up to heaven, one does not feel very much at ease, especially when perched on the tip end of a form, with a huge tent pole opposite one's eyes. 'Waft, waft, ye winds, his story.' Indeed, the prayer was liberally and literally answered, yet the people were as attentive and devout as upon the most hallowed and orderly occasions. During this windy service I was much troubled to know what to do with the people in the dark, in the evening. I hoped that many of the country people would go, and only the townsmen remain; but yet no place would hold them, and a service in the cold, night air, rough wind and darkness would have been impossible. At last I hit upon the following expedient, which answered admirably. I gave out that I should preach in both the chapels of the town, but did not tell a soul in which pulpit I should first appear. Both places were full to the skylights. I went to one, and preached at once, and then requested a brother minister to read, pray, and sing, and so conduct the services which ought to have been preliminary, at the end instead of the

beginning. This was changing the order, but it prevented disorder. Rushing away to the second house, where they had been proceeding with the usual service, I arrived at the last verse of the second hymn, and took up the sermon at once. Thus two congregations heard the Word, and let us hope double seed was sown. O, that the Lord may crown the day with success, and give a threefold increase to the three discourses. After service rode a few miles, so as to lessen the length of the next day's journey, and retired to rest in a quiet farm-house just as midnight had arrived."

Wednesday, 21.—Up at six, and rode across a cold, bleak country several miles to a railroad station, and then on to the town of Swaffham. When I saw the size of the chapel, and remembered the scene of the day before, I prayed very earnestly for rain in order that people might not be able to leave their homes. Rain it did, in the most pouring style, and hail-storms came at intervals to add to the effect. Thus we were able to get into the chapel; for although fearfully packed within, the rain prevented the accumulation of a crowd at the doors, who would infallibly have rendered all worship an impossibility, by their furious rushes to get into a place gorged already beyond imagination. It is a happy thing to see the people longing to hear the word, but when men's legs are broken, and women injured, the joy is turned into mourning. This fear continually haunts me in these desperate rushes, when the officers are unused to masses, and look idly on, as if paralyzed, instead of acting with double vigor. On this occasion all went on well, and the good hand of the Lord was very manifestly with us. The storm was a great blessing, and we shall never know how many accidents it prevented.

Thursday, 22.—Left Swaffham at five in the morning, and had a splendid, though cold ride, over a wild country, full of game of all sorts. How refreshing to the tired and exhausted mind to mark the liberty and enjoyment which still remains as the portion of God's creatures, to see the joyous play-

who
and
Mr. I
glory
evil d
ca, a
ple. t
of co
vanit
At
that
faces
own
loyal
serti
mott
will
thep
in pr
of co
self
stitu
and
roga

T
Soc
Str
inte
son
Soc
and
teer
ury
flek
Me
can
Th
the
in
of
pre
anc
tur

injured, the joy is turned into mourning. This fear continually haunts me in these desperate rushes, when the officers are unused to masses, and look idly on, as if paralysed, instead of acting with double vigor. On this occasion all went on well, and the good hand of the Lord was very manifestly with us. The storm was a great blessing, and we shall never know how many accidents it prevented.

Thursday, 22.—Left Swaffham at five in the morning, and had a splendid, though cold ride, over a wild country, full of game of all sorts. How refreshing to the tired and exhausted mind to mark the liberty and enjoyment which still remains as the portion of God's creatures, to see the joyous playfulness which survives the curse, and the singular beauty which even the fall could not utterly efface. These quiet rides are a healthy medicine to the soul, and when the heart is in fellowship with God, they are a means of grace of no mean order. I reached London after a ride by railway of about four hours, at eleven o'clock, and at once proceeded to the vestry of my chapel, where I spent the afternoon in seeing, separately and individually, a large number of inquirers who were seeking church-fellowship. God has been very gracious by continuing to us an increase almost invariable in its number, and constant in its periods. No spasms of excitements or fits of enthusiasm have seized upon the people; the course of the church has been like the rolling of your majestic rivers; a daily and hourly flood, ever gathering force, not from the fickle fountains of heated animal fervor, but from the ceaseless outflowing of the still waters of the Holy Spirit. It is not one remarkable sermon which is blessed, but the Word as a whole is ever useful. It is not at one prayer-meeting, or during a series of special efforts, that we have enjoyed the Divine presence; but year after year the gracious dew descends. True revivals may be sudden in their arrival, but I cannot bring my mind to believe that they are hasty in their departure. When a country or district is heaved aloft into the air of apparent zeal for godliness, and in a few years subsides again into its ancient lethargy, it is time to question the vitality of such a transient work. Personal piety, when genuine, is *abiding*, and why the like rule should not hold good with regard to the entire church, I am at a loss to tell. At seven I preached the word to our usually full house at home, and enjoyed the delivery of the message in my own soul.

Friday, 23.—My young students came at 9.30 to their usual weekly examination, which occupied us until nearly two o'clock. During this time we run over a variety of subjects, comprising theology, elocution, etymology, the physical sciences, and homiletics. Some fifteen or sixteen are thus aided in studies preparatory to the ministry, which are pursued during the week, and then surveyed and recapitulated at its close.

I find myself at the end of my paper, and therefore my intention of giving the whole fortnight week, and the next, and so on to this day, I have preached almost every day twice, and am sighing for a holiday. Yours truly, C. H. SPURGEON.