

REV. C. H. SPURGEON'S

Two Bridges of Calvinism & Arminianism,

Delivered in Belfast, Ireland.

FIRST LETTER.

MY DEAR YOUNG FRIEND,—You seem very anxious to ascertain my opinion of the Rev. Mr. Spurgeon, and the dogmas he so boldly announced to the community in his sermons lately preached in Belfast, and now published at large. To give it publicly, I can form no objection, but what arises from the high respect I entertain for many Ministers and laymen, who may, at least in part, approve of the sentiments he advanced. Several of these are among the excellent of the earth, having hearts filled with faith and love—principles which develop themselves in zeal for the glory of God and the benefit of the whole human family. However I may differ from such in minor points, I cannot but esteem them in love for their works' sake; and hence, I shrink from giving offence to the generation of God's children. I trust, nevertheless, this will not be the result—that the same right to think, speak and publish, which good men accord to Mr. Spurgeon, though a young man, will not be denied to one who has something of age and experience, and who, if he judges rightly, ought to be fully as well acquainted with the subject in hand as one who is but a student of yesterday. I am happy to find I cannot give offence to Mr. Spurgeon himself, seeing he declares in his first sermon, that "it does not signify to me the turn of a finger what any man existing chooses to think of me." This relieves my mind greatly in appearing before the public. This is, certainly, a very independent declaration. It equally sets the scorn of an enemy and the sympathy of a friend aside. It seems to set the world at defiance. It would, therefore, be a work of super-erogation for any friend to sympathise or offer assistance to one so careless, reckless, independent, and even infallible; and thus cast a reflection on his wisdom and sincerity in giving utterance to the conscious sense he entertains of his own gigantic strength and position. Dr. Johnson said of "Gulliver's Travels," "It defies criticism, because there is nothing else in the world to which it can be compared." It would seem as if Mr. Spurgeon entertains the same notion of himself. Dean Swift thought the man who talked in this style was a mere braggadocio. The celebrated Doctor just named considered the individual not sufficiently endued with wisdom, who dissects from the universal sense of mankind, and affects to despise public opinion. The