

In the Study.

What is a Christian?

TOWARDS AN ANTHOLOGY.

JOHN WESLEY.—By a Christian I mean one who so believes in Christ as that sin hath no more dominion over him.—*Letters of John Wesley* (ed. G. Eayrs), p. 62.

HORACE BUSHNELL.—I never saw so distinctly as now what it is to be a disciple, or what the keynote is of all most Christly experience. I think, too, that I have made my *last* discovery in this mine. First, I was led along into initial experience of God, socially and by force of the blind religious instinct in my nature; second, I was advanced into the clear moral light of Christ and of God, as related to the principle of rectitude; next, or third, I was set on by the inward personal discovery of Christ, and of God as represented in Him; now, fourth, I lay hold of and appropriate the general culminating fact of God's vicarious character in goodness, and of mine to be accomplished in Christ as a follower. My next stage of discovery will be when I drop the body and go home, to be with Christ in the conscious, openly revealed friendship of a soul whose affinities are with Him.—*Life and Letters of Horace Bushnell*, p. 445.

GEORGE WHITEFIELD.—Some place religion in being of this or that communion; more in morality; most in a round of duties; and few, very few, acknowledge it to be, what it really is, a thorough inward change of nature, a divine life, a vital participation of Jesus Christ, an union of the soul with God.—*The Life of the Rev. George Whitefield* (L. Tyerman), i. 96.

JAMES MARTINEAU.—The word Christian has for me a *religious* meaning apart from Creed. Whoever finds his highest in the Mind and Spirit of Jesus Christ and lives in his felt relation of Sonship to God, I should call a Christian; he has the very essence of discipleship, even though he should be brought to this temper of soul indirectly without knowing its Source; just as the Christian Fathers sometimes say that certain of the Pious Heathens were 'Christians before Christ.' The 'Living Test,' therefore, of love, of trust, of holi-

ness *is* in this view that Christian test; and whenever its conditions are complied with, *there* is a 'Christian' indeed, whether he knows it or not.—*Life and Letters of James Martineau* (Drummond and Upton), p. 125.

EDWARD FREEMAN.—I should have thought that, to deserve the name of Christian, a man need not be strictly orthodox—or what do we with Ulfilas?—but that he must do something more than 'admire, respect, or even reverence the character and teaching of Christ.' Every intelligent Mussulman must do that and more; for he must acknowledge Christ as a divinely commissioned teacher, the greatest of such teachers till Mahomet came. But the Mussulman is not a Christian: for he lets Mahomet depose Christ from the first place. I would count as Christian—perhaps only in a kind of secondary sense—every one who held Christ to be the greatest and last of divinely commissioned teachers—I mean divinely commissioned in some sense which I can't exactly explain, but something more than that general sense in which you or I or anybody may be said to be divinely commissioned whenever we do any good thing at all. Is not such an one a Christian, perhaps not a *full* Christian; but surely Christian, as distinguished from Mussulman, Jew, or mere theist?—*Life and Letters of Edward A. Freeman* (Stephens), ii. 213.

P. CARNEGIE SIMPSON.—If one were asked to state in terms what a Christian is, I should say something like this: a Christian is one who is responding to whatever meanings of Christ are, through God's spirit, being brought home to his intellectual or moral conscience.—*The Fact of Christ*, p. 175.

ST. PAUL.—If any man loveth not the Lord, let him be anathema.—1 Co 16²².

HUGH PRICE HUGHES.—When a discussion took place some time ago in the columns of the *Daily Chronicle* on 'Is Christianity Played Out?' the most significant and memorable feature of that controversy was the fact that a number of upright, honest, and sincere persons came forward to defend Christianity under the delusion that they themselves were Christian, although they made a number of ingenuous statements which clearly

showed that they were no more Christians than Confucius or Zoroaster was a Christian. They were moral, they were upright, they had noble aspirations, they accepted the ethical ideal of Christianity so far as they understood it; but they were not Christians. No one is a Christian who does not love the Lord Jesus Christ; and no one can properly love the Lord Jesus Christ who does not enjoy conscious, personal fellowship and intercourse with Him.—*Essential Christianity*, p. 112.

MARCUS DODS.—It is difficult to find any mark which definitely distinguishes the Christian from all others save this, that the Christian is the man who has received the Spirit of Christ. 'If any man,' says Paul, 'have not the Spirit of Christ, he is none of His.' Every man who has Christ's Spirit is His, is a Christian. All the knowledge that a man needs to make him a Christian is only the knowledge that Christ can and will bestow the Holy Spirit; for the one article of the Christian creed is faith in a now living and supreme Christ. All the action that is required to make a man a Christian is that action which consists in truly depending upon Christ for the Holy Spirit. And all the conduct and that peculiar character which are the proper manifestation of a Christian life do regularly and always result from the acceptance of the Holy Spirit. It is this which distinguishes the Christian from every kind of man, that he looks to Christ and waits upon Him for this greatest of all gifts, the gift of a divine power that can be applied to human nature, and that brings to human nature a life-sustaining, enlightening, and sanctifying energy.—*Christ and Man*, p. 120.

JOHN HENRY NEWMAN.—If the truth must be spoken, what are the humble monk, and the holy nun, and other regulars, as they are called, but Christians after the very pattern given us in Scripture?—*Sermons on Subjects of the Day*, p. 290.

The Seven Words.

II.

The Word of a King.

'To-day shalt thou be with me in Paradise.'—Lk 23⁴³.

I. CHRIST THE KING.

Christ's first word on the Cross was one of intercession; in it He exercised His function as

High Priest. His second word is a word of promise, by it He anticipates His kingly office, and that also at the very time when His claim to be a King was most subjected to contempt. In the first word He prays that repentance and grace may be given to sinners; in the second He opens the door to a chief among sinners. The first has to do with the kingdom of grace, the second with the kingdom of glory.

1. The penitent thief appeals to Jesus as a King. It is as a King that Jesus suffers. His kingdom is a kingdom of higher glory than belongs to the world. Even while His hands are nailed to the cross He is the King of heaven, and can open its golden gates with a word at His pleasure. The Saviour welcomed this man's homage. He tacitly acknowledged His own lordship over the unseen world. And in a moment the middle cross became the Judge's throne, from which the kingly word is spoken, 'Come, ye blessed of my Father.'

2. Judgment is the first and fundamental function of kings, and Jesus claimed it in its whole extent. To pronounce condemnatory judgment was not His purpose in coming into the world. But judgment was necessarily involved in His coming; the rejection of Him in some sort forestalls the verdict of the last assize; and even here definitive sentence must sometimes be pronounced.

† Christ hung upon the Cross at once as Saviour and as Judge. We read that double office in Michael Angelo's picture of the last judgment. The general theme of the picture, and many of its details, were fixed by a tradition two hundred years older than this painter, and the whole spirit of it is strange and repellent to our age. But there is truth in it, and the truth is told with consummate power. It is the *crucified* Christ who comes upon the clouds to judgment, and the hand once pierced for the salvation of men is stretched forth with a gesture—we are at a loss to define what the gesture is. The general attitude is one which may be traced to the earliest art of the Church. Originally it represented the Teacher proclaiming the gospel. In the early Middle Ages it was interpreted as an act of blessing. The later Middle Ages transformed it into a judgment of condemnation. But never before was this gesture depicted so equivocally as here: it represents the proclamation of that word which either saves or judges, according as men accept or reject it; it signifies at once blessing and ban; with mysterious power it raises up to heaven, it also presses down to hell.¹

II. THE PENITENT.

1. Of all the characters which came into personal contact with Christ, the thief upon the cross stands

¹ W. Lowrie, *Gaudium Crucis*, 32.

showed that they were no more Christians than Confucius or Zoroaster was a Christian. They were moral, they were upright, they had noble aspirations, they accepted the ethical ideal of Christianity so far as they understood it; but they were not Christians. No one is a Christian who does not love the Lord Jesus Christ; and no one can properly love the Lord Jesus Christ who does not enjoy conscious, personal fellowship and intercourse with Him.—*Essential Christianity*, p. 112.

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alone. He is a type of character often met with to-day. It is the character of a man who, hardened by the guilt and sorrow of a misspent life, still retains that within him which responds to the touch of God's Divine Hand. It is the character of a man, brutalized by his own misdeeds, who, strangely enough, carries beneath his rough exterior a heart which may be softened by a kind and sympathetic word.

The original word used to designate him means more than 'thief.' No commonplace pilferer was he; but a brigand, whose life, in all likelihood, had been one long atrocity, like the life of many a modern brigand in Spain, Italy, or Macedonia. These men were banditti; they belonged to that class, half-criminal, half-patriotic, which abounded in the land of Palestine at that time, and their successors are found even to this day. They were men who had lived unregulated lives; men who were to some degree the heroes of the lower classes of the people. They may have been revolutionaries, whose opposition to the Roman rule had driven them outside the pale of society, where, to win a subsistence, they had to resort to the trade of highwaymen; but in that country, tyrannized over by a despotic foreign power, those who attempted to raise the standard of revolt were sometimes far from ignoble characters, though the necessities of their position betrayed them into acts of violence. But his own words to his companion, 'We receive the due reward of our deeds,' point the other way. His memory was stained with acts for which he acknowledged that death was the lawful penalty.

2. In course of time the bandit's lot had been theirs; society had been too strong for them; the social power had laid its stern hand upon them; they had been dragged to the seat of judgment, and condemned to an ignominious death. And now, as Jesus goes to Calvary, they follow in His footsteps; and with the cross of Jesus are reared two other crosses—it stands not alone upon Mount Calvary, as Christian imagination of necessity too often thinks.

These two crosses are an epitome of the world. There are innumerable points in which one man may differ from another; but fundamentally there are two kinds—those on the right hand, and those on the left. There is between them no sure mark of distinction which men can trace; but the difference is as deep as life. The difference awaits

its revelation: the two walk side by side in the world, *and each alike bears his cross*—a burden, we are prone to forget, which no man may escape, though he may forbear to choose it; but to the one it is the gate of life, to the other the mere instrument of death. Between them, another cross bears the propitiation for the sins of the whole world—intended for all, available for all, though only one will accept it, and the other rails.

3. At first it would seem as though both of His fellow-sufferers were numbered with His foes, for we are distinctly told that the thieves that were crucified with Him joined the scribes and Pharisees, and the Roman soldiers, and the multitude in casting contempt upon Him. The people at the foot of the cross said, 'If thou be the Son of God, come down, and we will believe.' The devil had entered into them, and they were speaking the words of Satan; the same words Satan said when he took Him to the pinnacle of the temple, and said, 'If thou be the Son of God, cast thyself down.' 'Come down from the cross, and we will believe.' And when the two thieves heard them blaspheme at the bottom of the cross, they both of them caught up their blasphemy, and cast the same in His teeth.

The weary hours dragged on. One hour passed: two hours passed: the third was passing, and the reproaches were still heard. But a change was coming over one of the thieves—his reproaches were ceasing. He was beginning to feel that this Man was not like other men; there was a majesty, a solemnity in His demeanour not found in others. Besides, death was coming closer and closer, and there is ever clear vision when we judge ourselves in the presence of death. Ribaldry vanishes, our jests cease, when we stand face to face with it. The robber, as he died, saw two things in clearer light—his own sin and this wonderful Saviour. The panorama of his life passed swiftly before him as before the eyes of the drowning; but in this horror he saw a Hand which, if only it might grip him, would be his salvation. At length he expostulates with his fellow-robber. With fury, and in the pangs of fear, this man said rudely and roughly to our Lord, 'If thou be Christ, save thyself and us.' Who defends Him now? The other robber. He says to the reviler, 'Dost not thou fear God, seeing thou art in the same condemnation? And we indeed justly; for we receive the due reward of our deeds: but this man hath done nothing amiss.'

¶ What was it converted him? Was it that he heard Him say, 'Father, forgive them, for they know not what they do,' and though he had never heard any one put to death say such words of the executioners, was it that? Was it that he read the little gospel over the top of the Cross, 'Jesus of Nazareth, the King of the Jews,' which Pilate had properly put there? He must have turned his head and looked on the Lord Himself. That is what converted him, and that is what converts every soul that learns to love the Saviour. His words are beautiful, His miracles are wonderful, but there is nothing like Jesus Christ Himself. It was *Himself*. He looked and he saw Him. It was the look of the Crucified One. There was something about Him. He looked at Christ, and Christ looked at him. And, just as when Peter blasphemed in the Judgment Hall, he, Peter, looked at Christ and found Christ looking at him (for Peter would never have known that He looked at him, if he had not been looking at Christ), and broke out into tears, so the suffering thief turned round and looked at Christ, and saw Christ looking at him. And there is life in a look from the Crucified.¹

4. There are three characteristics to be noticed in the penitent thief.

(1) *His penitence*.—The penitent robber not only confesses his sins—they were obvious; but he acknowledges the justice of his penance. Enduring the most excruciating sufferings upon his cross, he has the grace to say, 'And we indeed justly; for we receive the due reward of our deeds: but this man hath done nothing amiss.' This is true penitence. Penitence which stops short of confession of sins is, of course, no penitence at all. And penitence which confesses sin, but strives to justify self, and is unwilling to bear the penance or consequences of sin, is not true penitence. The penitent robber not only confessed his sin, but acknowledged the justice of his punishment.

¶ With the majority of us repentance is a slow and labricious process; here it is swift as it is royal. His recorded words contain all the elements of that sorrow of soul which is the preface to peace and joy. He separates himself from his former companion in sin and rebukes him with quiet, selfless dignity. He vindicates the righteousness of Christ and bows his spirit in simple faith at the feet of the King. His sense of unworthiness allows him to ask but little even of a king—only that he may not be forgotten. Christ rewards his penitence by blessing him with a benediction so full that it blesses all ages with its consoling touch.²

(2) *His faith*.—We are apt sometimes to speak almost patronizingly of the penitent thief, but, if we think over it, there has hardly ever been such a magnificent display of faith as was shown in that prayer. Never rose faith higher among the sons of

men than this of the poor malefactor. As far as appearance went, it was prayer to a mere man nailed on a cross—a man condemned, helpless, dying. Yet the boon he asked for was one which could be granted only by the power and mercy of God. Viewed in all its aspects, it was the strongest exhibition of faith in the history of Christianity. It began at a time when Jesus was at the lowest depth of human abasement; it was fostered under circumstances the most repulsive and disheartening, and was consummated by Jesus Himself, in a manner such as never before occurred, and never again can occur, in the annals of redemption.

¶ It would almost seem as if at this particular moment this same thief was the only firm believer on the Saviour. The disciples had all forsaken Him and fled; and, though one of them had at last recovered himself, and was now near the Cross, and though the faithful women had kept close to Him through all that morning's agony, yet it was tender human love rather than genuine faith which brought and kept them near. Even they seemed for the time to have given up as lost the cherished idea of the kingdom. They trusted it had been He who should have redeemed Israel; but now that trust is being dissolved amid the agonies of the crucifixion.³

¶ Therefore, says S. Augustine, 'What fruit Christ obtained in him, as from a dry tree, his faith surpassed that of the Patriarchs and Prophets, even of the Father of the Faithful himself. Moses believed, but he saw the Burning Bush, and the Vision of Sinai. Isaiah believed, but he saw Him on His throne high and lifted up while before Him stood the Seraphim. Ezekiel, but he saw Him sitting over-against the Cherubim. Zechariah, but he saw the Lord sitting as a Priest upon His Throne. But this poor felon saw Him numbered among the transgressors, yet prayed to Him as if He was in glory: on the cross he worshipped Him as though He, as God, sat in heaven; he saw Him condemned, but he invoked Him as the King!'⁴

(3) *His courage*.—The third thing which commands our respect and our affection is the courage of the penitent thief. It must have needed courage to give up his friend, to confess publicly, in the presence of the mocking, deriding mob, that he alone in all that crowd believed in Christ, in His Godhead; courage to say, 'Remember me'—me a sinner, a thief, a malefactor, a well-known criminal, perhaps—'remember me when thou comest into thy kingdom.'

¶ A sudden death occurring in the neighbourhood from cholera, Hudson Taylor made the most of the opportunity to urge the importance of immediate salvation from sin and its eternal consequences. A few days later he alluded to the circumstances again, asking if any of his hearers had definitely

¹ *Father Stanton's Last Sermons in S. Alban's, Holborn*, 150.

² C. II. Brent, *The Consolations of the Cross*, 16.

³ J. M. Gibson, *A Strong City*, 121.

⁴ S. J. Stone, *Parochial Sermons*, 165.

come to God for pardon through faith in Jesus Christ. Pausing a moment, perhaps hardly expecting an answer, what was his thankfulness when Kuei-hua the young cook said earnestly, 'I have.'

This open confession before his fellow-servants meant a great deal.

'I do hope,' wrote Hudson Taylor, 'that he is under the influence of the Holy Spirit. Though not without faults, he is greatly changed for the better. For some months we have not detected him in falsehood or dishonesty of any kind, which is saying a good deal.'¹

III. THE PETITION.

The difference between the two thieves appeared not in their words but in their tone of voice. The voice interpreted the words. One of them prayed, 'If thou be Christ, save thyself and us'; the other prayed, 'Lord, remember me when thou comest into thy kingdom.' Which of those prayers was prayed in derision? Which was prayed in faith? The words do not tell us. The meaning was revealed by the face and the voice.

1. The words of the prayer are few, but their meaning is great. They cover a large amount of faith and hope and love. By addressing one who was dying beside him as a malefactor with the title 'Lord,' the thief showed that he recognized Jesus' superiority to all present appearances. By speaking of His 'kingdom,' he virtually asserted that Jesus was a king and had a kingdom. By asking to be remembered when He came into His kingdom, he showed that he believed that our Lord was the dispenser of favours in that kingdom. By making this appeal to a dying man, it proved that he knew that this kingdom was in the future world. As in his rebuke to his fellow-thief there comes out very clearly his repentance of his own sin, and his turning away from it, so by this appeal to Jesus there comes out his strong faith in Jesus as King over a spiritual kingdom, and as the rewarder of those who love and serve Him.

¶ The robber's prayer must have been very comforting to Jesus. He had heard all forenoon only words of insult and scorn and blasphemy; so that this humble, gentle utterance must have fallen on His ear like a song in the night, and dropped upon His fainting spirit like a cordial. Perhaps this prayer brought Him the best help that He ever received from any human being, seeing that it reached Him at the moment when He most required it. Already He was beginning to see of the travail of His soul, and to gather in the fruits of it.²

¹ Hudson Taylor in *Early Years*, 305.

² C. Jerdan, *For the Lord's Table*, 197.

2. What did this man pray for? His companion, when he spoke to Jesus, said, 'If thou be the Christ, save thyself,' and so on; all his concern was about physical things, physical pain, temporal, bodily things—a prolongation of His earthly life; that is as far as his thought or prayer travels. But this man has ceased to think of any prolongation of his earthly, sinful life; he does not ask that one pang of pain shall be removed. If he believed that that mysterious Saviour hanging there, almost within arm's reach of him, had power and authority to take his spirit into a paradise in another world, he would surely believe He could ease him of pain if He wished. The whole weight of emphasis, and need, and concern, and prayer were not on the body or this world at all. He has ceased to think of things temporal; his one concern is the things and the place eternal.

¶ Notice the humility of the request. He did not say, 'Take me with Thee'; he did not say, 'Reward me'; he simply said, 'Remember me; let it not be for nothing that I have hung by Thy side. I, a poor, guilty wretch, have been privileged for a moment to look upon Thy beauty, and to rejoice in Thy innocence; oh, remember me, remember me.'³

IV. THE ANSWER.

Before this our Lord had answered no one. But no one had spoken to Him as this man did. The passers-by had that morning mocked and taunted Jesus, and even the chief priests and elders had joined in the unlovely chorus. The Divine Sufferer, however, had maintained unbroken silence until He replied to the penitent malefactor.

1. The word of Christ in response to that great cry of faith was the word of a King. *Verily I say unto thee, To-day shalt thou be with me in Paradise.* 'Thou shalt be with me.' In that promise there is nothing of the hesitation or faltering or qualification with which we must needs, too often, comfort the sinful and departing soul. For we cannot read men's inmost hearts, or gauge the measure of their responsibility; we know little of the conditions of the world which awaits them beyond the grave. But Christ knew all, knows all. *Verily I say unto thee, To-day shalt thou be with me in Paradise.* This is the same voice of power which made all men wonder when they heard Him speak with calm confidence of the purposes of God and the destiny and duty of men. *He taught as One having authority.*

³ M. Creighton, *Lessons from the Cross*, 91.

¶ Perhaps in no other saying does Jesus so strongly witness to Himself as the Christ. In beautiful silence He hears the railer, leaving him to be reproved by the echo of his own words; in beautiful speech He answers the prayer of the penitent, and promises more than is asked. Was the promise but an empty word? The heart of the ages has confessed, if Jesus was ever real it was now. He who after such a life could so speak in the face of death to the dying must hold the keys of paradise; and if He could open it then, what must He be able to do now?¹

2. Christ's gift to him is the entire absolution of the penitent, the assurance of a speedy entrance into the Paradise of God, the pledge of fellowship in the joy of his Lord. It is no cheap gift. When we are tempted to think lightly of the forgiveness which Christ bestows, let us remember that Calvary was the price which both the Giver and the receiver had to pay for this absolution. It was the Cross of Jesus that opened the gate of Paradise.

There are three promises in the answer.

(1) *To-day*.—The robber was thinking of some date far off when Christ might intervene in his behalf, but Christ says, 'To-day.' This was a prophecy that he would die that day, and not be allowed to linger for days, as crucified persons often were; and this was fulfilled. But it was, besides, a promise that as soon as death launched him out of time into eternity, Christ would be waiting there to receive him.

(2) *With me*.—The loneliness of death is a large part of its terror. Human love and friendship will not avail us at the moment of parting. We must die alone, and pass alone into that world beyond, of which we know nothing. That is its dread. But His promise is, 'Thou shalt be with me.' His companionship is promised beyond the gates of death, in that unknown land where we shall await the judgment.

It was not Paradise, a blissful place, nor remembrance, favour bestowed, that he needed, but the presence and fellowship of Christ. And so Christ would go with him, and continue to share the lot that had befallen them together. This was help indeed—life joined to life, conditions shared, a common destiny; what more than this can one man do for another!

(3) *In Paradise*.—Paradise is a Persian word, and means a garden about a palace. The Jews adopted it as the name for the place of Departed Spirits in which reposed the just, whereas Sheol is the place in which the unjust are tossing till Judg-

ment, when they would be cast into Hell, Gehenna. Paradise is not heaven, it is the outer court of heaven, the garden of delight about the Palace of God, and therein the just repose till the judgment, when they will be admitted into the Palace itself. At the gate of the Garden Abraham is seated, and he recognizes and receives his sons. Therefore Paradise is also called Abraham's bosom, or bed. Through the Garden flows the river of the water of life. This gladdening stream never leaves Paradise, and the souls in Sheol yearn in vain for a drop of water therefrom with which to cool their tongues. Our Lord, both in the Parable of Lazarus and Dives and in His word to the penitent thief, accepts the prevalent doctrine and gives it His seal.

¶ We need not distract our thoughts by wondering of what it consists, nor whether we shall be happy there, if we ever are allowed to go there. The whole essence of Paradise is to be with Christ! Even now on earth what does it matter where we are, what does it matter what we have? The whole essence of happiness is to be with those we love—that is all that human happiness consists in—and therefore it is enough to believe that our dear ones are with Christ. It is enough to believe, if by God's infinite mercies we are allowed to go there, that we shall spend that blessed time after death at the feet of Christ in Paradise.²

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Virginibus Puerisque.

I.

November.

'Search me, O God, and know my heart . . . and see if there be any wicked way in me.'—Ps 139²³.

As you all know, there are a great many formalities connected with the opening of Parliament. I wonder if you know of a specially weird one of which I heard the other day. It has to do with this month of November, and sounds like a bit out of one of your own fairy-tale books.

Whenever a new Parliament assembles, first an officer and a troop of the Yeomen of the Guard go with lanterns and search the cellars underneath, and when they report that all is well, business proceeds. A strange old procession it must be: the Yeomen of the Guard with their scarlet tunics and quaint hats, their lanterns flashing searchlights into the dark corners; tramp, tramp, tramp, we can imagine them passing through the cellars.

How the custom began is quite an old story. More than three hundred years ago, a plot was formed to destroy the House of Lords, the King, and his Parliament. One man who had a great deal to do with it and at last became the leader in

carrying it out, was called Guy Fawkes. Under the House of Lords was a great vault which Fawkes and his friends discovered was To Let. They managed to obtain possession of it under the pretext of storing wood. Instead of doing that, however, they got a great many barrels of gunpowder, placed stones and bars of iron on the top of them, and then covered the whole with billets of wood. I do not need to tell you that Guy Fawkes and his confederates were caught and condemned to death. The fifth of November, the day on which they had planned to carry out their wicked designs, was henceforth ordered to be kept as a day of thanksgiving, and to this day English children are reminded of the story by seeing bonfires and fireworks; perhaps also the effigy of Fawkes burned at some street corner. It is a good thing if they do not get their own clothes and fingers burned as well.

I dare say you will wonder what connexion there could be between this story of Guy Fawkes and our text. There is none. But the things that happen in this world often turn people's minds to the life that is unseen. A poet one day watched the reapers, and when he went home he wrote about the 'Reaper whose name is Death.' A man hears a quarry horn blown, and the thought of God's silent warnings of life's dangers passes through his mind.

Those old cellars at Westminster are, in a manner, like your heart. God meant the heart of a boy or a girl to be a beautiful place—more beautiful than the Houses of Parliament. He made them that He might dwell in them Himself. He reigns there now, and holds council with you, telling what is right and what is wrong. But there are cellars and dark corners where evil is plotted against God and against His Son Jesus Christ. Often this evil is suggested with words as pleasant and as affable as Guy Fawkes used when he went with his firewood story. He did not go and say, 'Let me the cellars that I may blow up the House.' Neither do you hear a voice within you saying, 'Tell a lie.' Untruth appears dressed as worldly wisdom. 'If you want to get everything out of a certain boy who is in the class with you, use the wisdom of the serpent; work upon his weak points; he will yield.' Again the voice of evil suggests: 'You have a right to your own things,' and you act towards a little brother very selfishly. Or you read a story you ought not to read, and

try to make yourself believe that you are seeking knowledge.

Your mother knew about the cellars and the evil that lurks in their strange dark corners when she taught you to say your prayers. Prayer is needed. What seem to you but little sins are in reality as dangerous as gunpowder. Unless you seek them out, one day you may yield to some sudden temptation, and the house in which Jesus Christ was to dwell will fall in ruins.

Let us get the lanterns and search everywhere. These may be your mother's words, the words of Jesus Christ, and God's voice in your heart. Don't be afraid to use them when you are by yourself.

A Roman tribune had a house that in many places lay exposed to the eyes of the neighbourhood. A man came, and offered, for a sum of money, so to alter it as to remove that inconvenience. 'I will give you a sum of money,' was the answer, 'if you can make my house conspicuous in every room of it, that all the city may see after what manner I live.' That was the right spirit.

It is impossible for us to search our own hearts thoroughly. One morning we think the evil is gone; we make up our minds we will never be selfish or untruthful again; but temptations only reappear, and in a new and more subtle form.

God will help us. Many a time you have heard that no one ever truly prayed to Him in vain. Ask God, then, to help you to search out the evil in your heart. Pray this old-fashioned prayer:

'Search me, O God, and see if there be any wicked way in me.'

II.

Wise or Otherwise.

'Be not wise in your own conceits.'—Ro 12¹⁶.

The other day I visited a farmyard. Near the barn a mother-hen was clucking softly to a fine brood of chickens as she taught them to pick up seeds of grain. In the mill-lade a few young ducklings were enjoying their first lessons in swimming. But up and down before the farmhouse strutted a large turkey. His tail was well spread out and he thought himself a very fine fellow indeed, but when he spoke his voice was by no means musical, and as he swaggered along I thought, 'Poor old man, you imagine the place

belongs to you and that you are the most important person on the farm, but you'll be sadly disillusioned when you find yourself in a pot next Christmas!'

Perhaps you'll think it a funny thing to get a text from a turkey, but that silly young bird really gave me a text, so he has done some good after all besides providing somebody's future Christmas dinner. 'Conceited as a turkey-cock,' we say, and then the words that St. Paul wrote to the Christians in Rome came into my mind, 'Be not wise in your own conceits.' The Greek words just mean, 'Be not wise at your own bar,' that is, the bar of your own judgment. Don't be too pleased with yourself, thinking that you are always right and that you know everything that's worth knowing. In other words, don't have too good an opinion of yourself.

Now please notice carefully, I didn't say 'Don't have a *good opinion* of yourself,' but 'Don't have *too good an opinion* of yourself.' It's not at all a bad thing to have a good opinion of ourselves, to have a just pride in ourselves. The boys and girls who have the right kind of pride will be kept from doing many mean and unworthy things. But having too good an opinion of ourselves is another matter. It means puffing ourselves up to believe that we are what we are not, that we know everything when we know next to nothing, and if we only thought of it, it makes us look just as ludicrous as that silly turkey in the farmyard.

I am going to give you three reasons why we should not be wise in our own conceits, and I shall give you the least good reason first and end with the best.

The first reason is that *we shall get ourselves disliked*. There is no more detested person than the one who thinks he *knows* much better or *is* much better than anybody else, and that everybody else who thinks differently is wrong. A wise Chinese writer once said, 'Be strictly correct yourself; but do not cut and carve other people.' If all the flowers were the same colour the world would be a very uninteresting place, and if everybody thought alike it would be a very dull one. Certainly have your own opinion, but always give the other boy or girl the right to hold theirs, and be ready to own sometimes that they are right and you are wrong.

And the second reason is, that if we are wise in our own conceits *it will hinder us from learning*.

It's a curious thing, but you will find as you go through the world that the people who know most are generally those who think they know least. And the reason is, that they are the people who have found out how much there really is to know. A great pianist feels how difficult it is to do justice to the beauty of the music he is playing, a great artist how impossible to represent all the beauty he sees.

Once a cardinal was walking in one of the streets of Rome, and he met an old bent man trudging along in the snow. 'Where are you going,' said the cardinal. 'To the school of sculpture,' replied the other. The old man was none other than Michael Angelo, the famous sculptor who carved some of the most beautiful statues in the world. Yet, though he could teach the world, he was ready to be taught.

So don't be ashamed to learn. It's the people who recognize their ignorance who get on. Every day we live in this wonderful world there is something new to learn if we keep our minds open to receive it. And don't think you know better than people who have lived half a century. Your father and mother may not be so well able as you are to conjugate a Latin verb or translate a French sentence, but they know a great deal more of the things that are really worth knowing, and you will never regret it later if you respect their opinions now.

But the last reason is the biggest, and though you forget the others, try to remember this one, 'Be not wise in your own conceits,' because *pride and self-conceit keep us away from Christ*. It was pride that kept the Jews away from Christ. They thought they knew so much better than He did, and they would not listen to His message. And it is pride that may keep us away from Him too. He does not ask that those who come to Him should be good or wise, but if we wish to be His disciples we must lay ourselves like little children at His feet, knowing nothing, trusting not in our own goodness or power. Then He will lift us up and give us the knowledge that is true wisdom, the love that is true strength.

III.

Sunshine.

The Rev. John Wood, F.R.G.S., has issued *One Hundred More Talks with Boys and Girls*

(Allenson; 2s. net). This is one of the new 'talks':

"When you come into the house, do you bring sunshine with you?" is the query that heads the twenty-first of December—the shortest and darkest day of the year—in a modern birthday book.

'Surely that is the day that needs the sunshine most. Anyone can bring in the sunshine from outdoors upon a radiant day in June, for example. The test is to bring it in on the darkest day of the year.

'Now, you all know young people who come into the house with a sullen slam, and bring all the drizzle and darkness of a December storm in with them. They are irritable and complaining, and they make those in the home unhappy. If they have good manners, their fathers and mothers and brothers and sisters don't know it.

'When you come into the house, do you bring sunshine with you? Every young disciple striving to serve Jesus Christ and follow the upward way to heaven should keep this question in mind every day, until it can be answered satisfactorily.

'To live in the sunshine of cheerfulness, to keep our lives in the sunshine of heaven, will keep us useful, sweet, and healthful.

'A pleasant story of Ralph Waldo Emerson runs to the effect that, when Mr. Emerson was travelling in Egypt with his daughter, they met an Englishman who did all in his power to make it pleasant for them, and when the time came for their separation, said: 'You may wonder, sir, at my having overstepped my usual reserve, so far as to become so intimate with you; but it is for the sake of a countryman of yours, one bearing the name—Emerson—Ralph Waldo Emerson. He has done me much good, and I hope sometime to cross the ocean to meet him.' And Mr. Emerson never told him, it was he himself, whom he sought.

'That Englishman, boys and girls, showed kindness to Emerson without knowing it, for Emerson's sake.

'There is a greater than Ralph Waldo Emerson, and He is the Son of God, Who loves you. Love Him in return, and manifest His spirit—for His sake.'

Point and Illustration.

On the Russian Front.

As journalistic writer and photographer for the *Sphere*, Mr. R. Scotland Liddell went through the great retreat with the Russian armies in the autumn of 1915. He has now written the connected narrative of his experiences in that retreat, and the narrative is sufficiently arresting. Mr. Liddell has a style of his own, befitting the individuality of his character. He is clear of all egotism, so clear that he can tell the story of his own doings as naturally as he can tell of the deeds of any other. And his own personal presence gives just that touch of continuity and curiosity to the book which compels the reader to read right on to the end.

Mr. Liddell has a way of dropping facts upon his page which arrest by their isolation. Like this: 'In time of war, each Russian regiment is formed of four thousand soldiers. One Russian regiment, after a year of war, had already had thirty-six thousand men in its ranks. Can I write anything more tragic than that?'

In this way he gives us glimpses of the character of the Russian soldier, and they are more vivid because they are glimpses. 'On the night of Tuesday, July 6, the Germans on the Bzura-Rawka front fired gas shells against the Russians for the second time. The first occasion was five weeks before. The battle scene during the night was wonderful. The flashes of the artillery fire were like gleams of lightning in the sky. The boom of the guns was continuous. The shrapnels burst in fours with spurts of orange flame. I did not sleep. I stood in the open air and watched the spectacle. In the early morning the poisoned men were brought out of the deadly area of the trenches, gasping for air. The 21st Siberian Regiment of four thousand men had seven hundred left when daylight came. Three thousand three hundred men were dead or poisoned. Yet each man was supposed to have a respirator, and each respirator was said to be gas-proof. The officers were confident of this; they were confident of their readiness to fight against the foul fumes. Each man had goggles, also—worn on the peak of his cap, so as to be ready for use—to save his eyes from the penetrating acid. I discussed the heavy percentage of losses with an officer on whose word I can depend.

"But I thought the men had respirators?" I said.

'He assured me that every man had one, and that the men had been ordered to have them ready for wear.

"Then why?" said I.

'He shrugged his shoulders.

"Russia's a queer country," he said, "there are things you'll never understand. The men were not ordered to put them on."

'I tell of this instance as it was told to me. I confess that in spite of my officer friend's reliability, I was inclined at first to doubt his word. Later on, some days after, I mentioned the matter to some other officers of high rank.

"But that could never be?" I said.

"It's possible," said they.'

In the same way he gives glimpses of himself: 'I attended to one man for six hours. I am sure I saved his life. The doctors had practically given him up when I happened to come to the stretcher on which he was lying. For some reason or other—I do not know what—I took a sudden liking to the man. I applied artificial respiration for an hour. It was very tiring work. I ached all over, but I had the satisfaction of seeing the man begin to breathe a little easier. Afterwards I bathed his head and breast and nursed him as best I could for other five hours. By the end of that time he was able to have food and tea. He also smoked a cigarette quite contentedly, and was inclined to sulk when I refused to give him any more. He managed to walk to the train in which he was able to travel to Zyrardow.'

Mr. Liddell is an admirer of the Russian Sisters. They are all good-looking. They have sometimes wit. Here is an illustration of the text, 'Be sure your sin will find you out.' 'I travelled back to Pruszkow in one of the sanitary wagons. Sixteen wounded soldiers were in it, with a pretty Sister in attendance. Four other soldiers came with us also. One of them had a bundle of lengths of cloth which he had secured from the big Zyrardow factory. He gloated over his booty, stroking the cloth with his hand, feeling its softness against his cheek, and admiring the colours and the texture in the dim light of a candle-lit lantern. He showed one piece of cloth to the Sister. It had been intended to be cut up for towels for the use of the employees in the factory. Every foot there appeared some words in Polish. I did not under-

stand what they were, neither did the soldier, but the Sister read them and laughed. "Stolen from the Zyradow Factory" was what the notice was.'

The title of the book is *On the Russian Front* (Simpkin; 8s. 6d. net).

Dream Comrades.

For the writing of imaginary articles—articles in which the might-have-beens are more than the have-beens and ares—something other than industry is required. Has Mr. Leonard Green that something? Let two of the shortest of the sketches in his *Dream Comrades* (Blackwell; 2s. 6d. net) be offered to judge by. The first is a

FABLE.

There was once a young man who had vision of the Thing-that-matters.

And he tried to tell people of the wonder of it, of the mystery, and of its beautiful colour.

At first they were charmed: for he was comely and lovable, and they thought he was weaving a fantasy.

But when they found that he was sincere, they laughed: then they hated him.

Their laugh made him bitter. But their hatred renewed the vision.

Fortunately at this point he died.

We have no leisure for enthusiasts who take themselves seriously.

The second is:

THE CYNIC.

The cynic is he, who, having drawn back in fear from the unspeakable heights to which he knows he has been called, persuades himself that they are not only unspeakable but ridiculous.

Wesley's Letters.

Mr. George Eayrs, F.R.Hist.S., who, along with Dr. Townsend and Dr. Workman, edited *A New History of Methodism*, has now, alone, edited a selection of *Letters of John Wesley* (Hodder & Stoughton; 10s. 6d. net). He has so edited them that all is done that can be done to attract us to the reading of them. He has given a title to each letter—usually some phrase from the letter itself; and he has introduced each letter with hints of

time, and place, and circumstance, sometimes also quality. No doubt the question had to be settled: For whom? Mr. Eayrs decided: For the unlearned and ignorant. In every respect the volume is one to draw to the reading of John Wesley's letters and thereby to John Wesley himself, and thereby to Christ, the—what shall he be called?—the man in the street. The man who will not read this book will read no good thing.

Some of the letters have never before been published; others only partly: the rest are taken from Tyerman's *Life* or Jackson's *Works of Wesley*, or other less accessible sources. But the point which Mr. Eayrs wishes to make, and makes, is that the letters, published or unpublished, are not simply copied into this book, but edited. Is it possible to give any idea of what that means? Take the most momentous letter of all, the letter written on October 30, 1738, to his brother Samuel, in which he tells of his conversion to God and what it signifies. The editing consists of three paragraphs, the first paragraph an encouragement to the reader to read, the second a description of the character of the letter, the third an account of the place, time, and circumstances.

Of the letter itself this much may be quoted. It is most pertinent to our own present necessities:

'With regard to my own character, and my doctrine likewise, I shall answer you very plainly. By a Christian I mean one who so believes in Christ as that sin hath no more dominion over him: and in this obvious sense of the word I was not a Christian until May the 24th last past. For till then sin had the dominion over me, although I fought with it continually; but surely, then, from that time to this it hath not—such is the free grace of God in Christ. What sins they were which till then reigned over me, and from which, by the grace of God, I am now free, I am ready to declare on the house-top, if it may be for the glory of God.

'If you ask by what means I am made free (though not perfect, neither infallibly sure of my perseverance), I answer, By faith in Christ; by such a sort or degree of faith as I had not till that day. My desire of this faith I knew long before, though not so clearly till Sunday, January the 8th last, when, being in the midst of the great deep, I wrote a few lines, in the bitterness of my soul, some of which I have transcribed; and may the good God sanctify them both to you and me!'

The C.M.S.

The Centenary of the Church Missionary Society was held in April 1899. In the same year Dr. Eugene Stock published *The History of the Church Missionary Society*, in three great handsome volumes. He has now issued a supplementary volume, the fourth, giving the history of the Society in the last sixteen years (C.M.S. ; 7s. 6d. net).

The interest of the volume—great in itself, greater than that of any one of the preceding volumes—is not a little increased by the circumstance that the war has invaded some of the countries where C.M.S. missionaries are at work. There is Mesopotamia, for example. How bitter have been our thoughts, and for that matter how bitter our words, about the loss of life there and the sufferings of our troops. But listen to this record of human loss, every life that of an educated devoted missionary and all without a murmur! ‘Turkish Arabia,’ says Dr. Stock, ‘as Mesopotamia has been officially called, appeared for the first time as an independent Mission in the Centenary year. Another of its cities, Mosul on the Tigris, near the site of ancient Nineveh, from which an American Mission had lately retired, was to be occupied as soon as possible, also, like Baghdad, for medical work; and this plan was carried out in 1901.’

Then he continues: ‘For the last six years Baghdad has had a woman doctor, Miss S. E. Hill, M.B., B.S.(Lond.), a daughter of the late Bishop Hill of West Africa. One of the clerical missionaries there for a time, Mr. Parfit, claimed to have ridden the first bicycle ever seen in Mesopotamia (1901), which he thought “deserved to be put on the roll of C.M.S. agents for the service it had rendered to the missionary cause.” Other missionaries, men and women, have served for a time, but the climate has again and again shortened their periods of work. The first lady sent out, Miss Valpy, had died before our sixteen years began, and so had the wife of Mr. Parfit. Miss Kelsey also died of cholera in 1904. Miss Lavy, a trained nurse, was drowned on her voyage out after furlough, in 1910, through the ship foundering off the Scilly Isles. An Australian lady had to be sent home seriously ill; but another lady sent from Australia in 1896, Miss Martin, who had previously worked some years in Palestine under the F.E.S., has continued to this day, and so has

Miss Butlin, who went out in 1900. Indeed, it may be said that upon these two ladies has fallen a large part of the burdens of both stations during the whole of our period, they being the only two missionaries on the staff all the time. The staff now comprises two clergymen, the Rev. E. E. Lavy, who retired for a time to qualify as a doctor, and the Rev. P. V. Boyes; Drs. Johnson and Stanley; three wives, and five other women.’

And what cheer have they had? Listen to Dr. Stock again. ‘This Mission, like others in Mohammedan countries, is emphatically one of faith. Its good influence upon the people is unmistakable, and its beneficent treatment of bodily ills is highly appreciated, but conversions are few. The courage and zeal of some, however, have cheered the missionaries, as in the case of a man baptized as far back as 1891, to whom the Turks, having failed to shake his faith by imprisonment, gave a military appointment with a good salary, in the vain hope of succeeding that way. Meanwhile, the bookshop has put forth the Scriptures and other Christian books, so in one form or another Christ is preached, and therein we may rejoice. Of one of the Christian catechists, Abbo Hasso, who died early in 1915, Miss Martin wrote, “He was universally respected for his absolute faithfulness, not only by the Christians of all sects, but by the Moslems and Jews. His name will always be honoured for his sincere devotion to his Lord and Saviour.”’

The Great Assize.

From beginning to end, Mr. W. Swift Rollings’ book *The Great Assize* (Allenson; 3s. 6d. net) is an indictment of war, a persistent, merciless, overwhelming denunciation. Even in the Old Testament Mr. Rollings will give war no place but a bad one. Was David a man of war? The disasters which came upon him were due to it, due to his having left the pastoral life at Bethlehem in the early days to join Saul’s military staff.

‘The Psalter, which for ever will bear David’s name, does not take its rise from David’s blood-stained throne; it springs up from the well of his Bethlehem life. Its chief song is of Jehovah as the Shepherd of His flock. And in sundry other songs we are told that a king is not delivered by the multitude of a host, nor a mighty man by his great strength; we learn also from the Psalter to

think of Jehovah as He who breaks the spear asunder, and burns the war chariot in the fire, and makes wars to cease unto the ends of the earth. And through it we also get a vision of God scattering the men who delight in war, and of a coming kingdom of peace.'

Making Peace Interesting.

To make peace attractive is to bless men beyond belief. The Rev. L. George Buchanan, M.A., Vicar of Holy Trinity, Hull, has written 'Preliminaries of Reconstruction,' under the title *After the War* (S.P.C.K.; 1s. 6d. net). This is how he would make peace interesting.

"What is wrong with peace," says a writer in the *North American Review*, "is that it is so aimless; it fails to interest the average man." This is somewhat startling to us whose ideals are, to say the least of it, peaceful; we are apt, in our British way, to set it down as "American"; but as the writer proceeds you begin to see what he means. Peace, he thinks, will never attract mankind as much as war does, for war brings out certain qualities in a way that peace (in his opinion) never can. Here, for instance, are some of them:

INTENSITY OF PURPOSE,
SACRIFICE OF SELF,
UNITY OF METHOD,

gathering themselves up into a *concentration of aim* that he says is bound to make life interesting to the average man.

'Let it be granted as true that the intensity and sacrifice shown to-day by thousands is magnificent, even if the unity of method is not (as yet) quite so obvious. Still, it does not prove that it is war as such that gives life its greatest interest. Some wars we have known brought division to a nation's ranks (memory still recalls what were called pro-Boers and the opposite); other wars were in themselves the dividing of the nation (we still record in history the red rose of Lancaster and the white rose of York). In any case many other items in life's experience produce exactly the same qualities as those above mentioned. A General Election, for instance, produces intensity of purpose (in the candidates), sacrifice of self (in the supporters), unity of method (in the party). Or, to be more topical, a Zeppelin raid without doubt produces them all in even a greater degree. Who, that has been through one, fails to note the intensity of

purpose by which we seek shelter from the bombs, the splendid self-sacrifice by which special constables protect us, and women control themselves for the sake of the children; while the unity of method also is remarkable (it would be amusing were it not serious), how every one talks of the same topic and every one agrees in demanding adequate protection for non-combatants in raided areas!

'Now, why do they produce all these results? Because there is an overmastering motive acting for a short time: patriotism in one case, danger in the other. But it is acting only for a time. If General Elections were always on they would lose their thrill; if Zeppelins were always dropping bombs we should become hardened like the men at the Front.

'Thus, quite seriously, it seems to me it is not war, as such, that produces these fine effects. "War," as such, "is Hell"; war, as the Germans wage it, is "Hell with the lid off!" What produces the effects above mentioned is a master-motive temporarily applied; and what we need for peace times is a motive for life equally overmastering, but applicable with permanent force. Has humanity got such a motive? Has humanity ever conceived an overwhelming reason for existence, a motive that will thrill the long recuperative periods of history when there is no war, a motive that will transfigure life and not dislocate it; interest, and even enthral, mankind without exhausting it?

'Has humanity got this? Of course she has, she has the only motive that can really master mankind in a permanent sense, and that is the love and service of Christ. "The love of Christ overmasters us," said the Apostle; the challenge to the modern Church is whether first of all she has this love herself, and then whether she can capture humanity with it. So War, flushed with success, says to a Church bewildered not a little to-day, "I can captivate the universal mind; can you? I can commandeer the willing service of humanity; can you?" It is a serious challenge, not lightly to be answered in view of the obvious failure in so many directions.

'The only answer possible seems to be this: the Church as she ought to be could do it, the Church as she is cannot do it, but the Church as, please God, she will be can do it, and is determined to see that she does.'