

Have you seen the  
Balance Sheet?

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**T**he great commercial question of the day is, "What is the profit?" Have you seen the Balance-sheet? When everything has been satisfactorily totalled up, what will this or that transaction yield? When a final settlement has been made, when prime costs and "general expenses" have been accurately gauged, and when all these have been put over against my gross gains, what margin will then be left for my own benefit? By how much shall I *actually* have been the gainer? *What profit?*

Life's big transaction, with its various details, will have to be reckoned up some day for everyone. Actual gains will have to be accurately calculated, total losses computed, and the balance struck for final settlement. Then the

all engrossing question will once more be asked, "What profit?"

When men and women have reached the end of things here, what heart-sinking calculations, before now, have had to be made! When some of the wealthiest have viewed their golden gains in view of their eternal losses, what blank dismay have they betrayed, what fearfulness, what shrinking back!

It was an American millionaire who said on a bed of sickness, "The poorest man I know is the man who has nothing but money." He was only agreeing with the language of another, who said, "Though a man *without* money is poor, the man with *nothing but* money is poorer still! Wordly possessions cannot bear up the spirits from fainting and shrinking when trial and troubles come, any more than headache can be cured by a golden crown, or toothache with a chain of pearls."

Saint Augustine once remarked that "earthly riches are full of poverty"; and this is certainly far nearer the mark

than is the world's notion of riches, which is just about this—that a man who has £10,000 must be twice as happy as the man who has £5,000. Never was a greater mistake made than this, yet how commonly is it believed.

It is far more correct to say that *money is a universal provider for everything but happiness, and a universal passport to every place but heaven.*

The one who possesses riches best knows what burdens such possessions bring. There is a burden of care in getting them, of fear in keeping them, of temptation in using them, of guilt in abusing them, of sorrow in leaving them, and the burden of accounts to be given up at last concerning them. Nor does *position* among men, though so commonly craved for, stand for much when, without the consolations of the gospel, without the blessings of another world beyond the present, time is consciously slipping from your grasp.

Take just one instance from history, the last hours of Queen Elizabeth.

The historian says, " In her last illness, after a season of protracted and profound despondency, during which it seemed as though her inflexible will and indomitable pride refused to yield, and whilst she kept silence, her very bones grew weary; at length she made signs for the Archbishop of Canterbury and her chaplain to come near to her, whereupon, we are told, the primate said to her. 'Madame, you ought to hope much in the mercy of God. Your piety, your zeal, and the admirable work of the Reformation, which you have happily established, afford great grounds of consolation for you.'

" 'My Lord,' replied the queen, ' the crown which I have borne for so long has given enough of vanity in my time. I beseech you not to augment it in this hour, when I am so near my death! ' "

Here was one who had rejoiced in holding one of the most exalted positions in Europe, who had, no doubt, been surrounded by flatterers innumerable, both civil and religious, yet in view of

another world she saw it all as emptiness and vanity. She had evidently seen, like a greater and wiser before her that there is nothing that can give real satisfaction in this world, nothing in it but vanity and vexation of spirit—"no profit under the sun." Many a sin weary soul has found consolation and satisfaction alone in Him who sits higher than the heavens—the blessed Son of God. He who left the brightness of the glory of God for the darkness and shame and judgment of Calvary's cross, has secured for men an eternity of blessedness *above the sun*.

Do you know the reality of what is expressed in those words: "I . . . cause those that love me to inherit substance ; and I will fill their treasures," Proverbs 8 : 21. Do you know the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, who though He was rich, yet for our sakes became poor, that we through His poverty might be made rich. In the light of *His* riches and glory this

world's best portion is exposed as mere dross and tinsel.

What about your affairs, reader? Do you really apprehend how matters stand with you? Why not sit down quickly and audit your affairs. Make haste to take exact account of your actual possessions and liabilities, your sins, your responsibility to God, death, and judgment. Remember, before you make out the balance-sheet that all-absorbing question : "What shall it profit a man, if he shall gain the whole world, and lose his own soul?" Mark 8 : 36. You cannot prepare a satisfactory "balance sheet" if you leave *that* out. One word more, "That thou doest, do quickly," or you may find your affairs "*in other hands.*" "Behold, now is the day of salvation."

GEO. C.

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