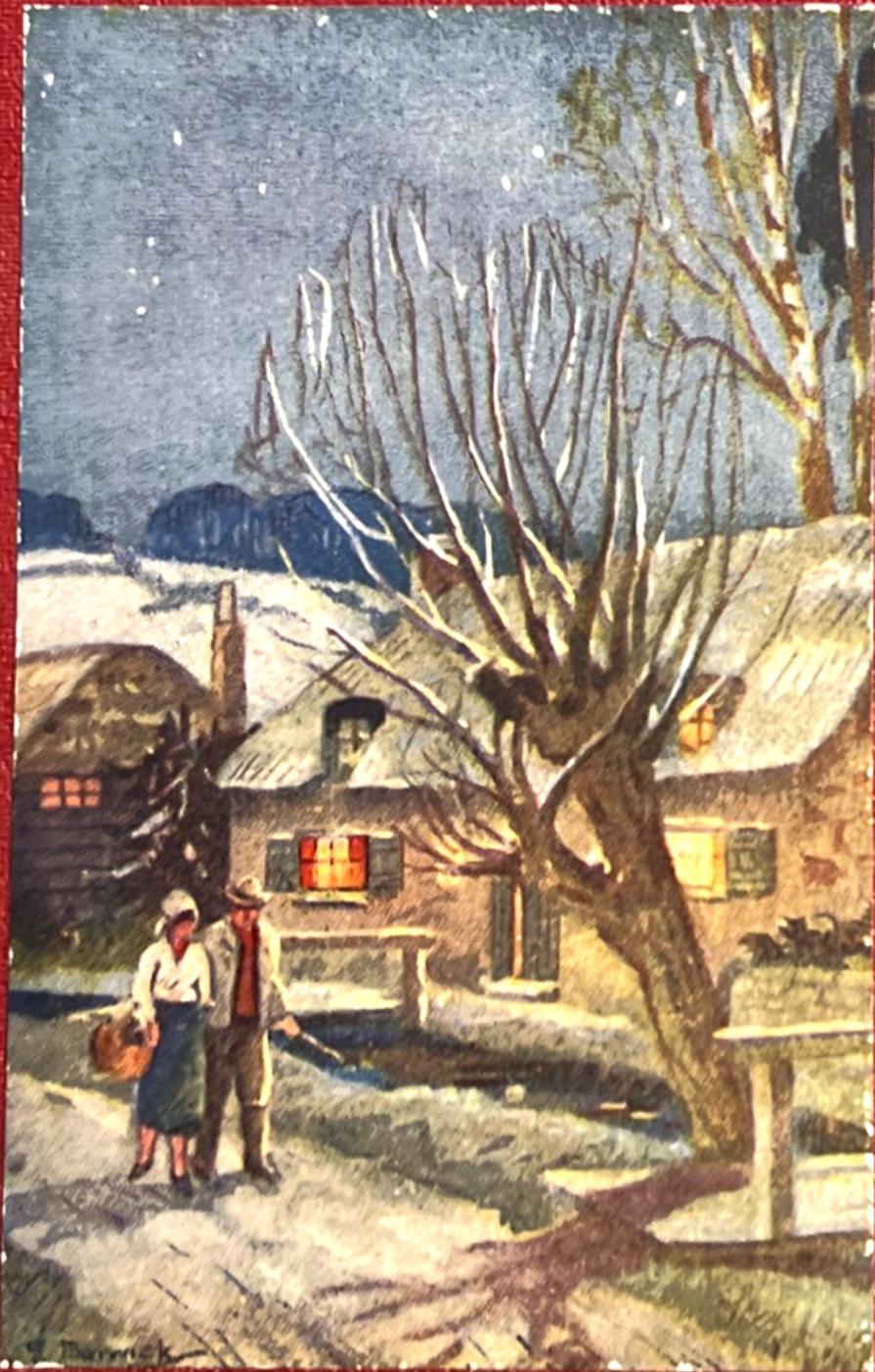


RAYS OF STARLIGHT



RAY S
OF
STAR LIGHT.

*Being Conversations with the Young upon the Wonders
of the Sky.*

BY L. T.



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Frontispiece.

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RAYS OF STARLIGHT.



CHAPTER I.

"The heavens declare the glory of God."

PSALM XXX. I.



WHAT is it you say, my young friends? A lovely starry evening, and not very cold, and will I come out with you for a glimpse at the stars, and help you to find some of the constellations? Yes; I am quite ready to do so.

Let us go down to the gravel path at the other side of the lawn, we want to get into a clear space, so as to have a good view all around us. And when we have satisfied ourselves with gazing upward, we will all go in to the fireside to look at

another kind of stars there—stars of quite another glory to those over our heads, but which have a glory of their own, as bright as, indeed brighter far than, the golden points studding the blue sky.

You all know the Great Bear, do you not? Not quite all of you, do you say? Well, turn your backs to where the sun was shining this morning at twelve o'clock. Now you are facing the North, look up, and you see straight before you seven bright stars, forming a square by four stars to the right and the three others a curve at the left of the square. That is our friend, Ursa Major, or Greater Bear. Some of the country people call it the Plough, others know it by the name of Charles's Wain or Waggon; the four stars they call the body, and the three to the left they call the shafts.

The Chinese hold this beautiful constellation in great reverence, and have even worshipped it as one of their gods for more than two thousand years. Of course, it does not in the least resemble a bear; but far, far away back in bygone ages, those who sailed across the wide ocean, had to select some fixed points in the firmament above them, to serve as beacons in guiding them on

their voyages from one shore to another ; so that by degrees the stars were grouped into what we call constellations, and given the name of some real or imaginary being : and the group we are looking at received the name of Ursa Major, known by most of us as the Greater Bear. This glorious group never sets, night and day it is always above the northern horizon ; only during the day the light of the sun dims the radiancy of it and makes it invisible except through a powerful telescope.

Are you quite sure that you see it clearly, distinct from those around ? Look well at it then, for when once you have learned to distinguish it readily it will always seem like an old friend to you. And there is another reason why you should learn to know it—it will be of very great service in helping you to find the other constellations, if you take it as a starting-point in our wonderful journeys through the starry heavens. I will shew you what I mean. Turn your back upon the Great Bear, now look up a little to the left, and just before you, gleams Orion, one of the most glorious of the wondrous wonders of the heavens.

What do you say, girls ? you can only see an

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immense number of stars, and none that stand out clearly like Ursa Major? Wait a minute, and you will soon learn to distinguish Orion, too. Look now for four brighter stars, that also form a long irregular square, with three others that cross the inner part of the square. Ah! you see it plainly; yes, that is right; now look at the three across, and you will see some others not so lustrous that seem to fall downward—they are called the sword and belt. Orion was supposed to be a great hunter and warrior, and the whole group is sometimes known as “Orion with his sword and belt,” and those two stars that gleam at the side are called his dogs. You can see all this with the naked eye, but to look at it with only a moderate telescope, marvellously increases its grandeur, and the number of stars visible are many more than we see now; and through a very powerful glass it is one of the most glorious objects that it is possible to conceive.

Is it not well worth a little trouble to learn to know these different groups? Not only for our pleasure on starlit evenings like these, but also because God has chosen to make mention of them; and that is why I love to see the gleaming beauty of Orion's stars up there in the deep azure, and I

remember, too, that thousands of years ago, far away in the land of palm-trees, and blue skies, and such starry nights as we rarely see in England, God was speaking to a man called Job, and He asked of him a wonderful question about this same bright company of stars that we are looking at. And when Jehovah was calling to His people Israel, through the prophet Amos, He calls Himself by the name of "Him that maketh the seven stars and Orion." So we may well try to know it from all the rest.

Now if you are satisfied with what you have learnt to-night, we will go back to our cosy room, and look at the other stars of which I spoke.

Here we are, then, comfortably settled in the cheery glow of the firelight. How pleasant it is, and how brightly the flames leap up and pour their red light upon us, but how very faint they seem if we compare them with the lights we have just been looking at. They are lights created by God, so that nothing can vie with them. And yet those stars as we call them, which are probably so many suns, are so many millions of miles away from us, that our mind cannot take in the distance. But we get a glimpse of how far off they are when

we think of the time the light takes to reach us as we stand looking at Orion, or the Great Bear.

How long do you think, young people, that gleam of light that we saw had been in coming to us?

What do you say, Janet? A whole day? Ah, no! none would reach us in a day.

A month? No, a month would be of no use for the journey of light from the almost measureless distance in space that the golden rays dart through.

A year? No! Ten years? No, no, dear friends, if you can imagine for one minute that you are a ray of starlight from the Great Bear, then you must have started on your marvellous journey twenty-five years ago, to be able to reach our eyes as we stood looking up to-night; twenty-five years ago, so astronomers tell us, must the light that we see now have left its home, in the lustrous worlds that gleam above us, long, long before most of you were born. Do you say, it is too wonderful to be true? Yes; it would be if it concerned any one else than Him who is called "Wonderful," the Mighty God, who called the stars into being, the suns that light

up our little world that is still the most wonderful world amongst all the worlds of the universe.

Why do I say it is the most wonderful? Can you not think of any reason for calling it so? then I will tell you. It is because of this: there once came to this very world on which we now live, such a light as never shone on mortal eyes before or since. It was a light that revealed everything in the darkness—not a fierce, glaring light that terrifies and destroys; but a pure, lovely, gracious light, that imparted its own clear brilliancy to all who were willing to receive it.

Where is it now, do you say, and have I ever seen it?

One question at a time, please!

First, "Where is it now?"

Well, that wondrous light has gone; it was once in this world, but it has gone back to the place whence it came. The darkness could not bear the Light; it shewed how very, very dark and gloomy the darkness was, and so the people of darkness agreed to do away with the Light, and they got rid of it as soon as they could, for as long as it was in their midst it shewed how very miserable all the poor, tiny, little lights were, that

they were so proud of, for they were not true lights at all. There never was but one true Light, and that is not here, it has gone back again to its own place.

But before it went, it lit up a number of smaller lights from itself ; very feeble they were, very flickering, and easily dimmed ; but still they really were lit up from the true Light itself ; and so from that day to this, other lights have been kindled from those who first received the only source of light, first one and then another, and another, and still others, on and on, down through long centuries, until this very day in which we live. And still other lights are being lit up and gleam brightly here and there.

And that brings me to your other question, "Have I seen that wonderful Light?" No, and Yes, is the answer I must give you ; rather like a contradiction, is it not ? But I must say No, because long, gloomy ages have rolled past since the Light was here, and this world will never see it again, till that same Light shall return to extinguish with its own overpowering glory, all the false lights of this world.

But I can also say, Yes, to your question, in

this way, that that same Light has shone upon me, not upon these eyes of mine that can look at yonder skies, but it has shone into my heart, exposing all the awful blackness there, and causing me for refuge to turn to Itself, and so, turning to the Light, and away from all the horrid blackness within, It has given me to walk in Its own most glorious and most precious brightness.

Ah! you know now what the Light is, It is a Person, and no less a Person than He who is the eternal Son of the eternal God, and sent down from the "Father of lights." What less *could* He be than the Light of the world—this dreary, icy world? He came into it to shew us a path of life that He would illumine with heavenly radiance for all who would accept it. For, those who follow Him "shall not walk in darkness, but shall have the light of life."

Do you not want this Light, dear young friends? are you willing to let it shine upon you, to shew you all the darkness, but, in the very same act, removing it all, and bringing in His own marvellous light? Are you ready for it to shine upon you, or does it make you afraid because of what it will expose?

The fierce heat and glare of the sun's rays we may be afraid of sometimes, but who is afraid of starlight? Well, read the lovely name that this holy glorious Person takes, you will find it, in Revelation xxii. 16: "I am the bright and morning star." Does not that tell you that there is nothing there for you but the most tender, pitiful love if you will have it? Nothing to terrify in it, is there? Only grace for you, if you will allow it an entrance into your heart. But if you turn away from it, you are turning away to darkness, and you will find, if you go on, it has only one end, and that is the awful "blackness of darkness for ever."

But now look at another bright ray from the word, it shines in Revelation ii. 28: "I will give him the morning star." Who is the wonderfully privileged "him"? If you look at the verses before this, you will see that it is the one who overcomes. So now we want to know how we can overcome. Look, then, at chapter xii. 11 of this same book: "And they overcame by the blood of the Lamb." You may be an overcomer in the same way.

What will shelter you in the first place from the



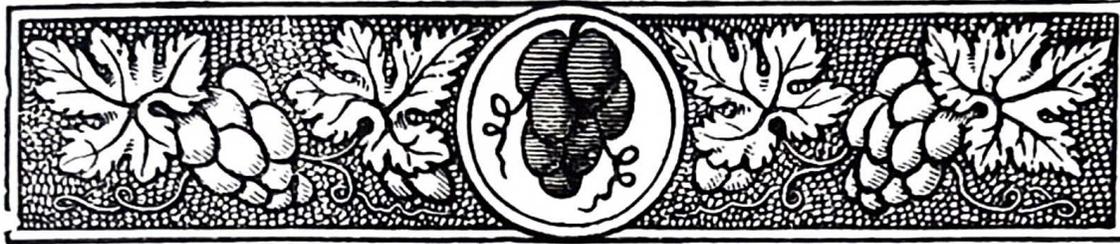
Ursa Major, or Greater Bear.

judgment of the holy God? that, I need not tell you, we all deserve. What will alone shelter you? The blood of the Lamb, only that—nothing beside that. On a terrible night, long, long ago, in the fair land of the Nile, when God's wrath swept down upon Pharaoh and his people, on that night of anguish and death, Jehovah said to His people, "When I see the blood, I will pass over you." And all who trusted in the blood were perfectly safe. God says to you to-night, "When I see the blood I will pass over *you*." Does He see you sheltered by it? are you trusting in it—that "precious blood of Christ"? If so, you are safe, and ready to go on and learn something of the infinite value that God Himself attaches to that blood. Then you not only need shelter from judgment, but you want your sins to be put away out of God's sight, that you may be before Him cleansed and happy in the sense of His full forgiveness.

It is the precious blood that "cleanses us from all sin." And in writing to the beloved people at Colosse (and I have no doubt there were some young ones amongst them), Paul speaks of this, too. Listen to what he says: "In whom we

have redemption through his blood, the forgiveness of sins." Now can every one of us really say that for ourselves? If we are trusting in the blood of Christ, as the one only hope of being made pure and clean in God's most holy sight, then it is true of us, and you will all agree that these different verses we have been looking at are well worth being called "stars," for they shine with heavenly light." God grant that we may live and walk in the brightness of them.





CHAPTER II.

“When they saw the star they rejoiced with exceeding great joy.”—MATTHEW II. 10.



ARE you ready, girls, for another chat about the stars? You have been waiting for me, you say? I am very glad to hear that, for I am afraid we shall not be able to go outside to look at any to-night, it seems cloudy and dull, and I can shew you nothing in the actual heavens. So instead of that we will look at “the star of the East,” and the One to whom that star pointed.

We read of this star as first telling the Magi, or wise men, that the “hope of Israel” was come to Zion, though the people of Zion did not know or receive Him—saw no beauty in Him, no beauty

in His brightness, for they loved their own darkness. Now let us see how they learned of His appearing in that holy land of promise.

Can we not imagine that down the rugged mountains that surround the city of the great King, along its narrow winding streets, came a company of bright-eyed, swarthy-cheeked strangers from the East? Princes, in their own far off land, perhaps, for they bear royal treasures amongst the things that lade their camels' backs. But what are they asking of the wondering group of Jews and Romans who throng around them as they dismount from their camels, glad, no doubt, that the long desert journey is ended at last?

Listen to their question: "Where is he that is born king of the Jews, for we have seen his star in the East, and are come to worship him."

The king of the Jews! why, they were no longer possessed of a king; as far as they knew, they were ruled over by the Romans, and the only king they knew was Cæsar, and Herod, whom they hated. But was it possible that Jehovah had remembered His people whom He had cast off for their sins, and was Messiah really going to appear and save them from the tyranny of their cruel oppressors?

All these and many other such thoughts, may have passed through the minds of those who heard the words of the travellers. And so it was that these wise men found no answer at first to their question ; for they had come into the midst of a people who did not even know where their own king was to be born.

Only the scribes and rulers knew, it was their business to study the law : The common people never troubled much about reading the law or the prophets. Why should they ? they heard it on sabbath days in the synagogues, that was all they had time for ; and as these and similar words may have fallen from the lips of the gazers there, it must have reminded them, I think—this question of the eastern strangers—of their sin and folly in giving up the blessed law of Jehovah. Reminded them that Judea was captive, that the chosen people of Jehovah, and Zion the perfection of beauty, were trodden under foot by a people from a far off country of the Gentiles ; so they were troubled, and as they spoke of these strangers coming on their mysterious journey, the news spread from one to the other, till all Jerusalem had heard. Many a Jewish schoolboy, I have no

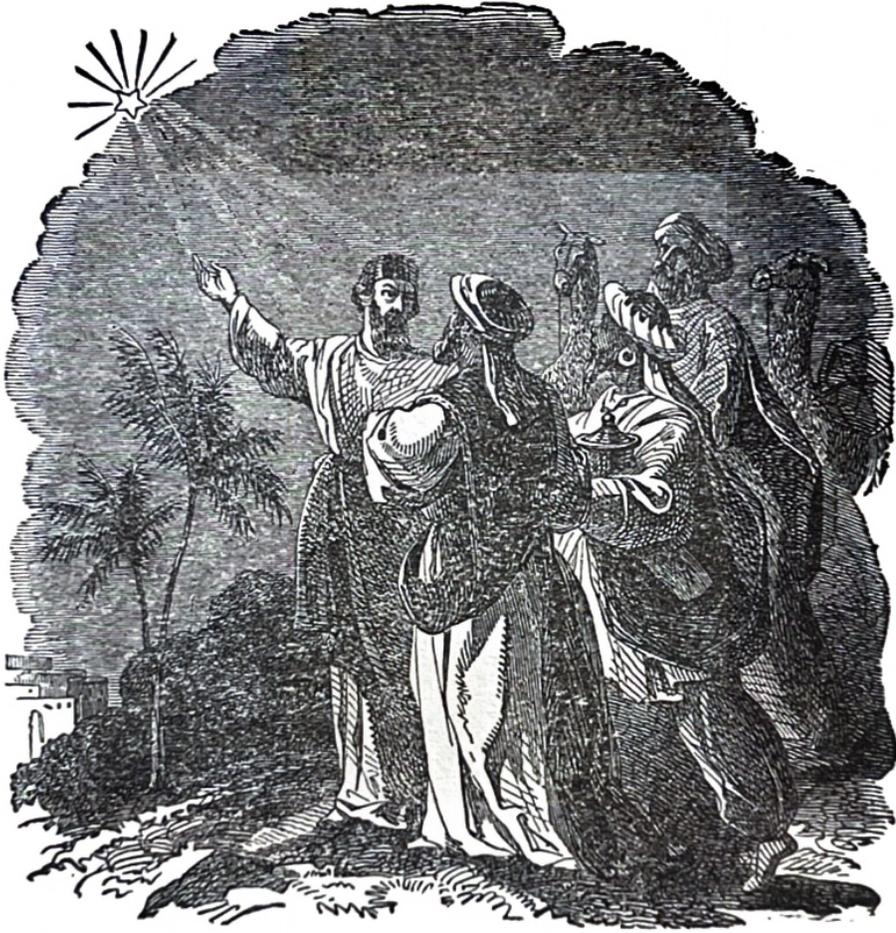
doubt, went home that night to tell the news he had heard in the streets.

At any rate, it passed from lip to lip, till it even reached the stately palace where the cruel, crafty Idumean, Herod, who hated the Jews as much as they feared and hated him, was holding his court under Roman power.

Surely such news would not affect him?

Ah, but it did, and he was troubled, too; for if these strange men were right, and the true king of the Jews was coming at last, why, it would cast him down from his borrowed greatness, and he had no mind to give up the purple and gold of royalty—not he.

And so it was that he set to work to get all the wise scribes together that they might tell him where the Messiah was to be born. And they could tell him; for God had had it all plainly written down long ages before, that whoever sought might find. And so at last the strangers got the answer, and they heard that not at far-famed Jerusalem was Jehovah's anointed King to be born into this world. How must they have wondered, surely, those wise men, when they saw the trouble their visit caused; and glad, I know



“ We have seen His star in the east.”

they were, when they turned their backs upon poor fallen, guilty, yet lovely Jerusalem, and set their faces towards Bethlehem.

And now hear the glad words of surprise and delight that they utter as they see shining above them a glittering star, the very same star that they had seen in the East!

Can you not imagine their joy, and as they see it gleaming brightly over their heads, how it would assure them that they were watched over by the only One who could command the stars? And as the celestial guide moves on before them, do you not think they would follow in awe-struck silence, on and on up the winding hillside, past the groves of cedar and fig trees, past the vineyards and olive gardens that lie outside the holy city? until at last the star stays its shining course over the lowly place where He who came to save His people from their sins, was first "God manifest in flesh"—the young child who came in such lowly guise, that none but those who saw with the eye of faith could pierce through the veil that hid His glory, and see that

"To Him belong'd the words,
King of kings, and Lord of lords."

But it was true. He who was lying there in that manger, was the same One that created the world ; this world, that when formed by His word, when as it were, it was fresh from His hand, He Himself had looked upon it and pronounced it to be very good. But this world, and we ourselves as forming part of it, had gone away from God ; who would call us back ? No angel could reach us, no angelic voice could pierce the hard hearts that hated God, yes, hated Him even to death. And so God's own Son "came from Godhead's highest glory," and entered this earth in the form of a servant ; and in the lowly spot where He chose to make His entry into the world of darkness, the wise men find Him, and all their longings are now fulfilled, the object of their pilgrimage gained. And they pour out all their gifts at His feet.

I wonder very often how much they knew ; to us now as we look back in the light of all that God has revealed in His word, it seems as if they must have known and believed a very great deal. What did the treasures signify that they had brought from their own country to present before Him, as gifts to the One whom they worshipped now ? By

the gold His royal birth was owned ; for by it they owned that He was a king. The frankincense, or incense, was to be offered to God alone. Did they then know Him, whom they saw lying in the form of a little child, as the Mighty God? Ah! we do not know ; but it always seems to me that, led of divine power as these wise men were—for the star was just God's messenger to guide them—they must have been led, too, in the choice of their gifts. And so I delight to think that these star-led travellers really owned the truth that the Child of Bethlehem was the Creator God.

Then what did myrrh point to? Well, we know that it was the one ingredient used in embalming the dead that was most indispensable, and these men, perhaps, looked past all the long pathway of thirty-three years of loving toil in going about doing good, that was to be trodden by the One before whom they bowed, and they looked on to that one day that stands alone in the history of the world. When the mighty sun was darkened, when darkness was over all the earth, because He who made the world, who even then was upholding all things by the word of His power, had been taken by wicked hands, and lifted up between

heaven and earth on that dreadful cross, there crucified—dying—dead.

Ah! well may tears come to our eyes as we think of it! Well may we bow down in adoration, and shame, too, for oh, dear young friends, it was for us—we of the race of Adam throughout this guilty world. It was for us He stooped to death, even the death of the shameful cross. Have you ever thanked Him for it, owned Him as your Lord, your God, your Saviour through death as these wise men did? Have you? It is the only way to get into the light out of the region of death and darkness. Will you let this star of the East do for you what it did for those wise men—lead you to the feet of the only Saviour? Will you? or shall it be only a pleasant story merely, leaving your heart untouched?

Listen now to a voice of warning from our star, let it speak to you to-night; of what does it tell us? Far away through the mist of centuries it tells me that there stood a man on the lofty peak of Mount Peor, in the land of Moab, uttering some of the saddest words that ever fell from human lips.

Listen to him as he stands on the hill-top, surrounded by the rude pomp and state of the king and princes of Moab : " I shall see him, but not now, I shall behold him, but not nigh." Just think of uttering such words, to know that he would one day see the only One who could redeem him, but not *now*, now is the day of salvation ; he would behold Him, but not nigh, not brought nigh by the blood of Christ ; but when he is raised from the dead and stands before the great white throne to hear his doom from the lips of the Judge who might have been his Friend. Do you not agree with me that these words of Balaam are some of the saddest ever spoken ? Then he went on to say, " there shall come a star out of Jacob and a sceptre shall rise out of Israel," a sceptre or king. And I have very little doubt but that his words were known to the magi of the East, and when they saw the star, they at once connected it with the prophecy, and believed that the king must also have appeared to His people in that land that the nations of the earth knew was the promised land to Jehovah's peculiar people. And so they set out on their long, weary desert journey to find Him " of whom Moses in the law and the

prophets did speak—Jesus of Nazareth the **king** of the Jews.”

Well, has all this no voice for us to-day? Does it not tell us that God will have His Son honoured? And it also tells us how He delights to lead on those who are really seeking Him. And if His own people are not ready, a new world, a star, shall have the honour of leading the seekers to the feet of God's Anointed. Does not the voice ask us, too, whether we have honoured this glorious One, whether we know anything of the earnestness that leads us through any and every difficulty, to Christ Himself, never satisfied till we bow before Him, and own Him as the One who has gained everything for us, whom we long to know better, to follow fully!

Some of you do really want to belong to Him—are you saying this, dear young friends? Well, what hinders? Are you thinking that your companions will laugh and jeer at you, and you cannot stand that? And you know the things you are so fond of now would have to be given up. Is that what you are thinking? Take care! oh, take care!

Those excuses kept me from Christ many a day

and year, and caused me such bitter sorrow as I would fain save you from.

Do you know where those thoughts come from? Why, straight from Satan himself, to keep you in his kingdom.

Now just pass over in your minds the next hundred years or thousand years. Where will you be then if you let these thoughts keep you away from God—from the Light of life? Shall I tell you? In hell you will lift up your eyes, being in torments. Set that against the trifles that hinder you now! are they worth thinking of? And let me tell you this, that those who obey the word, who own that in themselves they are guilty and lost, and so flee for refuge to God's Saviour for the lost, they find that in the exceeding joy and sweetness of being one of "His own," all these things that hinder and seem so terrible now are scarcely noticed at all.

Who mind being laughed at when they have the arm of their Saviour to lean upon? and who would mind giving up the rags of this world in exchange for the best robe of heaven? No, dear girls and boys, if you obey God's word and "believe on him whom he hath sent," you will have quite enough to think about, in the joy that will pour

into your heart, to walk about in this world, and to know that you, too, are one of "Christ's own." As a young girl wrote me some months ago, "I am so very happy now, and I do not belong to this world at all, for I belong to Jesus—for I have taken of the water of Life, and I am His for ever."

Now which shall it be for you? Christ, and happiness, and heaven; or, the world and the pleasures of sin for a while, and then hell—hell for ever and ever?





CHAPTER III.



BRIGHT, clear, starry evening ; so which of my friends will join me in another journey amongst the shining inhabitants of the blue vault that rises over our heads—so blue, so vast, so calm, that it seems to dwarf everything else in its own grand, mysterious immensity. To-night I want you to look closely at the constellation known by the name of “Orion,” that we may learn a little of the glories hidden there. Hidden in part to us as we look at it with the naked eye, but revealed to those who are able to study the wonders of the heavens through the great telescopes that are now of such use to

astronomers, and which have taught us how very, very little we know of the worlds that He who is the mighty God has created.

Now let us turn our backs upon the Great Bear, and so face the South, and just before us, a little to our left, gleams our glorious friend Orion. You recognise it do you? the long square formed by the four very bright stars, and the three across, not so luminous, that are called the belt. I want you especially to notice the star at the north-east corner of the square, that is, the highest on the left; and also the lowest at your right hand.

These are stars of the first magnitude; that does not mean that they are necessarily larger than the others, but they are brighter, more luminous, than those around them; the stars that form the other two angles of the square are of the second magnitude.

Now look more closely at the lower one on your right, it looks like one brilliant star, does it not?

What will you say when I tell you that it is really two suns, at so immense a distance from us that the light from them blends into one before it reaches our eyes, and to us it appears as one single orb, and we know it by the name of Rigel.

It is a double or binary star, and, looking through a powerful telescope, it is found that its two suns are not of the same colour: one is a clear white orb, the other a blue one. And when looked at closely, even by the naked eye, some think it has a blue tinge in the golden lustrous light that it has in company with the twinkling points that surround it. But there it shines! in very truth two blazing suns, that may be at an enormous distance really the one from the other, although against the background of blue they appear to us as one. When I was a tiny child I used to sing a little nursery rhyme about the stars, and often wondered what they really were; but I did not know for a long time, though I think I always had a love for them. And I hope our talks about them will help some of my young friends to be more interested in them, for if God has chosen to form them, and speak of them so often as He does in His word, it seems to me that they must teach us something of the greatness and glory of that One who has even called Himself as we have seen, by the name of "the bright and morning star."

But now let us look at **the stars** in Orion's belt.

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They do not appear so lustrous to us, but for many years astronomers have been finding new wonders there. Look at the middle star; more than two hundred years ago a man who gave a great deal of his time to studying the stars, found, as he looked through his telescope, that there was a space below this star so very bright that it puzzled him greatly, he could not at all understand it; and at last he thought that it must be a sort of break or opening in the heavens which gave him a glimpse of the glory beyond the created universe.

So this very learned and clever man came to much the same conclusion as a little girl that I once heard of, who asked if the stars were holes in heaven to let the glory shine through. Was not hers a very beautiful thought? and I do not think she was very far wrong either, for "the heavens declare the glory of God." But this wonderful light under the second star of Orion's belt is now found to be a real cluster of stars—suns—at so enormous a distance from our earth that through a moderate telescope they seem only a shimmering mass of radiant vapour; but through a very powerful telescope, such as Lord Rosse first

caused to be made, this vapour is seen to be the light from at least twelve visible stars.

Now are you tired of hearing all this, or shall we go on and look at the stars forming the ends of the belt? On the left, three suns blend their light; one is slightly yellow, another blue, and the third white. And on the right, a purple sun joins with a clear white orb to form what, to our eyes, is the one little twinkling star. When we think what *one* sun is to our world, how vast the influence of its light and heat upon the whole earth, and then remember that here we see star after star formed, not of one sun, but of two or three—can we not get a glimpse of what “Almighty” means. Could anything less than an almighty hand have formed and sustained such marvels?

But I think we have had enough of wonders for to-night, though we have not seen nearly all those that are to be found here. Still, we have learnt quite sufficient to make us exclaim as David did, “When I consider thy heavens, the work of thy fingers, the moon and the stars, which thou hast ordained; what is man, that thou art mindful of him? and the son of man, that thou visitest him?” So now we will turn to our fireside and finish our

chat there ; and, first of all, I want to look at those words of David that we have just been reminded of. Do you not notice that the "sweet singer of Israel" does not speak of the sun, he only notices the moon and stars ; so from that I gather he must have been looking up at the sky at night. And he was not giving just a passing glance and then off to something else. No ! he was *considering* them : that means to think about them, study them ; and it led him to exclaim, What am I, that the mighty God who created all these glories should think of me ?

Cannot we say the same, and in a far deeper sense than David did, for he could not look back to Calvary as we can, and see a little of what that name means ? Some time ago, I was travelling through a large city by rail. We passed through a dark tunnel, and as we emerged from it into the sunshine, almost the first thing I saw was that word "Calvary," printed in huge letters on a background of white ; just that one single word on an enormous board, nothing else. I do not know if my fellow-travellers saw it or not ; I only know that one minute I had been sitting there in the train, sad and lonely ; for the people with me

in the carriage all seemed to be absorbed in the pleasures of which they were speaking, or the business they were going to, and I was sorry to hear no mention of my Master. But that one word made me forget the strangers near me, and in a second I had left the gloomy rail far behind, and in spirit I was standing on that "green hill far away, outside a city wall;" where my Master had once taken upon Himself all my guilt and sin, and set me free for ever; putting me, too, into all the blessedness of His own place. And all the sadness and loneliness passed from my heart, and I knew that God Himself would see to it, that that work on Calvary, that made the name so precious to me, should have its own full and glorious answer in the eternal salvation of every one of those who trust in the divine Person who accomplished it perfectly there.

And as we consider the heavens, and think not only of the stars—that are the special objects of our attention in our pleasant talks now—but also of the moon, I am reminded of a person I once knew, whose first ray of hope, as to her eternal salvation, came as she was standing looking up at the clear, peaceful shining of the moon,

which first led to her thinking that there might be, even for her, something above and beyond the misery she had in this world. She was one of those who knew nothing of the love of God. She had heard others speak of it, and in her heart she really envied them, for she knew that they had a peace and joy all unknown to her. But she loved the world and its pleasures, and she chose them instead of Christ. She had a friend to whom she was greatly attached, and her spare time was devoted to their going together to the different places in which they tried to find their happiness. A vain attempt she found it even then. What can the places of amusement do to fill an immortal soul?

She had friends who were Christians, and when one day one of them spoke very earnestly to her, reminding her of her wasted life, of death and judgment, and also of God's pardoning love if she would accept it, his earnestness aroused her to an idea, that she must choose whether she would become a Christian now or go on as she was. But after a long struggle with her convictions, she deliberately settled that she could not give up her friend and all her daily pursuits, and so she chose

to give up the hope of being the Lord's, and tried to stifle the thoughts of eternity that haunted her by going more than ever into all the worldliness around her.

That was her side of it. But when God begins to work, nothing sinners can do will alter His purpose; only, if they will not let go the things that hinder them, these must be *torn* from their grasp, causing, it may be, wounds that leave their scars for all time. And so it was with the one of whom I am speaking. Three months of sin and folly and living without God, after her decision, the very friend whom she would not give up was taken away in such an awful and sudden manner, that every gleam of brightness seemed dashed at one blow out of her life, and for weeks she gave way to hopeless misery and despair.

But at last God spoke and it was by means of the calm, clear light of the moon. She was listlessly looking up at it one night, her heart surging over with wild and rebellious regrets, when little by little the quiet far-off radiance, so calm and peaceful above her, seemed to tell her that up above this gloomy world there was a region of rest even for such as she was. Ah, she little knew that God's

infinite love would give not only rest but joy. But that night was the occasion when the first ray of divine hope stole into her weary heart—but not the last. He who began the good work in His own matchless pity and tenderness, carried it on day after day until the wandering one was brought consciously to His own loving arms, to hear the precious words, “Thy sins which are many are all forgiven ;” and to find in a new life a happiness and joy never imagined possible before. So that now she thanks Him more for the greatest grief of her life, than for anything else in it ; because it made way for Christ to be everything to her.

But she need not have been so crushed, she might have yielded herself to Him long before ; but if we will not do that, well, then we must be broken. And so, dear young friends, let me beg you not to do as this one did ; do not reject the love of God, lest you meet His judgment.

And I do hope, too, that our chats about the stars, and what they lead us to think of from God’s word, may not pass away from your minds as only a pleasant way of spending spare half-hours. I want you to learn more of God from them—more of what we all are in ourselves—away from God



Shewing the New Star.

and utterly unable to get to Him by any trying of our own.

But what we cannot do has been done for us by another. And that reminds me of something which I feel inclined to call a star of the first magnitude, in the celestial chart that has been sent down here for our guidance. You know, as we stood looking up into the dark blue sky above us, some stars seemed to shine out so brightly and clearly from amongst all the others, that we seemed to take them in by our sight before the rest. Well, in **God's** word sometimes one text, sometimes another, shines out with such lustre that it fixes itself in our hearts in a very special way, just according to our need at the time. And the one that I want you to look at now has a distinct glory of its own.

I can point it out to you, but I cannot make you see how very lovely it is, unless you stand in the same place. You know in looking at ordinary things everything depends upon your standpoint. So here; unless you, too, stand where I do, you may not see the glory of this verse: "For Christ also hath once suffered for sins, the just for the unjust, that he might bring

us to God." (1 Peter iii. 18.) Now in this lustrous star from God's words, there are such rays of glory that every time we think over it we may see fresh beauties there. We see, for one thing, that the forgiveness of our sins is not nearly *all* we get when we belong to Christ. He has once suffered—borne the punishment—for those sins, He, the just One, for us the unjust ones ; and so the great and holy God can forgive us. There ! is not that a bright ray ? but the next we are going to notice is so very bright that I feel we only get rare glimpses of it, as it were : "That he might bring us to God."

Just think of it, dear young friends. Do not turn away to something else, let us give a few moments to thinking what those words really mean. They are fraught with blessing. God is "of purer eyes than to behold evil, and cannot look on iniquity." Then before we can have been brought to Him, every trace of sin's defilement has been washed away, and we are clean and pure even in His sight. "He is a great God, the almighty One whose greatness is unsearchable. Honour and majesty are before him, strength and beauty are in his sanctuary. He ruleth by his

power for ever." And yet we who trust in Christ are brought right home to Him in peace and love ; because He is gracious and full of compassion and so loved this poor, dark world, that He gave up His own beloved Son, to come down into all our misery and darkness, to lift us up into His own joy and glory. Brought to God! I feel how tiny are the glimpses I get of it. But I see a surpassing glory in what I do get. And I hope some of you will search into it and find much more there for yourselves than ever you saw before.

I remember, as if it were but yesterday, the time when I first found this verse. I had been saved for nearly a year ; and do not think I could ever make you understand what a rapturous joy it was to me to find that I had a living Saviour to speak to and trust in about everything. But I was taken ill, and for six weeks I was lying in my bedroom, shut out from the world, to learn a little more what salvation meant. One evening I was lying alone, only the flickering firelight lighting up my room, the ledges of the window, and the roofs of the houses opposite glistening with the pure, white snow that covered them.

As I lay there I took up my little Testament and opened it, and my eyes fell upon our verse. I read it and re-read it. I could hardly believe it was really there; it came upon me with such power, I could read no more: for it revealed to me that for nearly twelve long months I had known I was forgiven—known Christ as my Saviour—but never had known until that moment that Christ died to bring me to God. And how ashamed I felt. I had never praised Him for it. Never really known God as my Father—the One who gave Christ for me—who drew me to that Christ. How I had neglected Him! and tears filled my eyes, and self-reproach filled my heart as I thought over it in the stillness of that winter evening. And though years have rolled by since then, I feel to-night that I know very, very little of it now. But, dear friends, I do long for each one of us to enter into it more. Each of us here who are saved by His precious grace, let us earnestly seek to know more of what it means to be brought to God.





CHAPTER IV.

“Look now toward heaven, and tell the stars, if thou be able to number them.”—GEN. xv. 5.



WHEN I was a child, I once heard my brother speaking of a visit he had paid to an observatory near our home, and of the wonderful things he had seen there. We often passed the observatory in our walks, and how I used to wish that I could get inside and look at the stars through the huge telescope that was fitted up there for that pleasant study.

I am afraid I envied Mr. D——, who had had the place built for the purpose of carrying on his observations of the heavenly bodies, as they are called. Not that he was satisfied with what he could see there; for we used to hear of his going

to Spain and other places, to get photographs of the moon at times when eclipses took place, and great was my interest in hearing of all his preparations, and then the result of his journey.

Well, one day my brother received an invitation to the observatory, and the gentleman who assisted Mr. D—— in his various studies shewed him all the wonderful things collected there—all of them relating to the heavens. Wonderful views of the sun and moon, and not the least wonderful to me, when I heard of it, was his view of the sky through the large telescope, and I hardly believed him when my brother told me he saw the stars shining although it was the middle of the day, and so many more, too, than we could see with the naked eye.

I know now that through even a moderate telescope the number of visible stars is greatly increased; through one of greater power, fresh points of light appear; and so on with each increase of power in the telescope, until it seems that any addition to the number would be impossible. But even then, still farther beyond those suns that glitter in countless hosts, lies a background of blue void or space glistening as if sprinkled over with gold dust, revealing that there are myriads still beyond

our ken. Yet "the Lord knoweth the number of the stars, and calleth them all by name." All we know shews us only how very little our knowledge is ; only "pushes the boundaries of our ignorance farther out," shewing us how very much more there is for us to learn.

Shall we ever learn it, then ? I delight to think that some will—those who own the Lord of the stars as their Lord and Master, will "know even as they are known." At that time, when this tiny planet that we live on now, and call the "wide, wide world," shall have seen the glorious sun rise and set for the last time, when the earth shall flee away from the face of Him who sits upon the great white throne, unable to exist before the glory of the very One who was once crucified in weakness and shame on this very same earth, when all we see around us now shall have passed away for ever, then we shall understand all that is far beyond our mortal minds now. We shall be with Him and like Him who made all things by the word of His power.

But as we think of the myriads of suns, of which we only see a few and call them stars, and when we think that it is possible that every one of

those stars that gleam so brightly may be lighting up other worlds, are we not obliged to own that every one of them speaks in its golden radiance of the One who created them, who orders all their course, and maintains the most perfect harmony in all the millions that revolve in what we call space?

“And lo! the infinite host of golden stars,
With voice now high, now low,
Said, as they bent their glowing crowns of fire,
'It is the Lord—the Lord of all.'”

Some of you, I think, will be interested in hearing of a lesson on the stars that was once given to a number of the bravest soldiers in the French army, by no less a teacher than the great Napoleon himself. Most of you will have read in your histories of his expedition to Egypt; but your histories would not tell you of this lesson on the stars that I am going to repeat to you.

Napoleon and his army had entered Egypt, and were encamped for the night in a desert part. It was a lovely night, and the whole sky was ablaze with the gleaming stars. The soldiers were all in their tents; but Napoleon himself was walking up and down outside his own, and in doing so he

passed one of the officers' tents, and found, from the sound of talking that came from it, that a party of his generals were assembled there. They were those whom he had specially chosen to be near himself, and were all remarkable for some brave or skilful action as soldiers. As Napoleon passed and re-passed the tent, their voices fell on his ears, in excited, loud discussion about something that at last interested him, for he stopped and listened—listened, I can imagine, with a frown gathering on his brow; for what do you think one of them was daring to say there in the solemn silence of the night? Why, they were wicked and foolish enough to be doubting whether there was a God.

Napoleon listened quietly for a few seconds, long enough to know what the discussion was about. Then he went to the opening of the tent, called them all to come to him, and, in an instant, he was surrounded by such a group as it rarely falls to any one's lot to teach. Brave men they were, devoted to Napoleon, proud of him, and proud of the distinctions they had won in many a battle field, as shewn by the stars and medals that glittered on their breasts. And yet the poor

beggar who has no home to call his own, but who in his poverty belongs to Christ, was richer and wiser than all France's boasted warriors.

As they gathered around Napoleon, eager to know why he had called them, he told them that he had unwittingly heard their conversation ; and then, pointing up to the stars shining over their heads, he asked them who made those gleaming fires, and told them that there was an answer to all their doubts, for none but an Almighty God could create the shining worlds above them and sustain each one in its course. He ended by commanding them to banish such subjects from their conversation, as unfit for wise men who had the proofs of their folly ever before their eyes, if only they would see them.

Well would it have been for that great Napoleon had he gone on to know Him whom he thus owned as God, as his own God and Father in Christ. How different would his life have been in this world !

But now that we have glanced for a few moments at the vastness of the universe above and around our earth, and have seen how far beyond all our thoughts is the wondrous host of heaven, let us

look at a glory from the same mighty Maker, that comes very near to each one of us.

You will find the verse that I want to look at to-night, in I John iii. 1: "Behold what manner of love the Father hath bestowed upon us, that we should be called the children of God." The very way in which the beloved apostle calls our attention to it is striking. "Behold," he says—"Look at it—look well and earnestly at this wonderful love—at the manner of it." Does this verse belong to each of us? I am glad to know that it does to some.

That we are children of God as we sit here to-night—children of the mighty God who has created all the marvels of the great universe around us. Children of the holy God who cannot look upon sin. Children of that God who is Light. Children of God who is Love!

Then it is no small thing to be a child of God. At present we can only get glimpses of what it really contains. But there is one thing we can do—if we cannot fully understand it, we can believe it.

To lie down to-night with this melody rising up in our hearts: "Spite of all that would contradict

both within and around me, I am God's own child. God is my Father and He loves me perfectly. To rise in the morning and have the same precious words springing up to our lips in praise. To pass through the long, perhaps weary, day with this name of "Father" wrapping us round in its embrace, as it were, "our shelter, our shield, our covering."

I once read of a missionary who had gone out I think, to India, to tell the natives of this love of God—of Christ Jesus—and by means of his preaching some of the people were converted and "turned to God from idols."

After a long time, the missionary began to translate the Epistle of John into the native language, and he employed one of the young men who had been converted to write it down from his dictation. The young Hindoo seemed greatly impressed with the wonderful words he had to write. It was the first time that he had ever seen them in his own language, and many were his exclamations of surprise and delight, shewing how deeply he was interested in the wondrous truths of this part of God's word. But when at last the missionary dictated our verse, the young convert

could hear no more: starting from his seat, he exclaimed, "It is too much—it cannot be—write rather that we are permitted to kiss His feet." So inconceivably grand to him was this place of children of God into which he had been brought by believing.

Have each of you, dear young friends, thought what a very dignified place those have who are believers in Christ Jesus? Have you ever really sat down and, for five minutes, let your heart dwell on the position God gives you if you believe in His Son?

All that we have been looking at is positively true of the very youngest girl or boy who believes; God is their Father, with all that that means.

Are any of you satisfied to remain outside all this? shut out in the darkness and gloom of this doomed world? Surely not! Oh, do not stay there any longer. Do you know, dear friends, that this loving Father, of whom we have been speaking, calls to you again by these very words.

Listen to what God says in Isaiah i. 18: "Come now and let us reason together, saith the Lord, though your sins be as scarlet they shall be as white as snow, though they be red like crimson

they shall be as wool." Think of Jehovah condescending to speak like that, and I do not believe that any of you are really contented to think that the only heaven you will know is what you can make for yourselves down here. Are you now? You know quite well that you are not. Then how long are you going to put off seeing to it?

Only a few days ago I heard of a young girl who was visiting her friends for the day, and I did not find that they saw anything at all in her different from her usual manner. The next day she spoke of a violent pain that seized her, but after a while she said, "Oh, it is better now," and then her next movement was to fall back lifeless! All vain their efforts to rouse her, vain all the remedies—she was dead—gone from this world for ever!

Dear young friends, would you be ready for such an end to your life here? It may come to you at any moment. Are you willing to remain strangers to all the love and beauty and grace of Jesus? Will you not be decided to follow Him, and say, as a young friend said to me some time ago, that he had made up *his* mind to this :

“Jesus, I will trust Thee,
Trust Thee with my soul ;
Guilty, weak, and helpless,
Thou wilt make me whole.”

You will never know what real happiness is until you do own this in the depths of your soul. You may pretend to be happy, and fill up your spare time with music and singing, and reading story-books, and visiting your young companions ; but I know very well that when you let the thought of death—and what comes after death—pass through your mind, it is like a cold chill over everything, and you put the thought away as soon as you can.

Now would you not like to exchange this for the blissful happiness of walking about in this life, knowing that you “have passed from death unto life?” That death is over for you, and that if your body should fall asleep it would be for you to be with the Lord—and death so conquered for you, that it can never touch you, because you are in life for ever.

I know, dear young people, that some of your hearts are sometimes as troubled and restless as the sea in a storm, “whose waters cast up mire

and dirt." And your very wretchedness and misery makes you say and do things that you have to be ashamed of afterwards, or ought to be.

You see I have been through it all, and I know what it is to lie down at night and be afraid to go to sleep lest I should wake up in hell. Fearful of going on a railway journey, for fear I should meet with an accident, and be killed, and go straight down to that awful lake of fire—never meant either for you or me—but only for Satan and his angels.

Yes, I know all the horror of living like that—and pretending to be happy at the same time—and I know, too, the infinite relief of leaving it all behind for ever; because, knowing that I was utterly bad, lost, and guilty, I came to Jesus just as I was and He did not cast me out. And so I know for myself now a little of what it means to be a child of God. Peace after tempest—calm after storm.

I wonder if any of you have ever been at Plymouth, and had the opportunity of seeing the difference there is in a storm, between the vast mass of heaving waters inside the mighty break-water and the surging, frothing billows outside

it. Outside there is awful danger, terror, may be death for those in the storm-tossed vessels. Inside there is safety, peace, rest. What makes the difference? It is the same ocean roaring outside as inside, the same winds are speeding through the air in both places. But it is this—a barrier has been erected there at great cost, with enormous labour, and at awful risk for those who laboured to form it, and so a refuge has been provided for every vessel that enters.

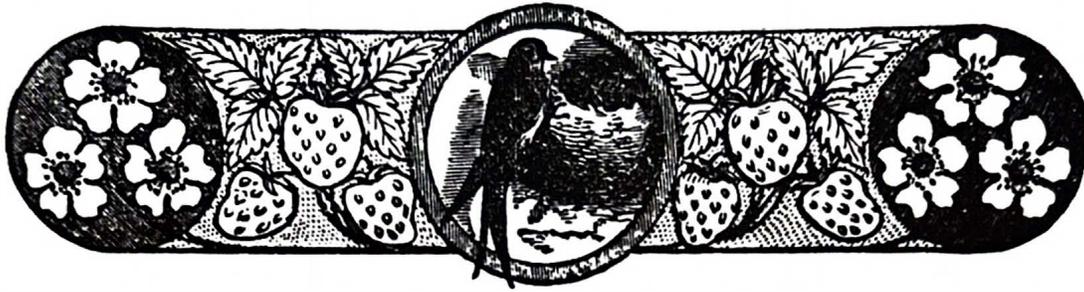
God has provided a refuge at infinite cost to Himself—who will stay outside? In the days when the children of Israel had been brought into Canaan, they were told to set apart certain of their cities as places of refuge for those who had accidentally killed any one, lest the friends of the slain man should attempt to avenge his death. At every cross road in the way that led to these cities, posts were set up with the words “refuge, refuge,” written on them, so that the manslayer fleeing before his pursuers, might know which road to take.

Now I want our talks to be to some of you, what those words were to the unhappy fugitive, pointing out to you the way to the eternal Refuge.

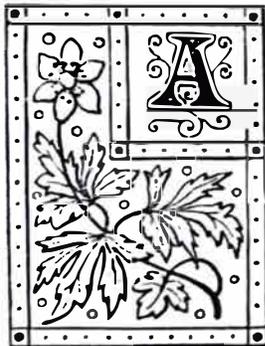
And then to those of us who are already sheltered there, let this lovely truth that we are children of God, through faith in Christ Jesus, be more and more precious to us.

And while we may have to bow our heads in shame and sorrow, when we think how often we have dishonoured Him—how little our ways and words have proclaimed our royal rank—let us never give up the fact, that it is true of us, little as we manifest it now. And let us see to it, that we do more earnestly and constantly seek to answer to the dignity God has put upon us.





CHAPTER V.



AS we were returning from our walk last evening, and the stars began to appear, we noticed how very quickly they came into sight, first one and then another of our old friends the constellations, until, in less than half-an-hour from our noticing the first one, the sky was twinkling and flashing in all directions with the gleaming lights. Conspicuous among all the others were the Great Bear and Cassiopeia. And as I thought over the lovely view of all these bright creations of my Father, it brought flashing into my mind a truth from His word which connected itself with what we had been admiring.

You are all familiar now with our friend the Great Bear, are you not? But perhaps you have not all noticed a beautiful group, there are five principal stars in it, and they are so nearly in the form of the letter W, that you will not have much, if any, trouble to find them. Let us go on to the balcony and look for them. There shines Ursa Major—now look up to the Pole Star, and the same distance on beyond, there we see our new acquaintance, Cassiopeia. The five stars are like the five points in W, are they not? and I think you will soon learn to know it, although it is not so conspicuous as the opposite constellation, Ursa Major. They are always revolving round the famous Pole star. A line drawn from one to the other of these two groups would pass through this star, which, I suppose, is really the most important of all to man, for it forms a starting-point for the calculations of most astronomers, and is of the greatest use as a guide to travellers, and navigators would be greatly puzzled if they had to do without it.

Now if you look only at these stars, you will see perhaps what so struck me the other evening after I had been thinking of them. Do

you see how clearly they shine out, lifted up, as it were, from many others? Always there, always speaking in their stellar language of Him who made them. And as I noticed them more closely and wondered what message the Lord would give me for to-night, these words flashed into my mind: "As Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, even so must the Son of man be *lifted up*, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life."

And with the words came the thought, that all the infinitely glorious truths of God centre around this most marvellous fact, that His Son, Jehovah, Jesus, Emmanuel, was, as the Son of man, lifted up upon the cross. And so the two gleaming groups of stars that with the others revolve round the Pole star, reminded me in a peculiarly precious way of this other light that is most certainly "above the brightness of the sun." For, dear friends, your salvation and mine depends upon that truth. Not one solitary individual of the lost race of Adam could ever tread the golden streets if that verse—John iii. 14—had not been literally fulfilled.

Know all that those words involve we shall never. What that *lifting up* was to God and to

Christ, what the depths of suffering it led into, we shall never see fully, for we are finite creatures. Only He who is the infinite God could gauge sufferings that were also infinite. Shadows of this we get through the Old Testament, and I think we may see one in the description given us of the building of Solomon's temple. An account is given in the word of the materials used, and of the gold, silver, and brass that entered into the construction of that exceedingly magnificent building. We are told what was the exact weight of the gold and silver, but at least twice over is it said that "the weight of the brass could not be found out." Now if we remember that brass was used for the great altar where the sin-offerings were burnt—indeed it is called the brazen altar—and if we see the way in which brass is mentioned in the scriptures, I think we shall find that in many cases it conveys the thought of the bearing of judgment.

And looking back now from this side of the cross, as all these types and shadows looked forward to it, it seems to me very sweet and precious that we can read between the lines, as it were, and see Jesus in them all. And so when

I read "that the weight of the brass could not be found out," it seems to whisper softly, like an echo from the words, that even when I shall have known and entered into all the glory for which Christ has purchased me, I shall never be able to understand what it cost Him, never realise what that judgment was that He took upon Himself for my sake.

But we may see a little of it, dear friends, if we look at His words in Gethsemane, "My soul is exceeding sorrowful, even unto death." Now if the looking forward to it could cause the blessed Lord to utter words breathing such anguish as these, what must have been the bitter reality? Oh! what horrible hearts must ours be that ever we can lightly think of that sin that cost Him the agony of Calvary.

I was once told of a poor man who, after living a life of folly and sin, spending all that he earned as soon as he received it, became so poor as not to have the necessaries of life. And then he took to selling fish about the streets. Not very long was he doing this before the exposure brought on illness, and in a few weeks it was plain to those around him that his life here would be very short.

At this time, some one who had found Christ as a Saviour for himself, went to see the poor man, to tell him of a home ready for him if he would have the One it belonged to for his Friend.

Do you think he would be likely to refuse it? He had to leave this world he knew—he could not help himself—and then all was darkness beyond. So now to hear of a glorious home all ready for him, all his past forgiven—for the sake of Another—was news of the happiest kind to him. And when he found that it was Jesus who had done all and suffered all for him, his gratitude and gladness were good to see.

He grew worse and worse, nothing could hinder the terrible pain that caused the great drops of perspiration to roll down his sunken cheeks. But he was patient through all; and one day when a friend noticed the cold drops coursing down the weather-beaten face, he seemed anxious not to think of his own pain, but said, “This is but little, *He* sweat blood for me.” That poor man had learnt something of what caused his Saviour the sufferings of Gethsemane. He saw his sins there.

Now friends, could anything be more welcome



Orion. See Page 12.

to us than to know that this sinful nature of ours—our sinful hearts—all in us that is against God (and that means ourselves, our nature, not our body)—will be gone for ever. Surely nothing could give us deeper peace.

One of the very sweetest joys of the glory will be the getting rid for ever of the sin in us that so hinders and clogs us now. To be stainless without—stainless within, not a single thought then of evil. All purity for ever. Do not you think it delightful to look forward to this? Those of you who know that even now your sins are gone, does it not make you long for the time when it will be literally true of you?

Well, dear friends, for your *faith* and mine it is true already, and I see the proof that it is so in this verse, for the Son of man was lifted up on the cross, and there the moral history of man was ended, once and for ever for God, and mine and yours, as belonging to the race, also ended there. And so all I am in myself—all you are in yourself—as a sinful child of Adam, has no longer any existence for faith. So that we may say, “I am gone, and Christ only remains as my life;” for as Son of man He died instead of me. If you and I

had really died in these bodies of ours, would not that have been an end of us here? Of course it would; death ends everything here, as far as the dead person is concerned.

But instead of you and me having to suffer that death of shame and agony, this "Son of man" suffered it for us, and so through death He has opened to us the way into life—and there is new creation with Christ Himself, the beginning, and we in Him. Could any place be more secure, more blessed than that? So that it is now we can take up such words as these: "I have died, and my life is hid with Christ in God."

Now I am not going to ask you if you all understand this. I do not understand it all, but, thank God, I believe it, and that is what I want you to do. If you will read carefully and thoughtfully through Romans vi., you will see how God teaches us the blessing of this death. But, then, if we never think about it or look at it, we shall get very little enjoyment from it now. And besides that, God expects us to care about it. If you have ever been away long from your parents, and they have written you a letter telling you what to do, are you satisfied with

reading a line here and there? Of course you are not.

I know a girl who is away at school, and when she gets a letter from home, she is not content with once *reading* it ; over and over again is that letter taken out and read and re-read, till every part is well known, especially if there are instructions in it as to her journey home. Now we are on a journey home, and God's word is like a letter telling us how we are to act as we go along ; but we must know the position He has given us before we can go through the journey so as to please Him

You know when first we found out that we were just poor lost sinners, we were glad to find that Jesus came to save the lost, and we learnt that His precious blood made us "whiter than snow." And we know that we are clean through His word. Then we could go on and see that that wondrous death of Calvary's crucified One did still more, for it brought us right home to God and to know Him not only as our God, but as our Father ; and here to-night, if what we have been talking about on the previous evenings is really our own, we can go on and see that that same

precious death was really our death ; for it is said in Romans vi. 10, 11 : “ In that he died he died unto sin once, in that he liveth, he liveth unto God. Likewise reckon ye also yourselves to be dead indeed unto sin, but alive unto God, in Christ Jesus our Lord.” Now do not let us forget this. If we feel it is beyond some of us, well, then, let us tell our Lord about it, and ask Him to teach us. For I do not think we ever get really quite settled in our hearts in perfect peace, until we believe this truth of our death in that of our Lord's.

Some years ago, a friend told me of a young man he had been visiting who was very ill—fast passing out of this world. A gentleman had been previously to see him, and had said something to him about dying, and the sick man joyfully said, “ I have no death to be afraid of, I died many years ago, so it is all past for me.” He had known and believed what His Master's word said about it. And so he could calmly fall asleep, to wake up in the presence of the One he longed to see.

Will you not all believe the same Master's word to you? It was nothing that he had ever done

that gave him this peace in the presence of what others called death. It was simple faith in Christ Jesus. Perhaps some of you will say, "Yes, but that was a man, we are young and cannot understand so well as those who are older."

Well, dear young people, I can tell you of a dear young girl, whom I once knew, who was saved in the same way as others, that is, by trusting herself to Christ. When I first knew her, she was about twelve years of age, and had very little knowledge of the Bible. She came to stay in the house for a few months where some friends of mine were living, and they soon became greatly attached to her. As they learned more of her, they found that she had scarcely heard anything of God or of His Son, so that when one day she read one of the gospel narratives, repeated in a story that she was reading, she brought it to shew it to my friend as something quite new, and was surprised to find that it was in the Gospel of John. My friend and her mother took every opportunity of speaking to Elsie, and had the delight of soon seeing that she was greatly interested in all that she had heard from God's word. And at last, one day, she told them she must buy a Bible for herself

and read all these wonderful things of which they spoke. A day or two after, she came in to shew them her new treasure, a very nice Bible that she had bought ; she had plenty of pocket money, for her friends were wealthy people as far as mere money is concerned, and Elsie had most of the things that money can procure to make a child happy. Her Bible became her very precious friend. Many times was there a gentle tap at the door of my friend's room, and, on opening it, there stood little Elsie, Bible in hand, either come to shew some newly found and wonderful verses, or to ask the meaning of others. And so daily studying this life-giving word, it was not very long before Elsie told them that she believed for herself now, and was resting her soul on God.

Then she became very anxious about an only brother who was away at school, and would write to tell him all she knew, and beg him to trust the same Saviour.

At last the time came for her to leave B——, and go back to her home ; and very sorrowful was her parting with her dearly-loved friends who had shewn her the way of salvation. And when she left them it was with the hope of soon returning to

them again. But that was not to be. A few long letters came from her, in all of which her Bible was spoken of as her one joy in the world. And she spoke with sorrow, too, of the friends who would not read or hear it.

At last there came a short letter from her saying she was very ill; but perfectly happy. One other short note from her also came, I think, in which she told them she was to be taken to Bognor; then for some time they were left in suspense. Then came a letter from her brother, enclosing from Elsie a tiny little note, so feebly written, telling them that she was going home to Jesus, and longing to go, and asking them to write to her brother. The letter from her brother was to tell them that his darling sister was gone to be with the Lord, rejoicing to the very last.

Now this dear girl found the truth just as real and precious as the young man, and for both of them death had no terror, because they knew Another had passed through it for them and taken away its sting.

And there is something else, too, about this real story, and that is that my friend who was the one that spoke most to Elsie, and who used to

shew her her need of a Saviour, was young herself, and an invalid, almost entirely confined to the house ; but even then she found means of doing something for her Lord. And was she not richly repaid when she saw that her little friend was safe for ever ?

Now before we leave off our chat for this evening, I want to look a little at what I only just referred to before, and that is the new place we are put into when we believe what God has said in His word. The Lord Jesus Himself spoke of it as “ passed from death unto life.” He Himself is “ the Life.” And in His parting words to His sorrowful disciples He told them that after He had gone away they should know that they were *in* Him. And the apostle Paul loved to speak of this grand truth of being “ in Christ Jesus.” No greater, more glorious truth can we learn than this. It is for you and for me, dear friends, to adoringly believe and own this as our only place before God.

I was reading a little while ago of a very learned and clever astronomer who, at the beginning of this century, made great discoveries regarding the sun and moon, and also wrote very valuable works

about the stars ; but once, after a long course of studies on the different aspects of the sun, and very close observations of it through the most powerful telescopes then made, he announced that from all his researches, he saw no reason why the solid nucleus of the sun should not be the dwelling-place of millions of reasonable creatures.

And I dare say he found great pleasure in thinking of the glory and splendour of such a home as the radiant, light-giving sun. I do not think many people agree with this great man in his opinion ; they think that no one could live in such a fiery home as our glorious orb of day. But such a home is not to be compared for glory or radiance to yours and mine, if we are "in Christ Jesus our Lord." Do you think it is? We are *in* Him already ; soon we shall be with Him.

"There in effulgence bright,
Saviour and Guide, with Thee
I'll walk, and in Thy heavenly light,
Brighter my robe shall be."





CHAPTER VI.

“Called out of darkness into his marvellous light.”—I PETER II. 4.



ALMOST the first thing that I can remember having pointed out to me in the starry heavens, is the broad belt of light called the Milky Way, or Via Lactea. As a tiny child this always had a peculiar fascination for me, and I have often been laughed at for star-gazing; though I think that I had the best of it even then, for it was a real pleasure to me as a child, and now the more I learn of the wonders of the great universe of stars, the more do I see of the almighty power of Him who created all things by His word.

Now as we look up at the Milky Way—which I

need not describe, for I have no doubt that you all know it well—are we ready for the thought that this earth on which we live, our little planet, is situated in a part of this most luminous region of creation. This gleaming, silvery zone of light is now known to be that particular spot where our sun and all its gorgeous retinue of planets is sweeping along in its noiseless career.

Sir William Herschel first proved this to be true, and, when I read the account of his long and patient labours in finding out whether this earth was really within the Milky Way, and the magnificent discoveries he made as to the almost inconceivable wonders of this path of light, it gave quite a new interest to it. And when next I looked up at it, I felt it told me a very great deal more of the grandeur of belonging to Him who “tellethe the number of the stars, and calleth them all by name.”

Our minds cannot grasp the number that we know are there, and there are vast regions beyond where we see still countless hosts.

Just one or two things that Sir William Herschel discovered may shew you a little more of this grandeur that is ours, as belonging to the One who

RAYS OF STARLIGHT.

formed it. Through his great telescope—which he had made himself—and which would penetrate more than a hundred and fifty times farther than the naked eye, he discovered that this splendid band of light was composed of millions of stars, and was of such a depth that, according to his calculations, in some places five hundred stars were ranged one behind another in a line, each separated by a distance equal to that which divides our sun from the nearest fixed star. Can your idea of distance grasp that? I confess mine fails to do so. And when we come to numbers it is the same. This great astronomer, Herschel, estimated that there were no fewer than eighteen millions of stars or suns in this Milky Way, most of them invisible except through a powerful telescope.

Such is the magnificent scale upon which this created universe is formed. And out of all the myriads of worlds around, it remains most sweetly true that God so loved *this* world, so thought of your blessing, so thought of mine, that all the gorgeous grandeur around us pales into nothingness when compared with the way in which that same love has been brought down here to us.

It would be no more to our God to create a

world than to form a snowflake—the word of His power is enough for both one and the other. But what is it for you, dear friends, what is it for me, to belong to such a God? And when we get glimpses of what lies beyond our world, and remember that He who was once “the Nazarene, the Crucified,” has “ascended up far above all heavens that He might fill all things.” Not one of those gleaming points of light, not one of those invisible worlds, that He will not fill with His glory, they were created by Him and for Him. Then we see that even now they speak of His greatness and tell of His power.

And looking a little at these wonders *beneath* the heavens, naturally leads us to think more of the marvellous grace that has put us in His own light *above* them all, where every single thing is perfect.

But since our last talk together, a dear old friend has reminded me that there is another side to our place, and that is our life as down in this world. A place of trial, and temptation, and sin, and sorrow, and suffering. Our home not here, our hearts not here, our very lives not here in one sense; and yet we ourselves left here for a time that we may learn what a God ours is, that we

may tell others of His love, and warn them of their danger, and last, and hardest of all, to let our light shine : and this means conflict—warfare.

You see we are in an enemy's country now—in a world where Satan is prince, and where there is not one solitary thing to help our hearts upward—except what our Father sends. All that belongs to this world that we see around us, the pleasures, the fashions, the amusements, all have the effect of dimming our light—of keeping us away from our real life—if we mix with them. Of course we have to go through this world, but now that we belong to heaven, it should only be as those who are on a journey through it.

Are not some of you away at school the greater part of the year? Well, when you go home for the holidays, would you think of stopping at any of the stations on the line short of the one where you know your friends are waiting for you? There might be some grand fête or pleasure party going on at one of those stations ; but it would be nothing to you. You never forget that you are going home, and nothing will do for you but getting there just as fast as you can.

Now, dear friends, let us all transfer this

eagerness to get home, to our journey through this world. Do not let us stop short at any of the trifling affairs of this foreign land. Foreign that is to our new life. And it is this having two lives or natures that so puzzles and troubles some of us, is it not? I will tell you what I sometimes think of, as a picture of ourselves in this.

Perhaps some of you have been to Geneva and seen for yourselves; but I dare say you all know that not far from the city the beautiful blue river Rhone receives the Arve as a tributary. Now in most of such cases the two rivers would unite and become one; but not so here. The Rhone is deep and blue, and swift as the flight of a bird through the air. The Arve is muddy and shallow, and, though falling with tremendous force into the clear, azure waters of the Rhone, it never mingles with it. And so the bright, clear Rhone flows on side by side with the muddy, brawling waters of the Arve; and perhaps some pass by and never see how entirely the two are separated, though flowing so closely together, within the same banks—forming one river, yet two distinct streams.

Now do not you think that this is a little picture of ourselves? We have received a new life—

pure, holy, heavenly. That remains ever true of the youngest believer in Christ ; but we still have the old nature that is evil and false and altogether bad, and what we have to do is what the Rhone does : keep on in the straight, stedfast, clear power of the Light, and refuse to let the muddy waters of the old life dim the brightness of the new.

Alas ! I fear that it is too often just the contrary that we do. But, dear young people, these talks I hope may help us all to seek grace from above to keep ourselves true for Him—true lights in a dark world.

And as left here in this world for a little while, we are not left alone, and as I ask you to turn now to a verse in Paul's letter to the Hebrews, it brings back to my mind a day when this verse was to me a very real light and help. You will find it in Hebrews xiii. 5 : " I will never leave thee nor forsake thee."

I was travelling one day by the North mail train. At the first place we stopped I was left alone in the carriage, until just as the train was starting, a very rough-looking man dashed hastily in ; the guard locked the door, and I knew that

“ I WILL NEVER LEAVE THEE.”

he would not open it again—and, indeed, that the train would not stop again until we reached B——, more than an hour's journey. As I looked at the man who had just jumped into the carriage, I thought he had a wild, fierce look on his face, and all at once I saw that he had some strange steel weapon, as I thought, pushed up his sleeve. I dare say you will laugh at me, but I really began to feel quite frightened ; I looked up at the man's face again, and found his eyes fixed intently on me. And then I felt that I must just turn to the Lord for relief, or I should get quite terrified.

My Testament was in my pocket; I took it out, opened it, and the first words that I saw were these : “ I will never leave thee nor forsake thee.” I could never convey to you the immense sense of protection those words gave me. I know it shews how entirely I had forgotten them—but they were there for me, as if just dropped down straight from the glory where my Lord was.

And now I took up the words of the next verse, and almost said them aloud, “ The Lord is my helper, and I will not fear what man shall do unto me.” That was enough, and I could lay down my book and smile at my foolish terror—which had

yet been so painful. One thing I must tell you that may partly account for it, it was just after some very terrible crimes had been committed in railway carriages, and I had heard of these, and for the time was forgetting to whom I belonged. And as surely as we do that, we get into trouble of some kind or other.

But I do want all of you to take these verses for your own—let them be to you bright stars that you often look at ; their brightness will cheer the gloom of trouble or sorrow, as nothing but His word can do. And when He assures us that He is ever close to us, and that He will never leave us, is not that a gleam of the most radiant sunlight or starlight ?

I once heard a friend say to some of the Lord's people, "The only way for a Christian to go through this world is leaning upon *His* arm." Now, dear little friends, if this remark is as beautiful to you as it is to me, it will help you to seek more earnestly to be one of those who in this cold, loveless world find something of the gladness of having such an One to lean upon as our Saviour—Jesus Christ, the Lord of glory, who ever liveth to make intercession for us."

He is never tired of taking care of you—never forgets you—and never will. Never! Never!

And that is the reason why we can pass along through this world, because He keeps us—that is, if we will let Him; of course, if we go off into paths of our own making, we shall not have the joy of His presence. Then we must find out for ourselves that it is “an evil and a bitter thing to depart from the Lord our God.”

Now to go back for an instant to the blue, arrowy river Rhone. That swiftly flowing stream seems earnestly bent on getting to the sea—nothing stays its rapid course—steadily refusing to mingle its clear waters with the thick, muddy Arve, it just flows on and on alone, right to the mighty ocean. I might almost say, it seems to have but one object, to reach the end of its course. And it may well speak to us about this.

Let us have but one single thing before us—to reach Christ in glory—not to mingle what He has given us with the defiled things around; but to keep steadily on in the place where He Himself has put us—never staying our onward course until we reach Him there.

Plenty of things to do as we pass along—we all

have some work for Him. Mine and yours may only be of a very homely character, but I am quite sure of this, that we shall never do it too well. And where we fail is, in forgetting that He knows better than we do what is best for us.

Those of you who are at school have to do your work in the best possible way : whether it is practising "the tiresome scales," as some call them, writing French verbs, or puzzling over a difficult sum, let it be remembered that that is our business for the moment and it is to be done for Him.

I once knew a sweet little child who used to say sometimes, when speaking of her trying to do her work, or resisting the impulse to be ill-tempered, "I do not want the Lord to look sorry at me when He comes." She thought that if He came while she was idle or naughty He would look sorry, and it was a strong motive to her for keeping on till her work was finished, or keeping the ill-temper in check. And her childish words come back to me sometimes, and make me wish that the same motive was more constantly before me.

But in this again we get encouragement from our Lord, for He says to us "Seek and ye shall

find.” You may be afraid of owning that you belong to Christ, for fear that after all you may dishonour Him, and not be able to live as you know one of Christ’s own ought to do ; but do not let that hinder you from seeking to follow Him. When a child tumbles down, it is far better for it to get up and go on again, than to lie there crying because of its tumble. And so with us ; instead of letting our minds dwell upon our failures, let us honestly confess them to our Lord, and go on—learning the lesson to be more careful for the future. And do not let us fail to own whose we are because we do not think we act up to it—that is pride after all. Let us think of Christ, and trust Him to make our lives more worthy of Himself.

Some time ago, a young friend of mine came to me one day, telling me she was so afraid she would have to sing some songs that her music master had spoken of her having. She had not long been brought to know Christ as her Saviour, and I am sure that she desired to live for Him. Her friends were not unlike most other people, and thought it quite right to sing songs ; but dear E—— soon felt that now that her lips were the

Saviour's, they must not be used for the foolish songs of this world. And so, when the music master spoke of these, she was troubled.

I could only tell her to pray about it, for her mother had already given permission to the teacher. And E—— did pray about it, and asked the Lord to save her from having to sing these songs. Then she waited quietly for her next music lesson. Mr. W—— came as usual ; but no songs appeared that day, and great was dear E——'s thankfulness. The next lesson was the same—no songs were given. They never were, as far as I know ; and for some months I used to ask her if they had put in an appearance, but her reply was always, No.

The precious Saviour loves to give us the sense that He listens to our prayers, and many of you, I dare say, could tell of answers similar to that of dear E——. So let us trust on—tell our Lord everything, and leave all the ordering to Himself.





CHAPTER VII.



ONE evening in November, some young friends were walking with me across a broad, open heath, where we had a splendid view of the sky, quite uninterrupted by trees or houses. The weather had been damp and foggy for a long time, and night after night not a star had been visible. But that day the weather suddenly changed, and, to the great delight of the children, the sun shone out quite brightly all day, and when it sank from our view, it was succeeded by the gleaming light of a host of stars. And by the moon also, which, however, did not succeed in hiding some of our old acquaintances ; among them the Bear and Cassiopeia, as usual, were conspicuous.

As we walked quickly along in the sharp, frosty air, we noticed several groups that we then saw for the first time that winter. But some of my companions looked vainly for one glorious group, and at last I heard one say, "I should think it must be time soon for Orion to appear ; we have not seen it yet." And her words remind me that I have not told any of you that you will look in vain for Orion until towards the middle of November. Then you will see it, seeming as if it were climbing the eastern sky, and each evening approaching a little nearer the West, until early in April it at last sinks quite from view in the golden and purple glory of the West.

"I almost think I like the dear old Bear and Cassiopeia better than Orion," says one of my friends—though Orion is so grand and wonderful—for they stay with us all the year round, and Orion is only a visitor for the winter, and then goes off somewhere else. But I am very glad to see it again when it does come.

Sirius, too, the most magnificent of all the single stars, rises a little later than Orion, and is stationed a little to the east of this constellation,

so that it seems to wait in attendance upon it. I do not think any of you can mistake it, for Sirius is the brightest of all the stars in the heavens. It first appears above our horizon in the evening at the end of November, and after lending us its golden light through the dark nights of winter, it says farewell to us at the close of March.

I am sure you will all suppose that this brightest of stars would be one of the first to attract the observation of astronomers, and some of them have at last succeeded in measuring its probable distance from the earth. But the number of miles in figures is so immense that it conveys no tangible idea to our minds. We can better estimate it when we learn the enormous speed at which light travels—no less than 185,000 miles in a single moment of time—yet at this wonderful rate, astronomers tell us, the golden rays from Sirius take twenty-two years in their journey to our earth. So the rays that meet our eyes in this year of 1886 perhaps left their home in 1864.

In the days of Egypt's greatness among the nations of the earth, when the Pharaohs ruled in their stern dignity over the land, this beautiful star Sirius performed the office of a sentinel to the

dwellers on the Nile, for its rising foretold the eagerly looked-for day when the overflowing waters of their beautiful river should bring fertility and beauty to the land on its banks.

Now as we look up at Sirius to-night, just think that Joseph, when in his princely position next to the king, may have watched for this same gleaming point on the blue space beyond, when the years of famine were over, and the land was once more to see its waving crops of grain spring up, and ripen in the rays of the sun that gladdens our world to-day.

Does it not make you feel what a mere moment of time our tiny lives down here really are? Think of the ages that have rolled away since the watchers on the banks of the Nile looked out night after night for Sirius, until at last they saw it rise, and knew that then they must prepare for the flooding of their fields and gardens. And still the same star shines through its appointed course; but where are they who then waited for it? Gone—all gone! and age after age has rolled on until this year in which we live, and yet the precious pity and love and mercy of God has waited all those ages, that this one little world may learn something of His mighty power and love.

What a glorious thing, too, it is to live on this earth. We know that it is only one out of many others that revolve ceaselessly around the sun that sheds life-sustaining light upon it ; and we know that that sun is only one out of countless millions of others that may each be lighting up a perfect system of worlds, and out of them all, God looked upon this earth, and for love of those upon it He even suffered His own holy Son to come down to this earth, to teach us who and what God is.

Did you ever think that we could never have known God but for that ? His glory, as another has said very beautifully, we may see in part, when we learn something of these starry wonders of which we have been getting a few glimpses. Think of the worlds that crowd the Milky Way ; think of the distance that separates sun from sun ; and we cannot help seeing something of the glory of God. Think of His almighty power, who moves all these millions of worlds, and keeps them passing onward age after age, in the path He has marked out for them ; not one of them ever swerving from their course so much as the thickness of a spider's web.

A devout astronomer once said, that if all the

strength of all the people who had ever lived on this earth could be centered into one mighty arm, that arm could not move even this one world a single foot in a thousand years. Yet the power of our God—our Father—keeps *all* the worlds in perpetual motion. His mighty hand directs the course of all the myriads that sweep onward in their majestic grandeur, and tell those who have ears to hear it, how unsearchable is the almighty power of the One who yet says to those who own Him as Saviour—“ I call you not servants, but friends.”

We admire the wisdom of men who, after long years of constant, persevering study, have found out the motions of the planets, and measured their distances from the sun, and learned their size and weight. But what of the wisdom of that One who set every single one of the systems in their places—every solitary star having its own orbit, its own time ; so that amid all the army of heaven, not one ever clashes with the other—all is in the most perfect order and harmony.

Dear friends, does it not make you feel that you can only praise Him more and more for His love that has chosen to take us up and teach us a

little of what He is? And does it not make you feel that our lives here are too short, to waste any of the precious moments in the foolish things that take our hearts away from this One, whose power and wisdom and glory are shewn us even in the stars that shine over our heads?

But not His love. Ah, no; Jesus, the Saviour, alone has shewn us that! We look for it in vain anywhere else. And we *want* that love every minute of every hour of our lives. If Judas had known that love, he would never have gone away and put an end to that life that had become, by his sin, too heavy a burden to be borne. And if you and I had known that love, we should never have stayed away from Him as long as we did.

Just now I remember the case of a poor wretched man, who lived near my home, who had heard of that love, but turned carelessly away from it—thinking, I suppose, that there was time enough.

He had been warned, I suppose, from what he said after he was struck down by sudden and fatal illness, as he was working in the field. It was not far from his home, and he was carried to it and laid on his bed, never to rise from it again in life.

When he was told that he was dying, his agony was something awful to behold—and I only mention it now to warn any of you not to turn away from the love of God, lest you, too, come to the same end. When gently told that he had but a short time to live, he exclaimed, “Then I am going to hell—going to hell,” repeating these terrible words over and over again.

His friends asked if he would not have some Christian, who lived near, sent for, hoping that he might bring some ray of hope ; but he replied, “It is no use : I turned my back upon God when I was well, and He will not hear me now.” And when some one spoke to him of believing in Christ even then, he only uttered these awful words, like a wail of despair, “It is too late, too late : I have turned my back upon God, and He will not hear me now ; I am going to hell, going to hell.” And so he died.

I shudder as I think of it. Years have passed away since it was told me, by one who knew the circumstance at the time it occurred, and I have always felt a thrill of horror in recalling it.

Do not trifle with the love of God—do not turn away and think there is time yet for you. Your

time here may be ended as suddenly as that poor man's was, and then you may find that for you also it is "too late."

Many of you, I rejoice to know, are resting in that love; feebly and faithlessly, we must all own, do we live now for Him. But it makes all the difference between a soul saved or lost, whether we are resting in it or not.

You and I may be like the very tiniest of the stars that we look up at and can scarcely see; still the faintest glimmer of light tells us that there is a star there. And the feeblest little child, who really does trust the Saviour, is one of those of whom that Saviour has said that they "shall shine forth as the sun in the kingdom of their Father." (Matt. xiii. 43.)

Think of that, little friends! If you and I are amongst those who have owned that they are utterly lost—and have trusted in the Son of God as their Saviour—then one day we shall shine as brightly as we could wish, and all for Him. And we shall never leave off shining.

There are stars in the heavens that appear for a time, and shine most brilliantly, and then pass away, never to be seen again, as far as we know.

Many years ago, a most beautiful star suddenly made its appearance in our constant friend Cassiopeia : you may fancy how very bright it was, for at one time it was visible for several days, even in the day time. Then its lustre gradually paled—it became less and less bright, until, after being a gleaming white orb, it became yellow, then its brilliancy grew of a reddish tint, and at last, as it disappeared, it seemed to melt away in a bluish faint light that vanished altogether, and has never since returned, after having been an object of wonder for about a year and a half.

Where has it gone—what was it? None of all the great and learned men, who spend their time in observing the stars, can tell us. None on earth can solve the problem.

And then again, stars that have for ages been known and marked, have now quite faded away—gone—and no researches have yet been able to find out the reason of their disappearance. He who made them, alone knows the cause. They faithfully shone for Him at His bidding, and at His bidding they ceased to shine. That is all we can say about them.

Still it is none the less wonderful. But they

who trust our Saviour will not be at all like this : they will not shine for a time and then disappear for ever. There will be no end to the glory of the redeemed of Jesus.

God also speaks of those who teach others the way to the Saviour, as shining as the stars for ever and ever. We do not know when they were created—the stars, I mean—for, as I dare say some of you know, when we are told of God creating the sun and the moon, it does not really say that He then formed or created the stars.

Indeed, it speaks of the sun and moon as being made as two lights, the lesser light to rule the night ; and simply adds, “ the stars also.” So we get no data as to the time that they have flashed and glittered through the infinite void that may be as measureless as eternity itself.

And have you ever thought, friends, that long after this earth has passed away, they may go on telling out the glory of Him who formed every radiant point of light ? Every world that He has formed speaks aloud of its Creator. And I think that even children cannot carefully notice the brilliant star groups over their heads without seeing a design in their order.

We see at a glance that it was no *chance* that set each one in so carefully regulated a system, so exquisitely ordered that in the case of some whose motions have been most minutely observed and recorded, not a single moment's change in the time occupied by those motions has occurred for the long period of two hundred years. So beautiful is the perfect harmony that rules there.

And why is it so? Because each one obeys the voice of its Master. If you and I always did that, there would be nothing but harmony and order and beauty in our lives. It is just because we forget to whom we belong, and set out to please ourselves, that ever we get fretted and worried and out of temper; and we never get right until we retrace our steps and get back to where we were before we began to walk in a path of our own choosing. Did you ever know a disobedient child who was a happy child? I never did. Obedience leads to happiness, and as I say the words, I feel how utterly they condemn me. But I like to think that our Master has all power in His hands, so He can work in our hearts and make us obedient even now, if we desire it.

We can never compute the influence that

we have upon every person with whom we are associated, if we are obedient ; and, indeed, whether we are so or not, the fact that we ever influence others remains the same.

I will just give you an example of what I mean. I know two sisters, one of whom is in bad health, and suffers a great deal of pain ; the other one is stronger and bright and cheerful, and I do not at all suppose she has any idea of the influence she exercises over the weaker one. When the one has perhaps passed a day of much pain and goes home from her daily work, and finds her sister busily working away and perhaps softly singing a hymn as she does it, she who perhaps came in depressed and weary—forgetting that a perfect Love ordered every throb of pain, and only feeling a desire to lay down this weary house of clay (her tired body)—has suddenly felt how ungrateful and complaining she has been, who had been looking at the thorns in her way instead of fixing her eyes upon the stars of blessings, and good things that were around and above her path through this world.

And here again we find that, in the region of the heavens, there is an analogy to this ; for there,

planet so influences planet, that when certain irregularities have been observed in one, it has been at once known that another planet must be near it, to have caused these irregularities, though the disturbing wanderer or planet may be, and indeed is, invisible to the naked eye, and must be sought for. And this has been done more than once or twice, and intensely interesting is the record of these searches. As they belong to the planets, and our talks must be confined to the stars, for the present, we must leave these till a future time.

But I want us all to think a little more of the influence we exercise one over another. Why, even the way you may shake hands with your friends has an influence. I know persons whose cold touch of the tips of one's fingers in shaking hands, always gives me a shivery feeling, as though their apology for shaking hands was meant to make one feel that they would much rather not do it at all.

Another will grasp your hand so heartily that you have a glow of warmth and friendliness all over you. We want a little warmth in this cold world—there is quite enough ice without our efforts

to produce more. And we must never forget, that but for deep, deep Love, you and I could never walk along in the precious sunshine of God's favour.

When I say this, I mean it for those "who have known and believed the love that God hath to us." (1 John iv. 16.) For such, life is a period of time spent in the unclouded light of His presence where His abiding love has brought us. That is God's side of it—we often make clouds, and so darkness. Has it ever crossed your mind what "the blackness of darkness for ever" must be, shut out in the awful distance from God that that must mean?

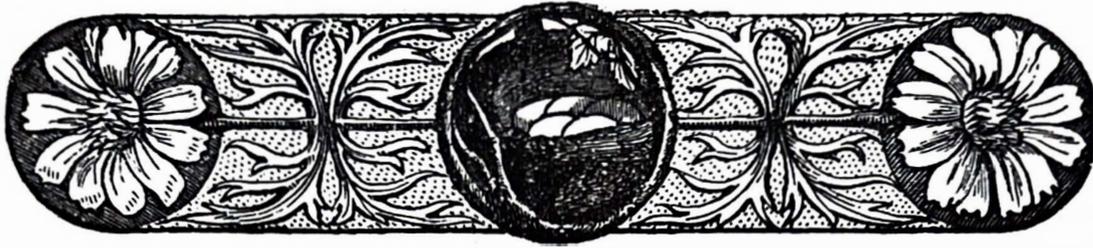
And yet we know that there are persons whom God, by His servant Jude, speaks of as "wandering stars," for whom this fearful darkness is reserved. They were—and may we not change it to the present tense and say they *are*—those who had never known what it was to have Christ Jesus Himself as the one, great, central object for their hearts and by whom their course is marked out. These were wandering stars, going where they liked, as they imagined; but in reality going to this horrifying place of remotest distance from

the very One who would have set them in His own marvellous light, if they would have allowed Him to do so.

I remember an old friend of my father, once telling us that in the Crimean war—through the whole of which he passed—the greatest suffering to the soldiers was that caused by the nights spent in what are called the trenches. These are deep ditches dug or cut in the earth to prevent the approach of an enemy, or to serve as a means of defence. And the darkness of a winter night, passed at the bottom of one of these trenches, was what this soldier regarded as the most painful endurance of the whole campaign.

Think of an eternity of darkness, because the Light while here was refused!





CHAPTER VIII.

“Canst thou bind the sweet influences of Pleiades or loose the bands of Orion?”—JOB XXXVIII. 31.



AGE after age has rolled past in the ever onward flowing river of time, since this question was asked. And many may have puzzled over the thought that it conveys to us. Have you ever looked up at these same Pleiades and remembered that that omnipotent One, who formed every flashing orb that sparkles there, speaks of their “sweet influence”? Have you ever thought what that influence was?

Or are you like a young friend of mine, who, when some of her school-fellows were telling her of their having seen one of the planets looking

most wonderful and unusually bright, and also that the Pleiades had been seen for the first time this winter by them, replied, "I do not know what you mean by the Pleiades, and have never noticed them"? So in case any of you have never looked carefully at them, I think we may as well make our acquaintance with them at once.

Look now for Orion, there it shines, and Sirius, lower to the left. Now imagine a line drawn from Sirius to the belt in Orion, and then prolong the line upwards and you meet with a star almost as bright as the famous Sirius. You can see it, can you not? Well, this star is called Aldebaran, or by some astronomers it is known as the "eye of Taurus," or the Bull, as those three bright stars are called that form a triangle, to the right above Orion. Now carry your imaginary line still higher, inclined towards the West, and you arrive at our group of Pleiades.

A gleaming spot of light is at times all we can discern there; but on clear, frosty evenings, we can distinguish a cluster of six stars, and some say they can count eight or nine; but, as a rule, only six are visible now: though in ancient times, seven were known.

These are perhaps those spoken of in God's word as "the seven stars," and, I think, always in connection with Orion. When seen through a good telescope, about eighty stars appear to rise from the void or space, that here especially looks as if sprinkled over with gold dust—so numerous and lustrous are the gleaming lights that are at too immense a distance to be seen as single suns ; but their light is seen, though they themselves are only recognised by the tremulous lustre that they shed through the void of azure.

The central star or sun is called Alcyone, and around this are grouped fourteen conspicuous stars—when seen through a telescope, I mean—it is only then that they appear bright, and more conspicuous than those around them. And so great is the power of the largest telescopes now used, that the motions of these fourteen stars have been accurately determined and noted. Their motions are all in the same direction, and very nearly equal to each other ; and it has been found, too, that a very great number of the stars beyond this cluster, appear to move in the same direction ; that is, in the same path that they would do if

they were all circling around Alcyone, in the same way that our earth moves round the sun.

Now look up again at the Pleiades, dear friends, and just think of the immense distance that separates us from them as we look up at them to-night. But we can only get a glimpse of that distance, for our mortal minds are not capable of comprehending it really, especially if it is all new to us, this delightful "considering of the heavens." Let us imagine that to-night we start to pay them a visit—that is, if you can imagine anything so stupendous. Our sight reaches them, so we imagine ourselves as accompanying it. We shall go at an almost incredible swiftness, that of light itself.

Now, then, imagine we have started from the earth—we flash over twelve hundred thousand miles in the first minute; in rather more than half an hour we pass Jupiter and its moons; then on and on to the outermost known planet, seventeen hundred millions of miles; and even then we do not appear to have lessened the distance between ourselves and our far-off clusters of stars by any appreciable degree. There they flash, almost as far away as when we stood upon the earth. On

again for days and months, still the same—sweeping along at this breathless rate, and still no sign of shortening our journey; months grow into years, years roll away till we count them by centuries. Imagine that we look back now: our sun is no longer visible as such, but merely a point of light, such as any other of the “forest” of stars behind us. Still on and on, and there lie the glorious group of suns that we are moving to, only nearer to us by one-fifth of the distance. So on for five centuries, and even then we are not at the actual end of our mind’s journey; for thirty years still must we traverse the infinite universe before we finally reach the great central star. For light itself is supposed to occupy that length of time in reaching our earth from Alcyone—530 years.

Does not this give us a glimpse of what the universe of God is? Far away beyond these wonderful Pleiades, lie other worlds and systems of worlds in endless, countless number; so that millions are reckoned by millions, and do not end there. And when we try to think what a *million* means, we shall get an idea of what distance and number when counted by millions really are.

One thing that will help us in this, I think, is just to look back at the time when we read of this earth being created. According to the usual method of reckoning, six thousand years have passed away since the time of its creation. Look down the centuries, as it were: think of the Flood, then of Moses, of Solomon, of Nebuchadnezzar and Daniel—then of the cross—and our own eighteen hundred years—and now see that only rather more than *two millions* of days have passed since this world was first formed and fashioned by our glorious omnipotent God. Now does not that give you an enlarged idea of what a million really means?

Then think that in the Milky Way alone lie not only millions of stars, but systems; and still on and on lie others ever increasing—ever countless; and then remember that the almighty power formed every single world—one infinite Wisdom sustains, rules, directs, governs all—and then look at Jesus Christ of Nazareth, of Calvary, and see that in Him all that that omnipotent God is, is now made known to you here to-night if you are trusting your soul to Him.

Ah, dear friends, our fancied journey of five

hundred centuries is nothing, only a point of time, when we think of the more marvellous journey the Lord's people will soon pass through. Where is the Lord Jesus now? "Far above the heavens," is the answer that peals down to us from above. And there is your place and mine, dear friend, if you, too, are one of "the Lord's redeemed."

Now do not you think that it was an *immense* thing for such a God as ours is—One, of whose power and glory and wisdom I hope you have had a fresh glimpse this evening—do not you see that it is the very greatest marvel of marvels, that this God should visit one world in such a way as He has deigned to visit ours?

No wonder that, for the only time since it was created, the sun refused to give its light to Calvary. And greatest of all other wonders, that men and women on this earth can live and die without ever seeing the glory that shines out in the One who there "gave himself a ransom for all." (1 Tim. ii. 6.) And yet He was the very same One that "made the seven stars and Orion."

But to go back to our question of *what* the "sweet influences of Pleiades" may be. And here we can only tell you of what a great astro-

nomer has recently announced : that after years and close observations of the movements of our solar system, and also of a great many others, he has come to the conclusion, that in the same way as the earth and the other planets roll ceaselessly around our sun, so exactly in the same manner are all the myriads of star clusters that "crowd the Milky Way," revolving ceaselessly around the central star of the Pleiades.

And as our solar system—the sun and all the splendid train of planets and comets that attend it on its course—is only one of the many millions of this Milky Way, we get an idea, it may be no more than that, of where it is speeding its course to.

Now supposing M. Maedlar to be correct, and other great astronomers are assenting to this conclusion, as agreeing with many researches and facts that are now certain ; then, I think, we get at least a glimpse of some of the influences of this magnificent cluster of suns that we look up at to-night and say, "There are the Pleiades."

And if it be that there shines the great central sun, about which all the universe of stars are revolving, then do we get, instead of uncertainty

and doubt, one of the most glorious proofs of the lovely harmony that takes in the whole created universe of God—where not a single star shines for itself, but has a perfectly ordered path to pursue, from which it never swerves.

Dear friends, I do want you to see from all this what a God we who know and adore Him have, because we are “in Christ.” For we know that this infinitely glorious One “who telleth the number of the stars and calleth them all by name,” is the same one that in pity and tender love “healeth the broken in heart, and bindeth up their wounds.” The same One that says, too, “Come unto me, all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest.” Is not He able to do what He says? Just try for yourselves and see, dear friends.

Do you wonder either that if any one refuses to obey this call from such a mighty Creator God as He who spake the worlds into being—do you wonder that, outside all the glory of heaven, there is no place left for them but “blackness of darkness”? No starlight will send its pitying ray of light across that horrifying blackness—no single solitary ray from sun or moon will pierce

through that dense veil that separates it from the Light.

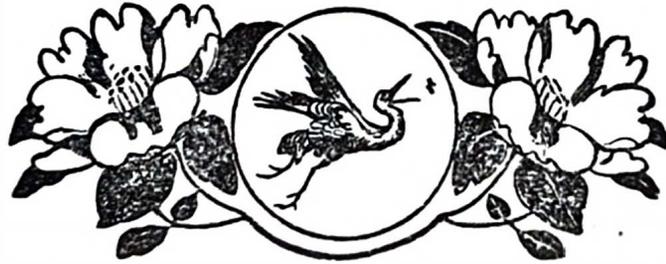
Think what it means to be shut out from God for—not a lifetime merely—not for millions of years merely—but for all eternity.

Are you leaving God out of your plans for this life? And this reminds me of a remark of Napoleon the Great, as he was called, when all his plans for some of his campaigns had been carefully completed by him alone, one of his most trusted generals was taken into his confidence; and then Napoleon, in his private cabinet in the luxurious palace of the Tuileries, unfolded to the eyes of his officer all his carefully considered arrangements, and the various routes by which the great army of France was to be led—all the preparations for any emergency that might arise—so that it seemed as though everything had been thought of. And when all had been made known to the general, Napoleon added, “All has been prepared for, excepting the hand of God; that is the great exception always to be made.”

Now, dear young friends, are you forgetting this hand of God? Or are you joyfully remembering that that Hand is the Guide of your life, now

INFLUENCES OF PLEIADES.

that you have given up trusting yourselves, and are trusting Him whose hands were pierced for your sins. One or the other of these two things all of you are now doing.





CHAPTER IX.

“Praise him, all ye stars of light.”—

PSALM CXLVIII. 3.



NOW we have come to our last talk, for the present, about the stars; and there are a few more groups I want you to look at to-night, so that when you are out on starry nights, you may see above you many that you know and recognise, each in their own particular place.

We will take the Great Bear as a starting-point—so will you look at that, and then let your eyes pass along an imaginary line from it to Cassiopeia; now carry your line on in the same direction, until you see a large square formed by

PEGASUS.

four bright stars—an almost perfect square do these four stars form—and they are known by the name of Pegasus. Lying at one side of these is an extension of three other stars, very much like the tail of the Great Bear in form, but with the stars at greater distances from each other; this bright group is called Andromeda. The last star in the group of Pegasus forms the first in that of Andromeda; the two constellations seem to form but one as we look at them, and they together seem to join the North to the southern part of the skies by the flashing belt they form in the eastern part of the heavens in autumn.

Now if you look closely at the last star in Andromeda, you will discover two others, one on either side of it, they are not so bright as the central one; but with it they are formed into another constellation, known as Perseus. Exactly opposite lies a very singular star, known as Algol, this is what is termed a variable star; that is, its brilliancy becomes gradually dimmed until it is almost invisible, then it returns for a certain time to great lustre, and again fades and pales as before.

I am afraid that some of us are “variable,” too.

Do not we know something of it? Lessons seem so hard to conquer sometimes, and even when we have really tried, and think we have learned them quite perfectly, we often find that when our time comes to be tested as to whether we are perfect in them or not, our knowledge is not enough to get "good marks" for them. And too often our brightness fails us then.

Yes! There are lessons to be learnt all one's life, you know. And this world is the school. But those who see something of the beauty and the glory of the One who is "the bright and morning Star," know a great deal, too, of His unfailing patience. There is a question that I love very much, about this—have you ever thought of it I wonder?—it is this: "Who teacheth like him?" You will find it in Job xxxvi. 22.

We ought to make rapid progress with such a Teacher. But we easily get discouraged and tired, and forget that every stroke that we do well for Him will have its full reward.

Now for one more look at our flashing friends above us. Turn again to the North, almost opposite to the last star in the tail of our useful Bear, we see a bright triangle of stars; carrying a

THE HERDSMAN.

curved line downwards from the tail of Ursa Major for some distance we come to a very bright orb, called Arcturus, this, together with the triangle above it, forms the group known as the Herdsman.

Arcturus is one of the stars that are the earth's brightest neighbours—though many millions of millions of miles these same neighbours are from us. Arcturus is a very beautiful star of a rosy colour. The one directly above in this constellation is a double star, one of them of an azure colour, the other yellow: two distinct suns blending their light in this wonderful way.

Now look a little to the left; on very bright, clear, nights you may see a lovely cluster of small stars, seven or eight in number, called the "Northern Crown," in the form of an incomplete circle; and, seen on a bright autumn night, very beautiful are these flashing clusters of light.

The Herdsman sets as the Pleiades rise, and so in olden times the Pleiades were sometimes called the Herdsman's daughters.

Many other groups are there which we have not looked at yet; but if all of you get familiar with those that we have seen, so as to easily recognise

each one without help, you will be able to go on with the help of others, or with a star-map, and find out more for yourselves. But as you look at them, never forget that each one has a voice for you if you will listen to it, human language of course I do not mean ; but you all know that there are other voices than that. And if you will look at every passage in God's word where the stars are mentioned, or the sun and moon, I think you will be surprised to see how numerous they are. And then beyond all the visible stars that are seen by the very strongest telescopic power, lie flashing points, and clouds, and wavelets of golden light, that seem to denote that *there*, beyond all vision of man, are other stellar universes in countless profusion.

Sir William Herschel was the first to see and make known these clouds of light, as he was the first who used a telescope of sufficient power to bring them within the range of the human sight.

Many of these brilliant clouds were, when carefully examined by him, found to be enormous clusters of distinct stars—or rather, suns. These are called clusters ; there are many of these clusters in the various groups we have looked at. There

ANDROMEDA.

is a most beautiful one in Orion, and also another in Andromeda.

Some appear like shining fragments of clouds, others like deep masses of light : some of a golden colour, others a lovely blue ; one appears rosy in the centre, paling off to white at the edge. Some have clearly marked forms, and have received names to correspond with that form. Those that are so far distant that no known telescopic power avails to see more than a brilliant cloud of light, are called "Nebulæ." One of these is said by a recent writer to "write in the midst of the page of heaven the last letter of the Greek alphabet, Ω , [Omega]."

Some, as seen through the great telescope that Lord Rosse erected, are in the most beautiful spiral forms ; and there seems, indeed, to be an endless variety. The nebula in Orion may sometimes be seen with the naked eye : so what can be the distance and magnitude of an object that even when viewed through a telescope that magnified several thousand times, only appeared as a vast cloud of light, and yet is visible by the unassisted powers of the eye ! It is calculated that the light cannot reach the earth in less than a thousand

years, so inconceivable is the distance, so immense the mighty universe around us. And the whole of this stupendous universe, the work of one mighty Hand—of Him who from the throne of glory is looking down at you to-night and reads every thought of your heart!

Does He see that you have decided to take eternal life as His free gift, and so become free for ever from all that awful weight of sin that is upon you, whether you know it or not?

We have looked at flashing stars and radiant star-groups in all their splendour, at fleecy clouds and golden clusters, and filmy nebulae. And now we will turn for a few moments to the "Shooting Stars," or Meteors, as they are called.

Nearly every evening through the latter part of November, we may see these shooting stars. And sometimes it is one of the grandest sights one can imagine, when the whole sky seems blazing and flashing in all directions with living points of radiance. Only a few nights ago this was to be seen, and over two thousand of these fiery visitors were counted, as they darted and streamed across the sky, many of them leaving long tracks of golden shimmering light behind them.

“SHOOTING STARS.”

Some of these meteors exceed the planet Venus in brightness, and are believed to follow in the track of comets: all pursuing a certain defined path. And what we may call the November family of shooting stars is known to pass along in a vast orbit round the sun, nearly twenty times farther away from it than the earth; so you may get an idea of the enormous distance these meteors traverse during one journey round the sun. For they obey the same laws and follow the path marked out for them, in just the same way that the earth does.

It is during November that the earth in its course passes across the path of these beautiful visitors. And sometimes it occurs at the time when that path is strewn in dense profusion with the meteors; the sight is very grand indeed. But every November many are to be seen, though I cannot say studied, for they flash upon us, and are away again.

Amongst the negroes of America, these “star showers” are looked upon with the most intense dread. During one November night, some years ago, there was a magnificent display of meteors in the United States, and we are told that thousands

of negroes were seen prostrated on the ground, with cries and tears imploring God to have pity on them and on the world, thinking that the end of the world was approaching, or, in fact, had come. So great was the terror inspired by the sight of the flashing stars darting along in their, to them, mysterious flight.

But when we see that these same stars are only part of the magnificent one great universe, which is all "the action of a single thought," as a writer has truly said, then we cannot help seeing how far from terrifying these visitors of November really are; although until recently many people, even in Europe, regarded them with dread and awe.

Even now it is surprising how very little many people understand what the "shooting stars" are. Only a few nights ago I heard of a tradesman, who had been looking at some as he came along to the house where I was staying, and he really seemed to think that the stars were just taking up fresh positions; for in speaking of the meteors, after he had done his business, he said, "I never saw such a sight in my life as I have to-night: why, the stars seem all to be *shifting their places.*" Just imagine a star acting like that!

ON THE WAY.

Ah, no! Stars never want to alter their places—they only go where they are sent.

I remember some years ago I was staying in a part of Kent, at the time when astronomers expected that the earth would pass across the track of a vast number of these lovely stars; between twelve at night and four o'clock in the next morning was the time when the star shower was to be looked for.

Some of the others in the house and myself agreed to get up soon after two o'clock, as that was thought to be early enough—and then all go to a very high part of the town, called "Mount Ephraim," from whence it was hoped that we should get a view of the meteors in all their splendour. Well, two o'clock came very quickly, and we dressed and looked out; to our dismay, we found it was misty and drizzling, instead of the clear, frosty weather we had been hoping for. However, at last we decided to go. It was some distance from Mount Ephraim, and might be better there. So off we went through the mist, finding, as we got nearer to our place, that we were not the only ones, for there were little groups of people walking up and down on the raised promenade on the top

of the Mount, all of them, like ourselves, looking rather foolish and disappointed. For the mist grew thick and dense till it was a fog, and not a star did we behold that night: the vapours from the earth prevented that; and, though it was strangely light, spite of the fog, yet our walk and giving up our night's rest was all in vain.

I dare say if we had been better up in the knowledge of such things, we should not have gone at all, for we should have been sure that no stars would be visible.

And such a mist as we went through that early morning long-ago is not the only mist that ever hides a brightness from our eyes. Too often we *make* the clouds for ourselves that dim, and sometimes hide altogether, the glory that lies ahead. But then it is an immense comfort to remember that it is there all the same. None of our clouds—be they ever so black or thick—can alter the fact, that for those who are "Christ's own," there lies on before, a place of such glory that, when compared to it, the light of the sun and its glory dims into nothingness.

Since we began our pleasant chats together, we have looked at flashing star-worlds and gleam

ing groups, and lustrous golden-hued clusters at fleecy, cloudy nebulæ. Flashing stars, and fleecy clouds of light, all flash and gleam and move at His word who created one and all. Every one of them obeys His word, shines as He orders, moves as and when He directs: "For his pleasure they were," for His pleasure they still are. But not one of those radiant worlds has our God thought fit to become the eternal home of Christ's redeemed.

No less than far above all heavens is the place where He who was once called "the Nazarene, the Crucified," now sits, exalted to the throne of the majesty on high. His place is yours and mine, dear fellow-believer in Him.

The more we see how faithless we are in ourselves, the more we see His faithfulness and love; and we can truly sing

"One place have I in heaven above:
The glory of His throne."

Yes, for us it is death here—glory there. And all the way along—whether we feel it or not—"Underneath are the everlasting arms." **Ah!** dear young friends, it is only

RAYS OF STARLIGHT.

“When we stand with Christ in glory,
Looking o'er life's finished story ;”

it is only then we shall be able to see how those arms have been around us : when we were most wearied and discouraged, and seemed almost ready to faint, and give up in despair. Well, why did we not give up in despair? Just because, though we knew it not, those same arms were bearing us up in their strength-giving clasp, and presently we were strengthened and helped, and saw the bright sunlight again of His own love and pity. And so the weak and tempted and tried ones amongst us are enabled to go on, because it is for ever and for ever true of those who are His, that “underneath are the everlasting arms.”

Well, that is for the road there. Now let us think a little of where we are going. We are going to Jesus Christ the Lord—the mighty, exalted One. No longer the lowly Stranger, but made both Lord and Christ, a Prince and a Saviour : soon to appear in all His glory. But now He who once lay in the grave in that distant lovely land ; “over whose acres walked those blessed feet, that eighteen hundred years ago were

nailed, for our salvation, to a bitter cross"—He is now set down at the right hand of God in the heavenly places: "Far above all principality, and power, and might, and dominion, and every name that is named, not only in this world but also in that which is to come. And hath put all things under his feet."

There in that radiant glory is Jesus now, and there we shall be ere long, as certainly as we are now down here—those of us, I mean, who "have redemption through his blood," and "have right to the tree of life, and may enter in through the gates into the city."

And this same Jesus is coming again to fetch us. How it sends a thrill of joy to our hearts to remember that at any moment "the Lord himself shall descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of the archangel, and with the trump of God: and the dead in Christ shall rise first: then we which are alive and remain shall be caught up together with them in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air: and so shall we ever be with the Lord."

Now when first I read this verse, and a friend spoke to me saying, "it may be fulfilled this very

hour," I was greatly surprised, for I had never noticed it before; and thought I must die some day. But although that may be so, and we may fall asleep and our bodies rest in the grave while our spirits are at home with the Lord—yet it is just as possible that we may be alive when He comes, and then we shall be caught up to Him even as Elijah was, though not with the chariots and horses of fire; but taken straight from this weary world to a Saviour's presence and fulness of joy.

Afterwards this same world will see Him come again "in flaming fire, taking vengeance on them that know not God and that obey not the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ."

Are any of you, dear young friends, still among those who know not God—who obey not the gospel? Just think of what is reserved for you, if you are.

And for all who now through His own matchless grace, own His authority and seek to follow and serve Him, let us remember this word of warning and command: "Be not conformed to this world." (Romans xii. 2.) Now, for every one who is the Lord's, this is as much a command as "Thou shalt not steal;" so that the only thing

for us is to be utterly separated from it. Not taking part in its pleasures or gaieties, or mingling in any way with it as friends.

Of course, we have our work to do in it. But let us all remember, that to be a friend of the world is to be an enemy of God.

But perhaps you will say, "What do you mean by the world?" Just look at 1 John ii. 16, and there you will see that the world is all that "is not of the Father." Could I mix in worldly parties and pleasures, if I remembered that Christ died "to deliver us from this present evil world"? So let us seek to obey Him in this, and keep ourselves true for His sake; for we shall bring no glory to Him, and no blessing to ourselves if we do not. A worldly Christian really denies his Saviour. Even in our dress we should shew that we are not of the world.

May each one for ourselves, seek to be like Daniel, who "purposed in his heart that he would not defile himself." He made it a settled determination, a steady purpose. So must we. And then let us go on and study the directions He has left for our life down here; seek in His living word to learn more of His glories; and, before we

have learned it all, before we are able to comprehend the half, we shall find ourselves caught up far above this doomed world—far above gleaming stars and flashing suns—up to the many mansions of the “Father’s house.”

There we shall for ever be learning, in all the surpassing glory and brightness and joy of His presence, what that One is whose love has brought us there, and say, now, “O Lord, no harps, no songs of heaven will be sweet as one word of Thine.”

Ah! that is verily true, is it not, dear friends? It is Himself we look for—Himself we long for—the bright and morning Star.

And now, as our starlight journeys and talkings are over, may He who has read all our hearts, bow every one to Himself for His precious name’s sake—for His own glory.

L. T.

“With Thee, in garments white,
Lord Jesus, we shall walk ;
And, spotless in that heavenly light,
Of all Thy sufferings talk.

Close to Thy trusted side,
In fellowship divine—

No cloud, no distance, e'er shall hide
Glories that then shall shine.

Yet still we wait for Thee,
To see Thee as Thou art :
Be with Thee, like Thee, Lord, and free
To love with all our heart."

