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A LETTER TO A FRIEND IN SPIRITUAL DARKNESS.

One word more. When I was myself once in deep, deep darkness of soul, I found that a most ingenious thing was, when I was tempted to come to a definite conclusion as to my past faith, having seen but a dream. Because, although it seemed plausible enough thing to say, Had you not better give up all the past, and just own and confess that you were but a self-deceiver, or hypocrite, or both, and then come, as *you for the first time*, to Jesus, upon the naked warrant which even the apostle have in the gospel to do that—yet I saw gradually there was a deadly snare laid for me in that suggestion, as to positively concluding that I had never believed before. For then, when I tried to believe as for the first time, Satan suggested, or my own heart (I care not which, or both), "Since you have been fatally deceived so often before, how can you know that you are not just going to repeat the self-deception once more?" Then I began to see that, in order to my coming straight, and just as I was, it was not necessary to arrive at any conclusion, favourable or unfavourable, about the past. I resolved to leave that

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He adds these impressive words: "Beyond twenty, not one! What a lesson on the delay of conversion! What an awful lesson! How rapidly it cuts off the hopes of the delaying, as they continue on in life, making darker and darker the prospect as they are nearing the tomb! How rapidly the prospect of conversion diminishes; far more rapidly than the prospect of life! Let the inner delay till he is twenty years old—he has lost more than half the probability of salvation he had at twelve! Let him delay till he is thirty years old, and he has but three-fourths of the probability of salvation which he had at twenty; let him delay till he has reached forty years, and only twenty-nine probabilities out of a thousand remain to him. Let him delay till he has reached fifty years, and beyond fifty there remains to him only fourteen out of a thousand! What a lesson upon delay! What an emphatic lesson!"

There is no mystery about these facts. The overtake of habit, the dulling, corroding power

RELIGION A BUSINESS.—The other day we spoke in commendation of an active Christian brother, to one who was content to take things in an easy, dog-trot way. "Oh! yes," was the answer, "he makes a *business* of it."

That was just it. Here was the secret of his christian influence. Religion was with him a *business*.¹ He was not namby-pamby of certain promises to pay,² such as, "Be thou faithful unto death, and I will give thee a crown of life,"³ or were his calculations based on any Pelagian tables of interest.⁴ He "went into it," because he liked it, or in better words, he had a *love* for his calling. Thus the "invested in stock" was not depreciate, for he laid up a treasure in heaven.

Cox, the cruel fiend, tied the man to his horse and rode at a rapid rate, the poor slave running to keep up behind him. When he left the regiment he had on a pair of good shoes, but when he reached his master's house his shoes were gone, and his bleeding feet were found to be bursting open from coming in contact with pebbles and stones. He had been dragged eleven miles behind his master's horse! They arrived home in the evening, about 11 o'clock, on Friday. He tied him to a tree, and called his overseer, Franklin Roby, and a man by the name of John Robinson. They commenced whipping him about 11

"Judge not the Lord by feeble sense,
But trust Him for His Grace;
Behind a frowning Providence
He hides a smiling face.

"His purposes will ripen fast,
Unfolding every hour;
The seed may long lie in the chafe,
But sweet will be the flower.

"Blind unbelief is sure to err,
And scan his work in vain;
God is his own interpreter,
And He will make it plain.

Aye, that he will; but in His own time!
Parliamentary work goes forward slowly; in
fact, it was suspended for many days at Easter