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JESUS

Carpenter,

Teacher,

Physician.



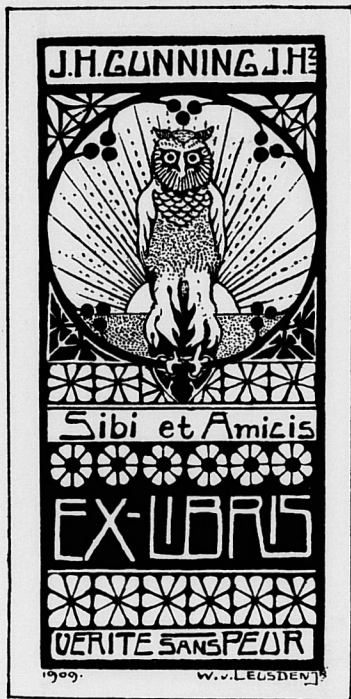
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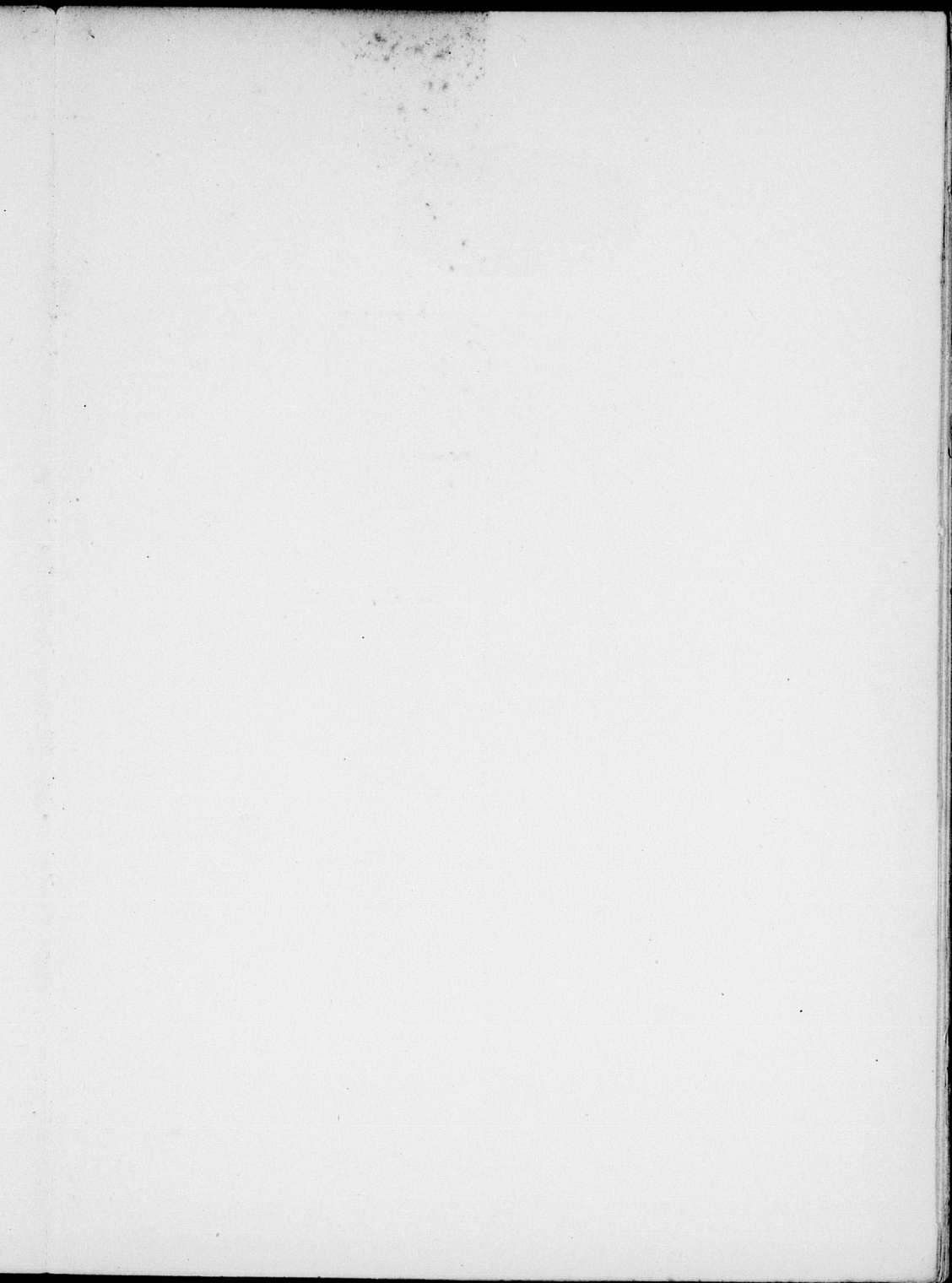
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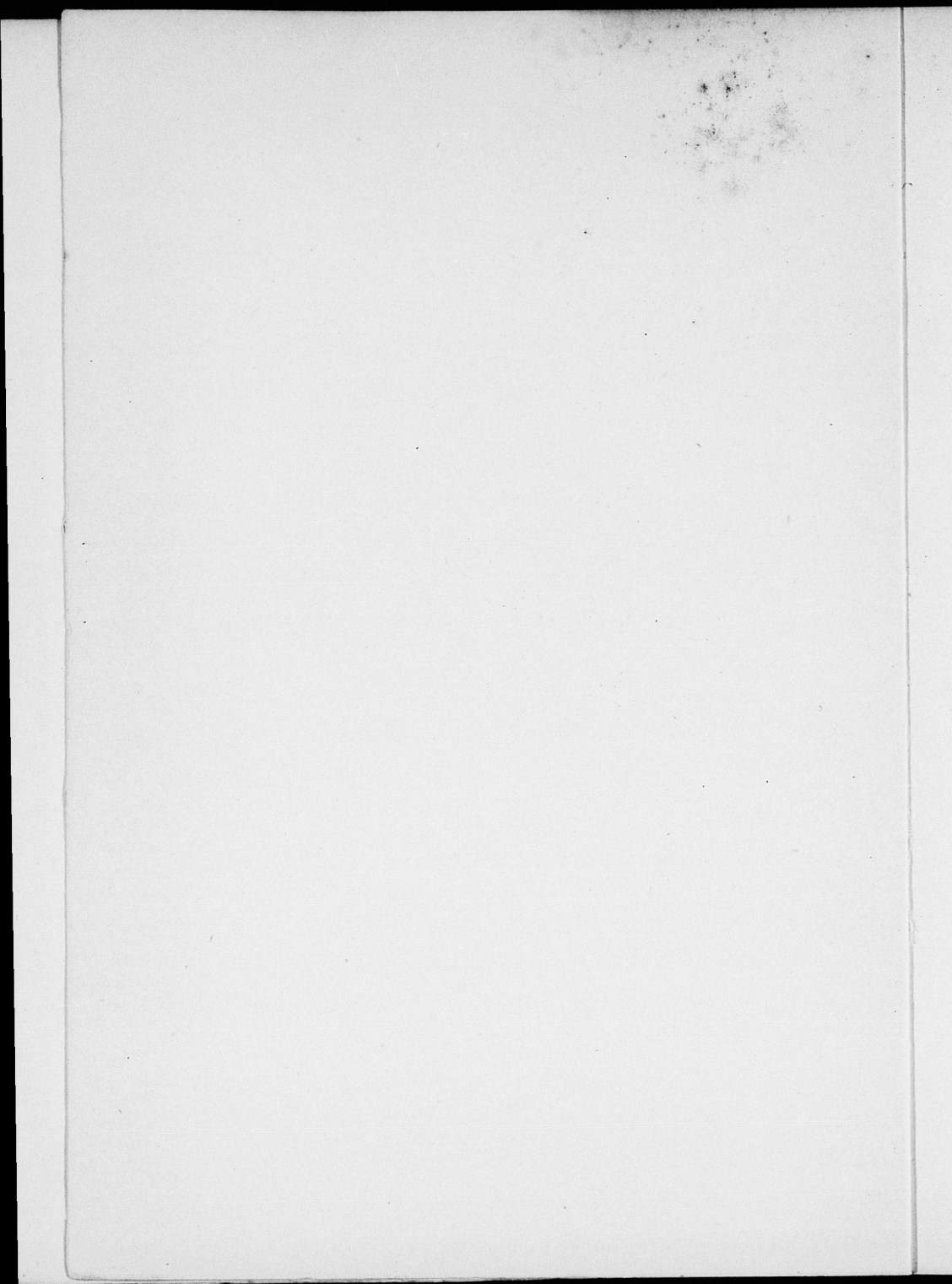
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J E S U S

CARPENTER, TEACHER, PHYSICIAN.

S E R M O N S

ON

HUMAN NATURE OF CHRIST

BY

REV. J. IRWIN BROWN, B.D.,

Scots' Church, Rotterdam.

ROTTERDAM—J. M. BREDÉE.

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I N T R O D U C T I O N .

I have much pleasure in introducing this little book of sermons to such of my Dutch friends as read English.

Trusting that no one will peruse these pages without heartfelt gratitude to the author, my introduction cannot be anything else but a sincere recommendation. In my judgment these pulpit discourses rank among the very best that are published in our country. Here is a Christian preacher who deals with some of the most attractive themes bearing upon our Lord's life and upon Christian conduct, and who does so in such a way that his book cannot be read without lasting profit. He writes a charming style, and evinces remarkable talent for the description of natural scenery as well as for depicting the inner nature of man. His sermons are not doctrinal, but regard primarily the ethical practice of Christianity. They might be called psychological treatises; but they

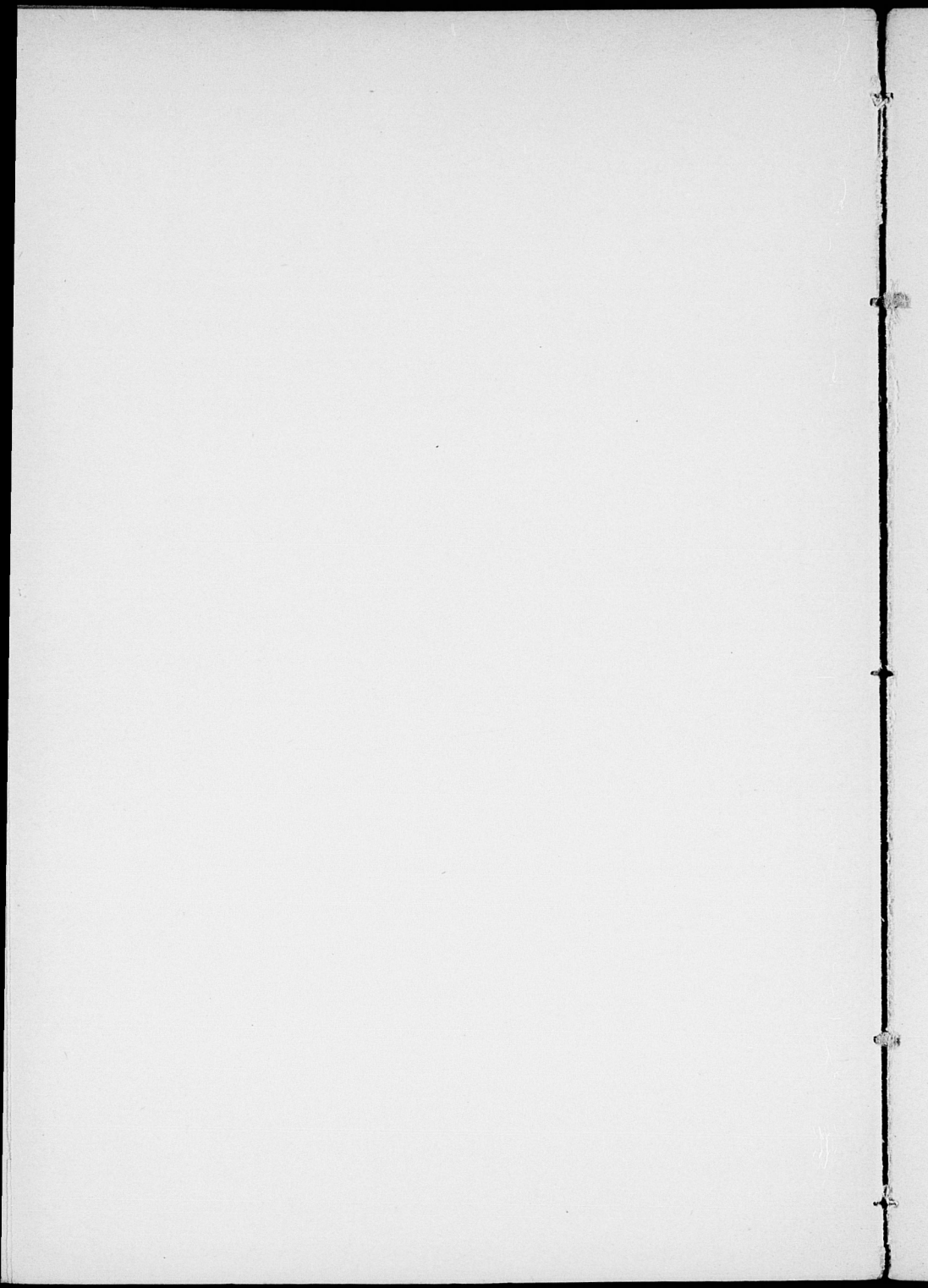
are, above all, highly practical and edifying, especially on account of the deep insight they betray into the working of the human soul.

One thing only is to be regretted,—they are but five in number. In the name of all his future readers I venture to express the hope that the author will give us more discourses of this character, and that this little volume may be the prophecy of a larger one of similar contents.

DR. H. M. VAN NES.

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"IS NOT THIS THE CARPENTER?"

Mark, vi. 3.

MANY of us have no doubt seen in travellers' books on Palestine that most interesting illustration—"a carpenter's shop at Nazareth."

A rough wooden table—a chisel or two lying on the half-planed boards—some nails of various sizes—a saw suspended behind the door—planks propped against the wall—a litter of shavings on the ground,—that is all, except perhaps we add the earthenware pitcher on the floor with its suggestion of intolerably hot days and obstinately hard work.

*kan vord
water*

I suppose even in the stationary East a good deal must have changed in carpentry since the beginning of our era. Yet who can doubt, but that the main features of such a picture give an adequate, if not an exact idea of the kind of objects and the kind of room, on which our Lord looked day after day? First He would be amid these surroundings when quite young, to help in trifles, to watch others at work, to

carry messages to customers, and bring small payments back, examining, no doubt, with a lad's curiosity, the image and superscription on the coins He brought His father.

Jewish boys were soon put to a trade; indeed, about their twelfth or thirteenth year there were few youths in Palestine, that were not learning some handicraft. For what was fashion with the wealthy was a necessity with the poor.

It would not then be long before the youth who grew so rapidly "in knowledge and in stature, and in favour with God and man", would be working at the bench by His reputed father's side.

One can fancy what the life was like,—a peaceful idyll—yet broken by the little frets and worries, as well as by the larger perils and disappointments of our common humanity.

Calm and untroubled as the village-carpenter's lot may seem, viewed from a distance and viewed casually, there were, I doubt not, anxieties and troubles enough in it, perhaps too a good many unmerited losses and not a little unrewarded toil.

We soon lose sight of Joseph—there is no mention of him after our Lord's twelfth year—and Jesus was known to His fellow-townfolk not alone as "the carpenter's son" but as "the carpenter" himself.

And what better training could be conceived for His

ministry than just the early responsibilities of an eldest son, the family's representative and the widow's stay? *comfort*

The family was strict with the strictness of those who, having nothing in the world but religion, clasp it close, hold it firm, and grow up in a holy sobriety that borders on asceticism.

That was the trend and tendency of all God-fearing belief in those days: and the fervour of true piety, the sanctity of a life unsullied by the age, was then found nowhere on earth more sincere or real than in the homesteads of the very poor. *nothing*

What that household was, we are not left entirely to conjecture. We have only to compare two passages of Scripture, and we shall have a flood of light shining in upon the carpenter's hearth.

It was not all at once that our Lord's brothers believed in Him; but when they did, they became, one imagines, all the more impatient to make up for opportunities so long neglected. Their Christianity however did not destroy the foundations of their character and education, it only confirmed and purified them; so that, Christian as he then had become, James, as he writes his epistle, writes it still as a "business man" as the son of a "business man" that had been scrupulous to the edge of severity, whose household had been disciplined in hardness and trained to be sober, righteous, and godly in an evil world.

James might have claimed, even more emphatically

than Paul claimed, to be a "Hebrew of the Hebrews"; and from the beginning to the end of that most practical of epistles, The Epistle General of James, we seem to hear his reiteration of the fundamental note of Judaism as well as Christianity, "Faith without works is dead."

This, we must believe, is the key to the early education of our Lord.

The Epistle of James is eminently the workman's epistle, the merchant's epistle, vivid with life and energy, practical, and to the point, the result of wide experience of men as they actually are.

The faults and temptations peculiar to a mercantile career are dealt with by Apostle James almost verse by verse. And the tone and temper of that household at Nazareth may be inferred from one singularly direct definition: "Pure religion and undefiled before God and the Father is this, To visit the fatherless and widows in their affliction, and to keep themselves unspotted from the world."

But there is another source of evidence regarding our Lord's early life. Our Saviour Himself has spoken on this theme, spoken about religion as an artisan might speak to fellow-artisans.

Matthew the Publican, and John the fisherman, did not lose their knowledge of trade when they followed Jesus; and they have chronicled for us many sayings, the scope

of which might have been missed by men ignorant of commerce.

In particular did the Tax-gatherer take care to record in his report of the great sermon the broad principles of guidance that might prove of value to all who had to do with markets and with buying and selling, and getting gain.

And the hope and trust, wherewith our Lord sweetened the long labours of His poverty and obscurity, may be judged from His own words: "Seek ye first the kingdom of God, and His righteousness: and all these things shall be added unto you."

"Take therefore no anxious thought for the morrow. The morrow will take thought for the things of itself. Sufficient unto the day is the evil thereof".

"Lay up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where neither moth nor rust doth corrupt, and where thieves do not break through nor steal. For where your treasure is, there will your heart be also."

If there is a "Bible within a Bible," for merchants and for workmen, it is surely the letter of our Lord's brother, together with our Redeemer's discourse. Take the Epistle of James and the Sermon on the Mount together, study them with the view to discover what light they throw on business enterprise and trade; let the one explain and amplify and supplement the other, and you will find these two short portions of the Word of God come quivering with emotion from out the

carpenter's workshop at Nazareth into your workshop— from out the stress and strain of a fifteen years' "commercial experience" eighteen centuries ago, into your experience of to-day with its surprises and losses, its competitions and cares.

For these two portions of Scripture are the utterances of two "men of affairs"; and just because they were not ordinary men, but one an Apostle, and the other the Lord of Glory, they have given us eternal principles, principles of spiritual direction to guide us amid the bewilderments of the "struggle for existence."

They have given us, if there can be found such a thing on earth, the Christian Trader's practical manual.

1. Of that youth of our Saviour's we are told little. But we may infer much. There would be many a house in that Galilean town into which He had often entered. Wood-work was always needing repair; articles of domestic use had always to be supplied,—and if not from the workshop where our Lord laboured, it must have been from that of some competitor in the same line of trade.

What endless suggestions open up, the moment you fairly face the thought of our Saviour's daily labours and of His career as artisan and merchant! What knowledge of human nature may be obtained by the workman who goes now into this house, now into

gather from what is told
no

that, who often gets behind the scenes and views men in the privacy of domestic life. The townsmen in their homes, the countrymen driving bargains about the making or mending of cart or plough, would all be seen and lovingly studied by Him, when they were off their guard.

That contact with the world—though to one of His disposition it must have brought many a sad disillusion—was part of His preparation for knowing men, and for saving them.

Our Saviour was brought into the most testing and trying relations which one human being can sustain to another, money-relations, relations of contract for certain specified work.

The money-side of men's character is often very different from all other sides; and many a generous, warm-hearted man may be "close-fisted" in the extreme, and hard and exacting as to all he demands from others in return for payment he has made.

We have absolute proof that our Saviour must have learnt human nature well whilst he lived in retirement. The sordidness and suspicion—the readiness to overreach and find fault—the effrontery that will not scruple to use any deceit—the untrustworthiness of multitudes—these were familiar truths to Him before He began to teach.

It is just after His cleansing of the temple that we read: "Jesus did not commit himself unto them, because He knew all men, and needed not that any

should testify of man: for He knew what was in man."

This knowledge was, humanly speaking, the result of that close relation with different classes of men which only some such life as an artisan's could give. For example, there is little doubt that He would be brought into contract with competition, and see something of the meannesses men will stoop to when unprincipled, to worst their rivals and steal customers from them.

Had He been a man of wealth, that whole phase of human nature would have been hidden from Him. He might have surmised or guessed it; but could not have spoken with the same feeling or with the same sympathy as He does about forgiveness of injuries or about agreement with one's adversary or about our apprehensions regarding the future.

But further. That He knew all about debts, knew what a merchant may have to suffer from "bad debts," His parables abundantly show: and they show moreover that there was not a base expedient current in Jewish commerce, nor a mean device for exploiting good men's generosity that He did not see through. He was no ignorant enthusiast believing all men to be saints—no dreamer easily imposed on. Nay, the very reverse. Who can read of the trickery of the unjust steward—the craft of the discoverer of the hidden treasure—the stealthy sowing of the tares—the dissatisfaction of the labourers paid in full, yet insolent and clamorous because their fellows had received an extra kindness,—or of the murderous violence of the farm

servants, given a little authority in their master's absence—who can read these descriptions, and not feel instinctively the Speaker here knows “what is in man”?

Whatever secrets about humanity the workman suspects or the merchant finds out, — these our Saviour has discovered, and sounded the depths of, long ago. Such a thought is a kind of reminder of the truth: that nothing is hidden, that shall not be revealed.

2. Yet our Lord's experience as a workman has taught Him to look for and to find a “soul of good” in things called evil.

A certain legend of His boyhood deserves mention here. It is one that may possibly be true and it illustrates this loving and penetrating spirit.

At Nazareth one morning He overtook a mob of boys, who were jeering around some object and raising discordant cries. As He approached and made His way through the crowd He saw the cause of the disturbance. One of those gaunt, filthy, wild dogs—the terror of eastern villages—the type for the Hebrew of all that was despised—lay dead on the roadside. Poor, homeless creature, it had dropped there famished; and the boys had gathered round, as boys will, with riot and din, to pelt the carcase with stones. He bent for a moment down and looked pityingly upon it, then turned quietly to the now silent crowd, and as He went away said half to Himself “His teeth are whiter than pearls.”

boiling, gully

noise

Is not this Christlike—to find something worthy of praise, something even incomparably beautiful, in what the world calls loathsome?

Is it too much to say that Jesus passed through all the stages of typical commercial life—apprentice—assistant—partner—principal? Surely he occupied some such posts then, so that now we may say He has the most intimate knowledge of all that concerns them.

Where is the workman that does not feel the carpentry of Nazareth making the Saviour more real to his mind?

Where is the clerk on small means, with hard work and long hours, that cannot think restfully of the workman's bench—and the saw—and the needed pitcher of water, to cool the sacred lips? Penury, Obscurity, and Toil walking hand in hand—how many hundreds and thousands know what *that* betokens?

The eldest son of His widowed mother, the breadwinner, or the chief breadwinner for the family—that Jesus was: and are there breadwinners anywhere, or heads of families anywhere, that may not feel inspired by the thought of His resolute self-denial, as well as saved by His grace?

Perhaps you say that you have met bad treatment. You have been deceived and misled. Severe illness came your way, perhaps; and hard circumstance made a whip and drove you out to work again ere you were

fit for it. Your employers have got you somehow under their heel, and demand more, and more from you of time, and energy, and life itself. You fain would change your position, but cannot do so. Others depend upon you, entirely or in part. The taskmasters are hard; the tasks unending. And, worst of all, you may be put—in the midst of your fight with the “wolf at the door”—to some supreme spiritual trial. For misfortunes never come singly.

“Do wrong,” says the tempter just at the critical moment, “Do wrong, this once in this little matter.” “Betray your former master: divulge trade secrets: play the villain for a day or two, and all will yet be well.” “Cook these accounts; make this false statement,” says the tempter, “Do as the world round you are doing. Act basely, wickedly, cunningly. Take the money, that is not yours: no one will ever know, if you are clever; and if you are not, you can restore it by and by. Act meanly, and dishonourably; and forget God. You have an unprecedented chance of bettering yourself, and of climbing out of your misery.”

Ah, is *that* your trial? Remember how the Carpenter of Galilee withstood temptation. Remember He must have withstood temptations at Nazareth just in the same way as He did in the desert.

Man shall not live by bread alone.

Thou shalt not tempt the Lord thy God.

Thou shalt worship the Lord thy God; and Him only shalt thou serve.

making to ends meet, & tested a knife on the
in home members

attack

That is your armoury,—tested, I have no doubt, many a day before the onslaught in the wilderness—tested, and strong to protect you to-day. Try it; use it. Bear up; bear bravely; and where you cannot, like Him, grow in favour with God *and* man, grow in God's favour, seek the Father's face and make it yours to be ever about the Father's business.

hurt

The weary sultry days—the endeavour to make ends meet—the exactions of customers—the falling away down, down, of amounts received, during some half year or year—the slow ebbing of hope at the same time—the failure of all plans to set matters right—why, it was just to pass through such experiences as *these*, that the Saviour became a tradesman at all, and that too on a scale so small that every breath almost that blew made an alteration in His worldly prospects. And He came out of this furnace seven times heated, with a nature untarnished and with a heart of gold.

fight

Merchants, in this commercial age, do not go unarmed into the fray.

Do you realise that your Heavenly Master, while on earth, lived till his thirtieth year engaged in trade, and spent only three years in His ministry? Jewish trade had the reputation then of being very clever and unscrupulous; and that reputation was perhaps deserved. While Jesus must have met many dishonest people, He never lost His love towards men, His hope for them, His trust in their possibilities. And yet He saw

the trickery and deceit. Keep your heart fresh, by living with Him. Take Him with you to your ledgers — your bargainings — your employment of labour. Let Him give you courage in your ventures, and wisdom in your undertakings, which, when honest, He will not fail to bless. Let Him open your heart in consideration and sympathy to your least grateful workman and in longsuffering towards rival competitors, whether they are honourable or not. Let Him train you in forbearance and in scorn for mean advantages. Let Him inspire you to bring Christian Chivalry into the marketplace, and gain a thousand victories by courtesy and by the love that beareth, that believeth all things. "Buy the truth and sell it not." Stand out against the thoughtless mob, that worship success, that bow down to the dust before the idol of gold, and estimate all things by money.

It was an exaggeration—but it was not much of an exaggeration—when the poet said: "An honest man's the noblest work of God." Be honest in *mind*, as Jesus was. Do not make haste to be rich; nor lust after ill-gotten gains. To desire them secretly is to prepare for sudden and open fall.

Let your Ideal be high—an Ideal of integrity, culture, character, religion, which may in nothing fall short of the beauty of the King. He says: "My son, give me your heart." With Him as your companion go gladly to your day's work. Gain all you can honourably with the exercise of all your powers. Use wisely

business
arrangements
general

books of
accounts

—for high ends for yourself and others. Give liberally to every just and worthy cause. So shall you “lay up treasure in heaven,” and be going far in obedience to the command: “Be perfect, even as your Father in Heaven is perfect.”

“LEARN OF ME; FOR I AM MEEK AND LOWLY IN HEART”

Matth., xi. 29.

Nothing is more striking about our Saviour's ministry than the way in which He united in Himself the professions of Physician and of Teacher.

Though He did not call Himself the “Great Healer,” yet the people of Galilee and Judea must often have used that epithet to describe the most popular part of His work; and He never repudiated the title.

Indeed in a spiritual sense He did once refer to Himself under this name; and in any case He made it His practice both spiritually and physically to help and to cure all who had faith enough to appeal to Him — and many who had not.

Wherever He went, He found sick and “impotent folk” awaiting that healing touch which He never refused; and for many a year in Palestine His fame was simply the fame of a “Great Physician,” whose success was unprecedented in the history of the land.

Magnificent and popular, however, as that side of His public career must ever be deemed, there was

another side, hidden out of view for the most part, and far less popular, but more truly marvellous and potent,—the training of the Twelve.

For He was primarily and supremely (if we leave out of sight His redemptive work) a Prophet, an Educator, the Prince of Teachers.

He is the King of Instructors, at whose feet all may sit who care to discover the mysterious influence of soul on soul. Education in its broadest sense,—including training, instruction, repression, stimulus—formed His chief vocation, His main purpose as a man, during the brief years that intervened between His baptism and death. From Jordan's fords to Golgotha,—from the day when the Spirit descended on the unknown Galilean youth, to the day when, the centre of a nation's hate and love, He stilled His crucifixion agony, and crying "it is finished" committed Himself into His Father's hands—from the beginning to the end of His Teacher's labour,—the interval was startlingly short.

Estimated by intensity it was a lifetime, judged by its moral impetus on mankind it was as the Touch of Infinity Itself—but measured by duration, it was only two broken years and a fraction.

Three summers and three winters! Did ever leader of men amongst men accomplish aught worthy of record, aught lasting, within a period so brief? Great thinkers, founders of systems, brilliant organizers have not been

accustomed to deal with educational problems with so marvellous a rapidity. Moses had forty years for his task; but the generation he led out of slavery had to die in the wilderness almost to a man, while yet so far as the nation's spiritual training was concerned, Moses' task remained undone.

Isaiah—Paul—Socrates—Aristotle—had they not long years in which to leave their impress upon humanity? Where is the prophet, philosopher, or seer, whether in Israel or beyond it, upon whose day of teaching the sun so soon went down?

But into three years Jesus compressed so much instruction, that the mind reels to think what a potent spell His words must have cast upon all His hearers. *Carroll*

Where lay that mysterious power? How did He reach at once that highest success attainable by teacher—to train the men that afterwards taught the world?

What is the explanation?

“Work while it is day,” He said; “for the night cometh.”

Effort and energy are there; and unremitting toil. But effort is not the secret.

“All power is committed to me both in Heaven and upon earth.”

“He taught as one having authority.”

But neither is force nor authority the key to unlock men's hearts. What then?

It is very simple after all,—this magnetic quality of His,—simple, that is, when we translate it into words; yet abiding strange in its simplicity. He has told us what it is.

It is His lowliness.

“Learn of me; for I am meek and lowly of heart.”

Do you perceive its attraction?

I. It needs no elaborate proof to demonstrate how far the most privileged of the Twelve fell short of understanding Christ, or how slow they were.

Prophetic hints and warnings,—parables with subtle, sudden home-thrusts,—open admonitions,—sorrowful appeals,—how, we ask, did His intimate companions manage to turn all *these* aside? How did they succeed in keeping their eyes shut, month after month, to Truth so vividly illumined? They needed line upon line, precept upon precept. They were dull of understanding, and forgetful; indisposed to take hints, rebellious under rebukes: Twelve disappointing scholars surely! We almost lose patience, as we read, with Peter, for his brusque self-confidence, with Thomas for his incredulity, with James and John for that too ready vindictive light that sprang into their eyes, when churlish villagers were inhospitable, or fond mothers importunate that Christ should bless their little ones. We, who see the whole progress of events, feel how trying all this must have been, and how disheartening. We see how hard it must have been to

Something that
strikes to
the heart

inde

remain patient,—to labour, and strive, and wait. But through it all He remained kind. He kept pace with their slow comprehensions; He led them little by little, step by step. Every crisis, every danger, He made explanatory of unseen spiritual truth.

1. He veiled and hid from them what was too difficult or too mysterious.

“I have yet many things to say unto you, but ye cannot bear them now.”

And as we turn page after page of the Gospel story, we are continually meeting such expressions as these: “They understood not”; “They perceived not.”

What can be conceived more disappointing to a teacher than to discover that your pupils have forgotten, or have never grasped, some of the rudiments,—some commonplace,—on which the superstructure of years was supposed to be built?

That is enough to cause one to despair of such a student's career altogether! Christ never despaired, though sometimes he seems on the verge of doing so. This finding of blank ignorance where He might have expected responsive enthusiasm, was alas too common an experience. Yet, how kind He was to those who were most exasperatingly discouraging!

They quarrelled who should be first in His kingdom. He set a child in the midst; and as they admired the childish innocence, He said: “Whosoever shall humble

fact of finding

himself as this little child, the same is greatest in the kingdom of heaven."

"Whoso shall receive one such little child in my name receiveth me."

Once more that strife for pre-eminence embittered their relationship. He arose silently; girt Himself with a towel, and went round the circle, washing His disciples' feet—the Lord of all performing the menial labour of a slave!

Because He was so high, therefore He could stoop so low. And weigh the words that follow: "He that would be first must be servant of all." "I have given you an example."

Truly that was a Teacher who had a right to say: "Learn of me."

2. There was another and wider field of education in which He showed Himself lowly in heart. Far-seeing teacher as He was, He knew that there are some things which may be learnt, but cannot be taught. They come by imitation, by companionship with the instructor. They cannot be analysed or dissected. You catch the spirit of them, or the secret of them, only by watching attentively and lovingly some one who is a perfect master of the accomplishment or the art. Literary grace—artistic taste—expression in music,—who can reduce these desirable acquirements to dry mechanical details, or say, "do this, do that, and you will be a poet, an artist, a musician"? Is not

all training of capacity in these fields dependent on imitation—on our “companying with” the great masters or their works?

Who can teach tact, gentleness, delicacy of feeling except by saying “watch this or that person who is gentle, loving, kind”? So it was with much of Christ’s teaching. It comes by an inspiration. You must have the living Teacher, speaking to you living words. Everyone has the capacity for serving and obeying: but you must company with Him, journey with Him, watch Him attentively, in your heart, in your life, in your soul, just as the Twelve hung on His lips in days of old. The larger part, the better part, of all we learn from Christ, is learnt in this way.

Do not be afraid to call upon your Teacher—to seek His face—to drink in His spirit.

Think how a child learns to speak. You do not say: “hold your lips so,” “take an inspiration so”. You simply repeat the words; the child imitates. It was thus our Saviour taught men. And divine as the Saviour’s utterances were, deep as the parables were, we cannot help seeing that it was our Lord’s Personality, our Lord Himself, that made the most profound impression upon men. He has not exhausted Himself in His teaching. The Teacher is mightier than His lesson. The Eternal Word is greater than the greatest of His sayings. “Learn of *Me*”, He said; “I am lowly of heart.”

They brought of sinful woman to Him, as a test case to try His orthodoxy. He stooped and wrote upon the ground. Catching a glimpse of His pained, burning face, they learnt what they had not thought of,— what they did not dream of in connection with a legal case; they learnt shame.

The disciples clamoured for a retreat to be made before the rising storm of persecution; or that at least that He should remain in hiding. "They seek to stone thee." "I go to Jerusalem", He said and set His face steadfastly; and they learnt courage.

"Teach us how to pray", they had entreated; and He taught them the one form we still possess. But for the spirit of prayer and the resignation of it, they had to be with Him in the Garden, they had to keep before them the sayings on the cross, to hear the Intercessory Prayer and to be present at the Rejection in the Temple ere they comprehended even that one petition, "Thy will be done."

"Learn of me", He repeats. "I admit you to intimacy", He says in effect: "I conceal nothing from you that it would be good for you to know; watch with Me, pray with Me, suffer with Me; and you will triumph with Me. Learn all you can now. I will be patient with you!"

3. Perhaps the supreme quality we seek in a teacher is the giving of stimulus, let it be mental, moral, or æsthetic. Without this, learning grows cold, knowledge seems barren, and the highest intellectual effort

is robbed of half its charm. "I do not teach you philosophy" said a famous professor, "I teach you to philosophise." The born teacher is the man who can get others to work for themselves, to take pains, to disregard the toils and the drudgery and the dry details of a study. He is the man that makes every thing interesting and attractive, and shows the life that lies in Truth. Many an eminent man has hated modern languages, or mathematics, or classics, just because his teachers did not give the needful incentive. Pupils need the stimulus of an active mind. Jesus supplied this stimulus. He often did so by setting before men some problem that piqued their curiosity. He made them ask themselves, "what does it mean?"

He forced them to deliberate. He brought them up in thought easily and gently over what they knew; then all at once, gave them some "hard saying." He trained them to do His work when He was gone, to think for themselves, to stand on their own feet, and to guide others. Continuous fresh thought is always a difficult thing: especially is it so in the region of what is moral and spiritual. Close thinking is the hardest of all labour. How astonishing then is this success of Christ's,—the training of a band of Jews—fishermen and the like—to become the pillars of His new Religion which was to supersede Judaism. And all that to be accomplished in three years!

But if the strength of this stimulus lay, as it always does, in an indomitable will, the charm of it, the attrac-

tion of it, is to be sought elsewhere. The grace, the beauty, the winningness of it, lies just where He puts it:

“I am meek: I am lowly of heart.”

As scholars, we are all as backward and slow as the worst of the Twelve. Blessed be His name he is kind and patient to all. He is not a hard taskmaster. What a credential it is to the ablest disciplinarian to have it said about him—“he is meek”.

That is what learners most need in a teacher—a kindly stooping to their position. Thus they are emboldened and encouraged to learn.

The merely clever teacher cannot interest the slow witted: and he will often bewilder the quick and shrewd. They feel dwarfed beside him; and excellence seems something immeasurably distant. His very brilliance will make them lose heart.

And if the instructor, too painstaking to dazzle, is yet cold and severe, we do not for all his conscientiousness fare much better. He awes and depresses us; we are not ourselves with him; we cannot do our best. We get nervous and anxious; and are apt to think far more about escaping his censure than about making progress.

To be half mesmerised by dread is to be deprived of the use of our best faculties. We need to feel in touch with our teachers, if we would profit much by what they tell us. But once we have secured a common ground with them, possibilities open wide before us. We can promise ourselves to learn some-

insignificant

a person who is too laborious, too slow

thing from a Master, of whose interest in us we are certain, and on whose constant gentleness we may implicitly rely. "I am meek" said He. No one but a teacher knows how much it must have cost Jesus to maintain that character always.

Think how difficult it is to place oneself mentally by a pupil's side. Consider how completely men are accustomed to forget whole phases of thought through which in youth they have passed. They grow out of sympathy with their former selves, and with those who remind them of what they used to be. It is never easy to understand the temper and disposition of those who have had less education than we ourselves.

And it is always a most wearisome task to begin at the beginning of any familiar subject and lead an undisciplined mind step by step over the well-known ground. That is what Jesus did.

Tact, self-repression, consideration, love, all these were daily requisite, were put to a daily strain; Christ remained throughout patient and hopeful.

The Jesuits hold that the test of a teacher is his success with children. If a man be a successful instructor of infants, painstaking, attractive, and clear, then we may be sure he can teach everyone all he knows. Christ has this power. He is kind and loving; He is inspiring to the dull.

And observe that His meekness is true meekness, for there is character behind it. It is not insipidity or timidity. Though gentle and unresentful, He, like all

*knack to be pro-
ving*

not returning evil for evil

good teachers, discouraged idle and harmful curiosity. He kept the scholars in their place; He maintained His dignity; He was Master. Mere intellectual puzzles He put aside: theoretical questions He made at once practical, by giving them some direct and personal application.

“*Are there many* that be saved?” was a question they once put to him. “*Strive to enter in,*” was the reply. “Lord, what shall this man do?” they asked at another time. “If he tarry till I come, what is that to thee; *follow thou me.*” One of His last communications is of this nature. They had inquired about His purposes: “Lord, will thou at this time restore again the kingdom to Israel?” And he said: “It is not for you to know the times or the seasons, which the Father hath put in his own power . . . *Ye* shall be witnesses unto Me—unto the uttermost part of the earth.

II. But the Saviour’s words imply still more. He was One Who was Himself encountering difficulties similar in kind to those that distressed His disciples. He was working out the problem—how to live in perfect subjection to the Father’s will in an evil world. He was a learner. His whole being was strenuously bent on accomplishing what men were bidden to accomplish. He could say “Follow me”: and He could also say “I am with you.”

Every successful teacher must be a student. His

mind must be active, fresh and keen; and there is no way to keep it so but by doing student's work. His will must be braced by meeting and overcoming obstacles. His moral sympathy must be preserved by the constant endeavour to realise the arduousness of mental toil; to feel again the joy of intellectual victory; and yet never to forget how insignificant the result may be of the hardest day's work.

The ideal Educator will have many fields of study. Research, we are told, is a condition of his success. But however wide may be his intellectual interests, he cannot afford to pass hastily by the subject he teaches, though he may have known it well in the past. He must live in it; else he will never attain the influence which his powers might lead him to expect.

And if he is not in any sense a student, his influence will wane and leave him.

The teaching of Jesus, to Whom all things were delivered of the Father, from the first is Spiritual Truth, without blunder or mistake. We cannot imagine Him changing, retracting, anything He said, or apologising for anything He did. Notwithstanding all this, the one great fact about Christ's human nature which we need continually to keep before us is, that He *grew*, He *learnt*, He made progress.

“Though He were a Son, He learnt obedience by

the things that He suffered"; and all His schooling is in His memory still.

He passed through the stages of human life. He has sympathy with the schoolboy as well as the master, with the tender maiden in the home as well as with the parents.

Every day of Christ's life taught Him something: and His hour did not come, till He had completely learnt human nature from within.

In the capacity of a Teacher, eager to learn, He says: "I am meek, lowly in heart."

III. We see from our Saviour's words here, that there are times, when we may vindicate ourselves, and claim a hearing for what we are or for what we have done.

Our Saviour is gentle; He deprecates boasting; He condemns self-assertion. Yet when needful, He claims His position, and keeps it. He takes His rightful place. Wherever there is responsibility, there must be authority. He claims to be a true Teacher.

1. The conscientious teacher has a right, to be regarded as such. He has a right to our respect.

Christ has sanctified and blessed two professions pre-eminently. These professions are proverbially those in which men receive scant gratitude. They are called the "thankless professions:" and they are the most responsible. Money cannot reward a good teacher;

Small

neither can it recompense a good doctor. People get well; and forget the Physician. Children get on at school; *they* are praised, but the teacher is too often forgotten. And if, in severe competition of life, that same teacher is less successful the next year, he is blamed.

His success too frequently only raises the standard of what is demanded of him. And comparative failure may mean ruin.

This is the world's judging, not the Christian's. It is most noteworthy that Christ vindicates His character as Teacher.

Remember your teachers. Some are gone; you have only a dim memory of them. Some were harsh, you would say. Forgive the harshness: remember the benefit. You owe them much. Remember too your children's teachers. Give them encouragement and help. Choose them carefully. Give them your confidence—your respect—your affection: these surely they deserve to have.

They are the rulers of the nation. Now more than ever do they hold the destinies of the world in their hand. And where they are honourable and upright, warm-hearted and God-fearing—whether men or women—they are the uncrowned monarchs of the earth. Nay more: every one is the type of the Heavenly Master who gives in His own Person the supreme rule of Education: "Learn of me: for I am meek and lowly of heart."

But as you value your children's eternal welfare, do not place them under the care of anyone, however able, who hates Christ and scorns religion. To do so is in all likelihood to throw away your child's life.

2. Let no teacher, however downcast, close his heart to the inspiration and encouragement of the Saviour's example and the Saviour's words. No lot in life is more magnificent than yours. You have the making of the future largely in your hands. The responsibility may well inspire awe: for verily, the teaching of the driest science is the contact of soul and soul. Only the Last Day will finally show, how great your influence has been for good or for evil.

huddles comel
orine Your personal religion, your devotion to duty, your likeness to Christ will penetrate every nook and cranny of your official life. If you are a good man, you will bless the most refractory scholar in your classes.

If you are a man of corrupt heart and life, you will be daily injuring even the best of your pupils — and one turns away shuddering from the thought of what the consequences may be.

Take Christ, the great Teacher, with you every day. Let Him encourage you. He can do it; for He knows how hard, how disappointing a teacher's life very often is. Let Him stand by your side, to be a source of inexhaustible patience, and to still that impetuous heart of yours, indignant at some shameful

want of earnestness, at some misconduct, or at some wanton wrong.

Let Him give you courage in the midst of your crosses and losses, in the midst of all "fallings off" and failures—when your spirit sinks to see bright promise unfulfilled—precious time misspent—talents hidden or misused. Let Him give you hope—when you see germs of evil, and find them almost too vital to destroy.

Let the Prince of Teachers be with you every day. His method means success both for Time and for Eternity. Teach in His way; and you will one day reap His harvest. He Himself has promised your reward.

"Well done, good and faithful servant; thou hast been faithful over a few things; I will make thee ruler over many things: enter thou into the joy of thy Lord."

with the intention of doing something bad

"AND HE HEALED THEM."

Matth., iv. 24.

It is a dangerous moment for a man's character, when he achieves his first easy success. Popularity, whether merited or not, so it be only sudden, is a touchstone of human weakness at once the most delicate and the most humiliating.

For most men the consciousness of latent powers may lie long dormant or be half awake, and no harm done. But the day when these powers in any one become active, and when urged by a strenuous will they enter the predestined arena where victory awaits them, is a day fraught for the moral nature with untold spiritual peril.

For the temptation of such periods comes as much from within as from without; and men are slow to notice their motives degenerating, or growing selfish and narrow, when all the while they are engaged in doing much helpful and most necessary work with the applause of their fellows.

It is a curious thing that our Saviour was brought

to experience all the worst dangers of popularity as well as those of persecution and betrayal.

At the very outset of His public life He attracted universal attention and aroused universal enthusiasm by His miracles of healing. And these miracles created everywhere in men's minds the feeling that they might rely on His kindness, wherever they met Him, wherever He went.

As this feeling increased, it mingled with a great many different and less worthy elements; and general expectation was ever ready to lay out a course and propound a plan of action for our Lord, before our Lord had made His wishes or His purpose known.

By becoming a public teacher and healer Jesus found His freedom of action in danger of being limited: and all through His ministry He had to contend with an obstinate popular prejudice which would have dragged down and degraded His powers to the level of those of a mere "wonder worker."

His followers begged Him to perform feats, to dazzle the nation with something extraordinary and astonishing. Their appetite grew every day for some fresh "sign." Whether it was connected with cures or not, this insatiable craving for excitement demanded public show, overwhelming display. Against this demand our Redeemer's conduct was a ceaseless protest. Inducements were offered at every turn to make Him forego His own chosen aims, and seek personal advantage; but He set them all aside. And as He refused to

listen to the voice of the multitude, or swerve from His course, persecution inevitably followed, the more bitter that it came from those who had once been friends.

Leaving the wilderness and its temptations behind, our Lord entered a world which was in some sort a wilderness on an ampler scale—with the temptations uninterruptedly repeated. And His most loving and sympathetic acts were just those that exposed Him most to trial and to the pressure of a public opinion, no less misguided and dangerous on the part of His friends than on that of His foes.

Many a physician has gained a cheap notoriety by the use of methods which he knew would be rapid and agreeable, but not really or permanently effective. Reputations have been built up in that way before now, temporary and precarious, it is true, but sufficient to give a struggling practitioner that hold on the good will of his neighbours, which to the ambitious is the first round on the ladder of fortune.

Let public confidence be once established in a man's ability and in his integrity, and provided only he keeps up appearances, there is hardly any limit to the incompetence, or the self-seeking, or the baseness that the public will calmly allow. But he must beware of offending prejudice, or running counter to what is expected of him in those minor details of conduct, of which the multitude constitutes itself judge.

Our Lord took the opposite course. He would not

set Himself merely to please men, in things great or small. Time-serving His soul loathed. He would not stoop to make compromises, or yield to ignorance in order to disarm it. He came to heal. The world was perishing; civilization was sinking, slowly but surely, under its own cruelty and lust. Men were dying everywhere to all that was righteous and worthy and pure.

It was no flatterer that was needed--but a Divine Physician, the Lord from Heaven.

The sudden change from perfect obscurity to wide renown, from the artisan's scantily-paid labours to the first place of influence in the land, was surely a supreme test of character; and few points are more noteworthy about our Lord's human nature, than the firmness with which He adhered to His own Ideal and plan of life. It was that firmness, indeed,—that moral integrity,—which led Him on through His mission, and brought Him at last to Calvary.

When we think of Jesus being exposed to the dangers of popularity, we almost necessarily think first of His cures. True, His early hearers were much impressed with His teaching; they wondered at the gracious words that proceeded from His mouth. But this wonder soon changed into something very like resentment, when to His loving invitations and promises He added spiritual doctrines—doctrines about

His person—"hard sayings"—which so offended many well-meaning disciples, that "they went back," and "walked no more with Him."

The Saviour's miracles attracted more notice than His teaching; and among the miracles none were so popular as those of healing. The other miracles for the most part were occasional and unforeseen—like the walking on the Lake—or the miraculous draught of fishes. But on His healing-work men had got to rely. The cures were constant and regular. The sick were everywhere; and He never turned any away. Men's first thought on hearing of the Saviour's approach was: "Let us bring the diseased and weakly amongst us, and have them made whole."

Such a natural course of conduct was always successful. The Lord never shrank from His self-imposed task. But He shunned publicity. How often did not He warn the recipients of blessing to keep their recovery as far as possible a secret! He sought neither fame nor gain. He refused to be a portent-monger, or "make capital" out of His own kindness. But the sight of actual suffering never failed to touch Him; and let the blind, and the palsied, and the impotent, and the distraught come to Him in whatever numbers they might. "He laid His hands upon them all, and healed them."

That the sun would rise, was not more certain than that Jesus would heal the afflicted who believed in Him. Men got to depend upon His lovingkindness as on a law of Nature. And they were right.

1. The first characteristic of Jesus as a Physician was His *disinterestedness*. This quality in Him was not only negative, refusing to do for men, what would ultimately harm them, it was positive too, in that he braved all danger to carry out the methods of healing which alone could benefit the world.

It is not to be asked of physicians that they will devote themselves to the cure of disease and take no remuneration for doing so. In the field of medical practice as well as in all other fields "the labourer is worthy of his hire." He deserves his reward in full for his care and attention, and also some recompense for the years of self-denial, by means of which he has acquired his skill.

But a physician, though accepting payment in full, is yet to be disinterested. To be true to his calling he needs to do what Jesus did—aim primarily at healing and benefiting men. It is an ignoble thing, when he makes profits the criterion of success,—perhaps still more ignoble, when he humours the whims of the ignorant to their own disadvantage.

What the temptations may sometimes be in a scientific career of high promise—temptations to time-serving and looking only on the material side of things—we may all remember when we think of the tragic failure of Lydgate in that book of analysed motives, *Middlemarch*.

There are certain very obvious lessons in this con-

nection that a great many otherwise thoughtful people are prone to ignore. Justice and fair-play should teach us, not needlessly to impose restrictions upon our physicians—or make unreasonable demands—even regarding the cure of petty ailments. Let their earnest warnings against luxury, drinking customs, intemperance, idleness, overwork, never pass unheeded. It is not their interest to speak so: when they do, let us not make it too hard for them to be straightforward, but honour and obey them.

Our Lord, the Physician of the soul, is disinterested: for He seeks only our good. There is but one adequate recognition of disinterestedness; and that is Love. Only by our loving Him can we show our gratitude for His ministry of grace.

2. Another characteristic of Jesus as Physician was His *insight*.

It is this capacity that most distinguishes one physician from another. The best means for treating separate disorders soon become known to the great body of well-informed students of medicine.

Discoveries are made yearly and tested by wide experience; the sum total of scientific knowledge is gradually increased; and the wonders of yesterday become the commonplaces of to-day. But the extension of knowledge never can do away with the necessity for thought, for that quick and accurate reasoning on premises—some of which may be obscure—which we call diagnosis.

It is this divining faculty,—the resultant of natural ability and strict training—that marks out one man from another. Skill in this respect makes differences so vast between able students who started on equal terms, that one seems gifted with an almost miraculous instinct for finding out what is wrong with his patients, whilst another blunders along in the dark.

Our Lord had this faculty. Jesus divined the life and motives of those that followed Him and sought His aid. How varied, for example, was His treatment of the diseased! To one, he give a command; to another a process was prescribed; in the case of a third He himself would treat the patient in some way designedly strange. On many He laid His hands: some He cured at a distance. The touch of the hem of His garment sufficed for some: others needed to be long importunate in prayer. The widow's son He raised from the bier unasked. Lazarus, "whom He loved," was allowed, in spite of the sisters' message, to die and to remain four days in the grave.

The case of each was separately considered and separately treated. The woman in the press came diffident, trembling. Her timidity called for encouragement. She was met according to her need. He cured her before He turned.

The blind man whom Jesus led out of the town, had been brought by his friends. His malady had deadened his power of hoping or expecting anything.

He needed to be roused from his indifference, and brought into mental contact with the Deliverer. Hence that strange walk—away from all companions—the touch of the hand—the questioning.

A stereotyped religious experience is not asked of Christians. The Saviour approaches men differently, treats men differently. What sounds the most hidden depths of *your* nature, leaves your neighbour unimpressed. Then unexpectedly *he* is carried in thought into the presence of the Searcher of Hearts at the mention of some truth you deem commonplace. The spiritual Physician dealt with men in accordance with their idiosyncrasies.

Our Saviour's insight is further to be seen in His care to treat—not so much the symptoms of disease, as the disease itself. When the sick of the palsy was lowered down from the roof to the space in front of Jesus as He taught, the Great Teacher stopped and said: "Son, thy sins are forgiven thee!" The cause of the malady was touched. It was this insight too that rebuked the hasty judgment of His disciples. "Lord, who did sin—this man or his parents, that he was born blind?" The answer was: "Neither hath this man sinned, nor his parents: but that the works of God should be made manifest in him."

We are told that there are more than a thousand distinct maladies, to which the human body is liable. The moral nature is perhaps liable to a still larger number. Who has not felt what it is to have a mind

ill at ease—a spirit, restless and dissatisfied—a heart, crushed and sore? You may be wounded by a sense of injustice—agonised by irremediable wrong—tortured by remorse. Night and day may be filled for you with the accusations of conscience speaking with voice more awful than the thunder of Sinai. Who can enumerate the mind's disorders? The madness of pride—the soreness of vanity—the bitterness of hate—the prostration of a great disappointment—the aching void of some irrevocable loss—all vain regrets—all unhappy memories—chafings—rebellion—despair—these are but a few out of the unnumbered maladies which may afflict the soul. Ah, when He opens the prison-house, and heals broken-hearted, what human misery is there not found there! Think not: every man suffers as every other; but be convinced that there is not one pang or distress He does not know of and cannot cure.

One evil is common to all—the degenerate will—the stony heart. Look on the cross, and say, does He not melt our hearts and give us fresh hope for ourselves and for the world? For us He pays, for sinners, for His murderers: “Father! forgive them—they know not what they do.”

3. It is not every physician who is *sympathetic*. Perhaps it even seems, as if an excess of this feeling unfitted the physician for curing others.

Jesus found indeed His physical capacity taxed to the utmost by His works of healing. “There went

virtue out of him;" for He took trouble—He felt for the afflicted—He suffered with them.

His curing them was purchased at an enormous cost: and after almost every occasion where he healed multitudes, we read that He withdrew Himself for a time. There was however a reserve strength of will and purpose in our Saviour which prevented Him being overcome by His emotions. He was always master of Himself; and being so strong and calm, being so resolved to benefit men and bless them, He never allowed Himself to be enervated by any luxury of grief or sudden sight of pain.

In how many hundreds of ways that sympathy must have been shown!—He spake gracious words. He was gracious in all His ways. He was gentle. Pained as He often was regarding men's conduct, he never obtruded His own distress upon others. Much as He longed for sympathy, He never burdened others with His cares.

He went about doing good, alike when He had disappointment in His heart,—being "troubled in spirit,"—and when in holy joy He poured out His thanks to the Lord of Heaven and earth.

It is the considerate physician who is mindful of such little particulars. "A merry heart doeth good like medicine."

It is said that from the necessity of being cheerful to their patients, doctors cultivate the habit so far

that the profession as a whole outdistances all others in its sunny hopefulness and healthy natural joy.

However this may be, Christ was truly the Good Physician, kindly and sympathetic, weeping at the grave of Lazarus—blessing the marriage feast—taking the children in His arms—and having ever ready on His lips the words of comfort: Weep not. Fear not. Be of good cheer.

How tenderly He cares for the feelings of Mary! How mindful He is of His mother! And after Peter's fall, with what delicate insistence He conveys the message to him: "Go, tell my disciples *and* Peter, that I am risen." With what considerate love he repeats the question: "Lovest thou me?" to allow the shame-faced Apostle the slight reparation of a threefold pledge.

Nor is that all. Kind as all this is, there is something in His treatment of men that is kinder still—something that betokened, if that is conceivable, a Divine Love.

He probed deep in order to effect a radical cure. It is no true sympathy that takes half measures in cases of life and death. From the very first that Word of His was sharp, piercing to the dividing asunder of soul and spirit.

"Whosoever therefore shall break one of these least commandments and shall teach men so, he shall be called least in the kingdom of heaven."

"Except your righteousness shall exceed the righte-

ousness of the Scribes and Pharisees, ye shall in no case enter into the kingdom of heaven."

"If thy right hand offend thee, cut it off, and cast it from thee—for it is profitable for thee, that one of thy members should perish and not thy whole body should be cast into hell."

"Many will say to me in that day, Lord, Lord, have, we not prophesied in Thy name? and in Thy name have cast out devils? and in Thy name done many wonderful works?"

"And then will I profess unto them: I never knew you: depart from me, ye that work iniquity."

How cutting and personal as well as terrible and awe-inspiring were His denunciations of the Pharisees. Woe after woe is pronounced. Every one of the eight touches some well known abuse. Every new sentence is like the sinking of the scalpel deeper.

"Woe unto you, Scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! for ye devour widow's houses, and for a pretence make long prayer: therefore ye shall receive the greater damnation. Ye pay tithe of mint, and anise and cummin, and have omitted the weightier matters of the law: judgment, mercy and faith—these ought ye to have done, and not to leave the others undone."

"For ye are like unto whited sepulchres, which indeed appear beautiful outward, but are within full of dead men's bones, and of all uncleanness."

"Even so ye also outwardly appear righteous unto men, but within ye are full of hypocrisy and iniquity."

What was the result of these rebukes? At the time, little that was visible. But not long after, when newly-ordained Stephen preached Christ, "multitudes of priests became obedient to faith"! The sharp words had surely helped to heal the worst of all maladies: a malady deemed almost incurable—Pharisaism.

Did you ever think of the kindness Jesus showed—and still shows—in His *reticence*?

The far-seeing Physician does not alarm or bewilder the sick patient by telling too much, or by discussing the scientific principles of the intended cure.

There is nothing needlessly brought forward by Christ regarding controverted doctrines. It is all personal: and it is all hopeful.

"Come unto me, all ye that labour, and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest."

Perhaps the most astonishing fact about our Lord's sympathy is that it rendered Him dependent on men.

The surgeon with iron nerves, and a hard heart, can do his work at any time and upon all variety of patients. The more mechanical cures can be performed equally well at all times. But the healing work of Jesus was essentially a spontaneous, natural act; it was as far as possible removed from what is mechanical. While He could have forced men to do His will, His way was to persuade them, to draw them, to induce them. Where men opposed, He failed.

Regarding one town we read: There He could do no mighty works, because of their unbelief.

The Good Physician cannot heal those who shrink from Him and wince at His touch.

The condition of His helping is, that men shall have confidence in His power.

He is with us: and all our transgressions and defects are open to His view. He longs to remove them—to wipe out the memory of that wrong—to give sweet kindly thoughts—to purify the imagination—to wash the soul from stain. He is waiting to be gracious. No more solemn thought can enter into the mind of man than this: we hinder His work, if we refuse to give Him our confidence. For confidence in His Love is the only bond of union with the Divine. But it is a bond for evermore.

Bless the Lord! and forget not all His benefits, Who forgiveth all thine iniquities—who healeth all thy diseases—Who redeemeth thy life from destruction—Who crowneth thee with lovingkindness and tender mercies.

“ IF THOU HADST KNOWN.”

Luke, xix. 42.

Is there any exclamation in our language so bitterly, so pathetically suggestive, or any which condenses into one breath so much of human history and human passion, as the exclamation “Too late,” or the phrase “If I had only known”?

Used about ourselves, these words sound like the utterances of despair: used regarding others, they are the pronouncing of a woe, made all the more bitter by our feeling an ineffable pity for the sufferer’s mistake—“If *thou* hadst only known.”

What lost privileges and lost opportunities,—what wilfulness, perhaps, and waywardness, may be hidden behind that “if”! Self-elected blindness may be there, and darkness “chosen rather than the light”. For failure to know is in certain cases grievous sin.

Not always, however, thank God! All ignorance is not blameworthy. There always will be many things

which we cannot possibly know about our circumstances, which yet would be extremely valuable to know.

The limitations of our nature, of our occupation, of our experience, hem us in on every side. We cannot perceive, we cannot find out, all about our lives we should wish.

This is the ignorance that is not culpable, seeing it arises from circumstance; and we must not mourn too much over it, or repine too much about it, for we cannot help it.

With the kindest intentions in the world we make mistakes, we fall into error; while doing our very best. God, who is merciful, will forgive us all that. One of the highest praises ever bestowed by Him on human creature was: "She hath done what she could."

But there is an ignorance that is most blameworthy; nay even, that is conscious guilt—ignorance that is avoidable—ignorance that is both cause and consequence of wrong doing—the resisting of God's Spirit.

Of *that* our Saviour speaks. It is that calls forth His tears. And are not the "Saviour's tears" the most terrible of all preachers?

You remember when they fell, and why.

Who can ever forget the "Triumphal Entry," and the unexpected prediction, and the broken-hearted lament.

Stand on the brow of Olivet and watch. It is a

Spring morning—the week before the Passover—the loveliest season in the year.

But we do not look at the carpet of wild flowers on the grassy slopes or in the valley below; nor allow the eye to rest beyond one moment on the clefts where hyacinth and anemone rival the splendours of the sky.

Look, yonder is Bethany, the little town, where Jesus wrought that deed of mercy but a day or two ago,—the raising of Lazarus.

The hamlet lies amid the silence of the hills. But listen! Is not the stillness broken by the far-off murmur of human voices? And see! Away there on the waggon-road that leads from Bethany to Jerusalem, descending from the plateau of rock, on which the village stands—coming into view more plainly every instant,—is a pilgrim band.

Under the trees, past the green fields, keeping to the highway, the company approaches, eagerness in their tones and gestures, yet orderly and reverent; for the Twelve are there, and in their midst One, Who raised the dead—Jesus the Master.

A cry of joy makes us turn in the other direction—towards Jerusalem. A second company is in sight, hastening forward tumultuously. Running on with joyous speed, with palm-branches in their hands, they have already seen their friends; and soon have met them: and you can hear the echo of that shout of welcome with which the city-pilgrims greet their Lord—
“Hosanna, Hosanna!”

They have come forth to lead Him in triumph to the capital; and thither now the concourse moves. The throng is dense. But as they slowly wind their way along the valley, a halt is called over against the village Bethphage: and when the crowd clears around the Redeemer we see Him giving orders to two of the disciples; and all wait expectant till the messengers return.

Jesus at last will accept kingly honours. He who has traversed so many weary miles on foot, will at last ride the few remaining furlongs into the city, not as an earthly conqueror—on horseback or in the victor's chariot,—but as the rulers and prophets of Israel rode, "meek and sitting upon an ass, and a colt, the foal of an ass." As king he would enter Jerusalem, King of the Jews, Heir of David's royal line; and His entry should carry with it every circumstance of symbolic, typic, and prophetic truth.

The disciples return with the foal, found as He had directed. They spread their garments on the colt, and set their Lord thereon. They unwrap their cloaks, and stretch them on the path. They cut down branches from the trees, and strew them along the way. They twine palm-leaves together, and throw them at His feet.

They went together—the united company,—the welcoming city-pilgrims in the front, the travellers

from Bethany behind, and in the midst Israel's promised King.

Gradually the long procession swept over the first ridge, where for an instant a glimpse is caught of the still distant city.

It was but a flicker of the Temple roof that came to view, a hint of what lay there—no more. But it was enough for the excited throng. There below them they could see Mount Zion, and the towers that rose where once the palace of King David stood.

There, yonder, was David's city. Here, with them, was David's Son, the Messiah, the Deliverer.

How the words would pass from lip to lip! How the fire would leap from heart to heart!

Till now they had greeted Him with "Hosannas." Would they not add something bolder, something more?

Thrilled as by a common inspiration, the multitude with one accord broke through all self-repression; and scarce knowing what they said, raised a triumphant song of joy, and rent the air again and again with praises to Jehovah and with welcome to His Son.

"Hosanna, hosanna to the Son of David! Blessed be the King that cometh in the name of the Lord! Peace in Heaven, and glory in the highest!"

Broken utterances perhaps, many of them. But the

shout rang through the long defile ; and the Pharisees' hearts sank. "The world is gone after Him," they said. And so it had—for the moment.

But meantime the company has passed on ; and the sight, that so stirred their emotions, is hidden behind the shoulder of the hill they climb, Mount Olivet.

The view is cut off, but only till they reach the final ridge.

Then, as in a flash, the whole scene is before them. Like a magnificent panorama unrolled, the surroundings of "mountain-built Jerusalem" lie outstretched at their feet, clear in the crystal light.

There was the green waving foliage of the valleys ; of Jehoshaphat near by, opening into the shadowy purple of Kidron ; while in the distance the threads of smoke hung faint over the gloom of Hinnom.

Then the city itself rivetted every eye ; its massive walls and dusky battlements resting beneath upon the crags ; then rising above these, tier upon tier, the frowning towers and lordly palaces known to story : while high over all and dazzling in its splendour, with marble pinnacle and gilded roof, the Temple shone, a "mass of gold and snow."

O city of ten thousand memories, city of peace and privilege, Jerusalem of prophecy ! canst thou call up no joy upon the face of thy Deliverer ? Canst thou not bring gladness to thy King ? Is it only the eager

and the ignorant, the fickle and forgetful, thou canst affect?

It might seem so.

For even when the shouts rang loudest, and the songs were most triumphant; when, in their devotion the throng had reached an enthusiasm, ready—it might seem—not only to “hail Him Lord,” but to die, if need be, in obedience to His word,—the moment men might have deemed the proudest of His life, and in itself fit recompense for years of disappointment,—then and there, amid the plaudits and the joy, He has turned away in anguish; and gazing on the city He loved, has pronounced its doom.

The ashen pallor of His face, the quivering of His frame, the pent-up pity welling forth in fast falling tears, have all their reason.

He sees what none beside Him can.

The present has vanished; the future looms up vivid and awful.

Looking forward not merely four days more, but forty years, He perceives the end.

He sees not only the day when the “hosannas” have given place to cries of “Crucify Him.” He sees the final leaguer of the fated city.

Closer and closer around these walls, they come—the enemies, the armed conquerors.

Closer and closer, from this mountain and from that, and from all the surrounding hills, the siege is pressed,

by trench and palisade, by starvation and strategy, by every artifice of war.

The outer defences are stormed. The Temple flames to heaven, burnt by the destroyer, who yet meant to save it; and as it burns, throws lurid light on the nameless horrors of a universal massacre.

The last desperate valour of the garrison proves unavailing to save the citadel or save themselves: and Jerusalem, the abode of holiness, the home of the Prophets, is razed to the ground and destroyed; its streets slippery the while with human blood; and the wood of its aforetime green valleys failing to supply crosses enough, whereon to crucify the miserable survivors.

That was His vision; and the Saviour wept aloud and uncontrolled.

But to this appeal, as to so many more, there was no response. The plotters plotted; the pilgrims wondered; the heedless were unmoved.

Did you ever think of the seeming waste of wisdom in Christ? It is a terrible thought, enough to have broken a human heart.

There was the Saviour, with treasures of wisdom, with perfect knowledge of what men needed, with infinitely wise adaptation of His strength to meet those

needs, with skill to cure the sin-sick soul, with longing desire to lead men through all the tangled paths of trial, to deliver them from sin and sin's power, and bring them safe to His Father.

There was the Saviour, with His wisdom, His sympathy, His insight into the human heart, with His infinite help, with everything that man could need—all to be had for the asking--all thrown away! How are we to understand it? The wisdom of the parent placed at the disposal of the child: the wilful child turning obstinately from all aid and advice, and going his own sad, wicked way—that is the picture. Voluntary peril, needless ruin, can anything be conceived more pitiful?

“O Jerusalem, Jerusalem, thou that killest the prophets, and stonest them that are sent unto thee, how often would I have gathered thy children together, even as a hen gathereth her chickens under her wings, and ye would not! Behold, your house is left unto you desolate.”

JERUSALEM refused to know—until it was too late. And then—the things belonging unto her peace were hid from her eyes.

What things were there? What truths did she reject? Was she not passionately attached to the very letter of her Law?

True; and that was just her ruin.

The Past was turned into a lifeless tradition of

observances and words, and made her idol: but the living Present and God's message therein were ignored. Tradition was worshipped; God forgotten. Such at least was the religion of her spiritual leaders; and the people too often followed blindly.

And they failed to see what Christ revealed — whether concerning man's sin — or God's Fatherhood — or His own Sacrifice.

1. It behoved them to "know themselves" — to know their own weakness — to know their own guilt. And Jesus was the true Revealer. In almost every discourse He touched, in some manner or other, upon man's sin. And His whole life was a declaration of God's Holiness. His words and acts convicted men before the tribunal of their own consciences. And His teaching was explicit: "Except a man be born again he cannot see the kingdom of God." "And this is the condemnation, that light is come into the world and men loved darkness rather than light, because their deeds were evil."

He revealed man to himself. But they refused to be taught.

2. And it behoved them to know what Christ revealed about God. The Fatherhood of God was our Saviour's constant theme. "My Father," — "Your Father," — "Our Father in Heaven," are expressions on which He seems to dwell lovingly, as though to make men realise what elsewhere He teaches.

God is not a hard taskmaster or an inexorable judge:
He is our Father.

And how did He interpret the Father?

No words of Scripture are better known than those of the parable that tell us of His love. "I will arise," said the Prodigal in the far country; "and go to my father."

"But when he was yet a great way off, his father saw him, and had compassion and ran and fell on his neck and kissed him . . . and said, Bring forth the best robe, and put it on him; and put a ring on his hand, and shoes on his feet: and bring hither the fatted calf and kill it; and let us eat and be merry: For this my son was dead and is alive again; he was lost, and is found."

That is the revelation of God. The earthly father is not more loving than the Heavenly. And Christ compels us to understand these words of His. For had He not already laid down the principle: "If ye then being evil, know how to give good gifts unto your children, *how much more* shall your Father which is in heaven give good things to them that ask Him?

Jesus declared the Father. But the world would have none of His teaching.

3. Another truth they should have laid to heart was—His own approaching Sacrifice. He must needs

suffer. "The good shepherd giveth his life for the sheep."
"The son of man came not to be ministered unto, but to minister and to give his life a ransom for many."

Man's sin—God's Fatherhood—the Redeemer's Sacrifice—it behoved them to know what Jesus taught on these themes. These things concerned their peace.

But to these things they turned a deaf ear. They hardened their hearts. They would not learn.

Therefore their day—their time of visitation—passed by unredeemed—never to return.

There is for us all a day of grace. God deals with us as He dealt with Jerusalem. He has given us a period wherein to repent of sin and seek His favour. It is a poor short-sighted life that merely busies itself about the present and gives no thought to the future in this world. And it is a mark of true manhood to abstain from present ease for any worthy end, and to refuse to pledge the future for the enjoyment of the hour.

Our day of grace is short.

"Watch therefore for ye know neither the day nor the hour wherein the son of man cometh."

But there are special seasons. All parts of our life are not alike. In certain moments the Kingdom of God seems to be brought very near. These moments are times of visitation.

And they do not necessarily bring with them dis-

aster or affliction. It is a great mistake to suppose that only sad hours are spiritually important or spiritually decisive. On the contrary the Divine visitation may be a time of happiness and success. It may be heralded with joy and peace as well as by disappointment or bereavement. None the less is it testing and final.

Our Lord's ministry was in many ways far less terrible than that of the Baptist. He was not austere. He came eating and drinking; he companied with Publicans and sinners. The timid were encouraged by Him: the outcast and the stranger were certain of receiving a glad welcome from Him; children delighted in His society.

His mission brought pardon and blessing; it brought happiness and hope. Yet that ministry was, above any period in the people's history, a time of visitation.

Nations—families—individuals have all these seasons of privilege.

An emperilled principle needs to be maintained—some great wrong set right—some sacrifice made. The nation must rise to the occasion; and be content to forego prestige for the sake of Justice. At such a crisis the community are being given their opportunity: they are being weighed in the balances. Will they be worthy?

Testimony has to be borne to unpopular truth; an

attack has to be led on some entrenched evil of the day. Will the church, in spite of odium and opposition, take a bold stand for the Right?

Or is it a family that is in question? Circumstances have perhaps called them to some great exercise of forbearance or magnanimity; or duty points to the incurring of new responsibilities which may entail serious hardship; or it may be that the changes of life have broken up the old home-circle, and the members as they scatter far and wide find, at every step of the way, some fresh trial of their courage and their Faith. In all these cases there is the application of a subtle moral test.

But, after all, it is the individual that is most concerned with these seasons of opportunity. A man is suddenly awakened to Divine Truth. Words are heard or read, which open a new vista in life. Thoughts are enforced, which glorify patience, obedience, self-denial, in a quite unexpected and quite irresistible way. You have read a good book: and henceforward the world wears a changed look; and the possibility of giving every energy of your nature to the service of God is brought home to you.

Some loved one has died, and his death has made you think. You are on the point of making new resolves—of leading an altered life. Let not the occasion pass. It is your time of visitation.

Jerusalem might have known. It had the prophets;

it had John the Baptist. Thousands, who had confessed their sins and been baptized in Jordan, had heard the Saviour's teaching. They had gone away back; they had shirked the cross; they preferred ease and comfort; they despised a lowly Messiah; they had set their hearts on a political and national triumph,—and scorned what alone can constitute the foundation of social prosperity—Righteousness—Fidelity—Love. Hence the destruction of their city. It was no arbitrary judgment. Amongst other saving truths Christ was offering them right conceptions of their function as a people. He did all that could be done to save them from fanaticism—from national death. They would not be wise in time: and their own blind prejudice and foolish ambition proved their ruin.

It was the working out of their own madness. "O Israel, thou hast destroyed thyself!"

There was a patriot's heart as well as a Saviour's, pained to agony, when our Lord saw they had rejected Him—and a patriot's lament, as well as a Saviour's, is sobbed forth in that wail over lost souls and a ruined nation.

"If thou hadst known the things which belong unto thy peace! but now, they are hid from thine eyes.

But how, it may be asked, are we to recognise the "time" of our "visitation"?

It is not easy to know it: it requires insight, humility, preparedness of spirit.

It passes quickly; and, though in life there are many visitations—there is always one that is the last.

Ah, amid the flowers of Olivet, and the raptures of the multitude, when He beheld the city, Jesus wept. The people round Him saw no reason for those tears.

He is watching us to-day. We have come in gladness to His house; we have sung “hosannas” to His name; we have hailed Him Lord and Deliverer; what if after all, He has cause on our account to feel, not joy, but grief—if, looking upon us, he sees that our enthusiasm is vapid—and our adoration a thing of words rather than deeds.

What if this moment He is crucified afresh—put to an open shame—by some part of our lives, that we have not given to Him.

Let Him illuminate our consciences and strengthen our resolves. Let us receive and appropriate His grace by seeking fellowship with Him, and by following anew His guidance wherever He may see fit to lead us.

If any have never sought the life of the Spirit, never accepted God’s unchangeable pardon, the story of the Triumphal Entry has brought our Saviour’s appeal to them again. “Behold,” He seems to say, “I stand at the door and knock.

Then to the penitent Christ's very tears are consolatory. For He longs, and agonizes to bless us.

Let our response to His pleading ever be the absolute trust that finds its joy in submission: "To whom can we go but unto Thee? Thou hast the words of eternal life."

THE LONELY SUFFERER.

“MY GOD, MY GOD, WHY HAST THOU FORSAKEN ME?”

Matth., xxvii. 46.

CAPACITY for suffering varies indefinitely between man and man.

Not only are no two human beings exactly alike in this regard; but even the same person is different at different times. In the intensity of our feelings we are ever subject to change. The same burden of care is heavier one day than another, the same grief more poignant. Nor is this a matter merely of health or of nervous sensibility. Making due allowance for this factor in the result, we find that there is another and much more important element at work—the element of sympathy, of imagination, of experience of life. And in the very widest sense it is true, that “he that increaseth knowledge increaseth sorrow.”

While many of the ancient virtues were proverbial for the self-sufficing stoicism they conferred on character, we are not to assume that all virtues should have

this effect. The Christian graces indeed have quite another tendency; and unquestionably of the noblest attributes of our nature are possessed by us only at the cost of increased susceptibility to pain.

It was so with Jesus. The qualities that fitted Him to save, fitted Him also inevitably to suffer. And it was His supreme characteristics that brought to Him His bitterest anguish and His loneliest hours.

Our Saviour's temperament and disposition were of a well-marked type. He was unselfish and affectionate. He was self-forgetting and kind. He was one of those who readily show sympathy and constantly desire to receive it. Quick to feel for others and to apprehend their point of view, He surprised His disciples again and again by taking the part of those they had censured.

The Syro-Phœnician suppliant they regarded as an intruder; but she was understood by their Master. Instead of dismissing her, He led her into a conversation which stimulated her faith and aroused within her that holy violence that takes the Kingdom of Heaven by force.

It was this sympathy that put Him in touch with the mothers whom the disciples would have driven away,—with the penitent who, despite the disapproval of the respectable, bathed His feet with her tears and wiped them with her hair,—with the tender-hearted Mary in whose broken alabaster jar He saw—not waste—but loving devotion.

And did not our Lord desire sympathy from His friends?

On the Mount of Transfiguration He took with Him three disciples to share His joy, as in Gethsemane he took the same three to be with Him in His sorrow. For He found solace in human companionship and asked for it expressly; "Could ye not watch with me one hour?"

Such a disposition, while it wins affection more readily and impresses men more lastingly than any other, gains its hold upon our nature and keeps it for the most part through suffering.

Its influence must in truth be purchased with the very heart's blood.

And a character that is expansive and affectionate has its peculiar temptations. It runs the risk of cultivating the softer graces at the expense of the bolder and sterner. It is liable to grow indulgent, to itself and to others. In its eagerness to please it is apt to forego some of its individuality. If we would gratify men in all circumstances, we can do so only by the occasional sacrifice of duty. This sacrifice the loving heart is tempted to make; and sometimes can hardly help violating strict integrity in its anxiety to show itself kind. There will seem to be an endless strife between sympathy on the one hand and truth upon the other. And the nature overflowing with good

will to men must yet act sometimes with apparent harshness, if it would maintain its sincerity.

Many a man of noble and unselfish instincts has gone down under these perils. For there are people everywhere who will not thank us for any kindness short of permission to do wrong or of our palliating their misdeeds.

Our Saviour had to wrestle with the weaknesses that specially beset the genial and sympathetic temperament. While self-centred souls have to become more expansive and yielding, if they would attain their true development, gentle natures on the contrary require to grow in firmness and independence, or else they deteriorate. They must not become more pliant, but less so, as the responsibilities of life unroll themselves more definitely before them. They have to learn to stand alone; and, even when misapprehended by friends and maligned by enemies, to act strictly on their own initiative.

It would have been far easier for Jesus to carry out His own purposes if His nature had been cold and hard. But if His nature had been cold and hard He never would have formed those purposes at all; for then He would not have been the true Revealer of the Father, He would not have been the Saviour, He would not have been Divine.

Starting with a perfect and sinless sympathy the Son of Man had yet to "learn obedience by the things He suffered"; and the development of His human character was through an experience which compelled Him with increasing frequency to disappoint the expectations of those He loved.

The first hint we get of the Divine compulsion thrusting Him into an almost isolated position was the incident in the Temple in His twelfth year. Such a son as Jesus did not lightly leave His parents. But His human nature was growing in self-reliance and had already recognised higher claims than theirs. "Wist ye not that I must be about my Father's business?"

When at the beginning of His ministry His mother requested Him—with a mother's fondness—to display His miraculous gifts at the marriage in Cana, what pain it must have cost Him to undeceive her and with seeming brusqueness to claim freedom of action. "Woman, what have I to do with thee?"

When at a later day the members of His family desired to interrupt Him as He taught,—fancying, with a thoughtlessness natural enough, that their presence was more important than any duty in which He might be engaged,—He refused to break off His teaching.

"And He stretched forth His hand toward His disciples and said, Behold my mother and my brethren.

For whosoever shall do the will of My Father which is in heaven, the same is my brother and sister and mother."

Nazareth where His youth was spent, received Him with suspicion and hate. His own brothers taunted Him: "If thou do these things shew thyself to the world." The disciples never reached more than a dim comprehension of His Person; and we know how they failed Him at the last. His whole ministry is the record, among other things, of inducements offered Him to be less than Himself, to minimise His message, to accommodate His teaching to the prejudices of the day.

We may safely say that our Saviour's greatest trials came from the worldly spirit of His followers rather than from the hostility of His foes.

On His friends He could never quite rely. They constantly needed sympathy from Him; but they understood Him too imperfectly to be able to give much sympathy in return. They were often dreaming of earthly thrones and quarrelling about pre-eminence; and had He permitted it, they might not have been indisposed to force His hand, and commit Him to some course fatal to His mission.

Yet how steadily He kept on His way! As the task of His life opened out, He was left more and more alone. The year of popularity soon gave way to the year of persecution. His righteous life and lofty standard of morality had soon made Him enemies.

Others hated Him for His high claims regarding Himself and for His unswerving attachment to His ideal: and when He convicted them of sin and denounced their hypocrisy, they were aroused to murderous resentment.

At every step of His career they drew the net closer around Him, and strove to entrap Him through the very nobleness of his purposes and aims.

At first He must have found some comfort in the knowledge that His most intimate associates remained true to Him; and afterwards when multitudes left Him He may have been consoled by the thought that Peter's enthusiastic confession found an echo in the hearts of all: "We believe and are sure that thou art Christ, the son of the living God."

But even then He lets it be understood that He had read treachery within the chosen circle of the twelve.

As His suffering and death approached, Jesus found that the most faithful of the Twelve were far from sharing His spirit. Peter repudiated the doctrine that the Christ must suffer: "That be far from thee, Lord." We often think of this ill-advised speech as irreverent and presumptuous; but is not its main feature a stubborn determination at all hazards to escape pain and indignity,—a determination that discloses how wide the gulf was that separated Peter from his Master? How much more isolated must Jesus have felt after such an episode!

Even before the betrayal Jesus had made up His mind that little was to be expected from those that loved Him best. One is hardly astonished at His answer to Peter's protestations of fidelity: "Wilt thou lay down thy life for my sake? Verily, verily, I say unto thee, The cock shall not crow till thou hast denied me thrice."

And when, listening to His last discourse, the Eleven eagerly renewed their profession of belief, "By this we believe that Thou camest forth from God," our Saviour did not regard this comprehension as carrying with it much of the sympathy for which His soul longed.

"Jesus answered them, Do ye now believe? Behold the hour cometh, yea, is now come, that ye shall be scattered every man to his own, and shall leave me alone: and yet I am not alone, because the Father is with me."

That was the secret of His spiritual strength. Throughout all disappointments there remained with Him the consciousness of His Father's favour. He stayed Himself upon His God. That was Rest. He would go to the mountain top alone and hold commune with the Unseen, thence to descend calm and strong. Human support in His spiritual trials He had none. But as His experience of life widened, as He advanced step by step in the struggle between Love and Duty in all its varying forms, He developed the latent strength of His human nature. He did so in solitude;

but He did so in perfect reliance on the Father. The Father's favour was simply everything to Him. On no other thought could He dwell without pain. It was the knowledge of the Father's loving presence that supported Him in the agony in the Garden, and gave Him at last the joy of submission. "Nevertheless not My will but Thine be done." In Gethsemane He conquered His human will unaided by human being. But even then He might have repeated, "I am not alone, the Father is with me."

But may we not say that the cup of suffering was not drained to the dregs till that awful hour upon the cross when He cried aloud, "My God, My God, why hast THOU forsaken me?"

The last support had failed: and the Redeemer, the God-man, is left utterly alone to bear the sin of the world. The light went out that had shone all those weary years upon His human soul—the light of God's countenance.

He could have resumed His glory—the glory He had with the Father—by a single act of will. His sacrifice was voluntary: "I have power to lay down my life, and take it again." He could have commanded legions of angels, and they would have borne Him away. There was no compulsion forcing Him to that lonely suffering save the inner constraint of His own Eternal Love. He might have made the

cross a throne of majesty, and have smitten with lightnings of destruction His murderers, His enemies, His faithless friends.

But then He would not have saved men: He would have surrendered His mission: He would have severed Himself morally from mankind.

His love, however, would not let them go; He was man too, in all points like His brethren; and though He was sinless and they were sinful, He kept to His self-appointed task.

Sin isolates; it separates from God. Its tendency is to make the breach with God still wider. Sinful man had no power unaided to return. Christ took it on Himself to do what never had been done—to hold fast to God's law and to God himself when occupying the position of guilty man.

Had our Saviour given way to despair (if that be conceivable), then He would have cut Himself off from the Father. If he had renounced his task, yielded to Pilate and the Chief Priests, begged His life and called Himself an impostor, He might have been taken down from the cross.

But His faith endured,—His faith in the Father's justice and holiness; His love endured,—His love towards guilty ungrateful man. This Faith and this Love were strong enough to remain unshaken while the Son of Man was left alone in the universe, bearing the sin of the world.

All the Saviour's atonement depended on how He would meet that hour of alienation. All that He had done—all His obedience to the Law—had to be brought across the gulf of separation that sin had opened.

He had, as it were, to see the other shore fade completely away, to lose sense of all aid human and Divine, and in utter darkness and loneliness to leap spiritually across the abyss by a daring act of perfect faith in His Father, drawing with Him a shrinking but submissive human nature to lay at His feet, saying in effect, "Though He slay me yet will I trust Him."

Here is the final triumph of the atoning work. He suffered, the just for the unjust, to bring us to God.

But how, it may be asked, does He do so? In what way does His suffering affect our relationship with God? The answer is complex; but a few principles may be noted.

1. He was a prophet for righteousness sake; and like all righteous prophets in an evil world, He suffered. His example inspires us to follow the Voice of God, and to esteem pain and danger cheap when they are on the path of Duty. It proves to us that our spiritual life is independent of all things outward, and that it may attain its triumph even in the depths of lonely misery. His life and death are an encouragement to men to strive to realise the best of which they are capable.

But He is more than a Prophet for righteousness' sake; and it is not merely encouragement He offers.

2. He is our Priestly Representative. He is the highest Type of Man. He "sanctifies humanity by sanctifying Himself." His faultless career realised the Ideal which the Father desired to see in man. He kept His Faith in God and His Love to man unbroken through the greatest trial conceivable; and when this Faith and this Love seemed incompatible He yet maintained both in perfection in His own Person. Thus, by His oneness with His brethren and His oneness with the Father, He bridged over the separation which sin had caused; He made atonement, and rendered humanity well-pleasing in the sight of God.

But He is more than our Priestly Representative.

3. He is the Revealer of God's Infinite Tenderness. He is the Suffering Sympathiser, whose self-sacrifice exhibited what the world by wisdom had never discovered, what the sinful world had never dared to dream—that God was Love. He was the Man of Sorrows; for it is sorrow that develops sympathy, and sorrow that reveals it. And it needed the Crucifixion agony as a dark background to manifest His Love in all its fullness. By this sympathy He gains supreme influence over men, and rules their hearts.

But He is more than the Revealer of the Father;

and His mission is not exhausted when we say He wins our Love.

4. He was the Sin-Bearer,—the Great Sacrifice. He put Himself in our place, making Himself subject to all the conditions of ordinary human life. He, the sinless, identified Himself with sinful humanity even in the conditions that sin entails.

Must not the last of these mysterious conditions have been reached in that terrible hour when He suffered alienation from the Father and cried, "My God, My God, why hast Thou forsaken Me?"

He came to save from sin—from the power, the penalty, the love of sin—and bring men to God. He is not merely the Prophet of Righteousness, the Representative of Humanity, the Revealer of God; He is the conqueror of sin, the Saviour, on Whose Divine Person and finished work we may rest our Faith. God was well-pleased with the One Perfect Life; for in It, completely and uninterruptedly, in all Its relations, His will was done on earth. But to participate in that favour of the Father we need a union with Christ. How are we to obtain it?

Let but the heart love Him sincerely, let the will make one resolve to yield to Him without reserve—and that union is effected. What our weak wills and fickle hearts cannot do, Christ has done. For he has

not only maintained unbroken relationship with the Father, but by His sufferings He has condemned and expiated our sin.

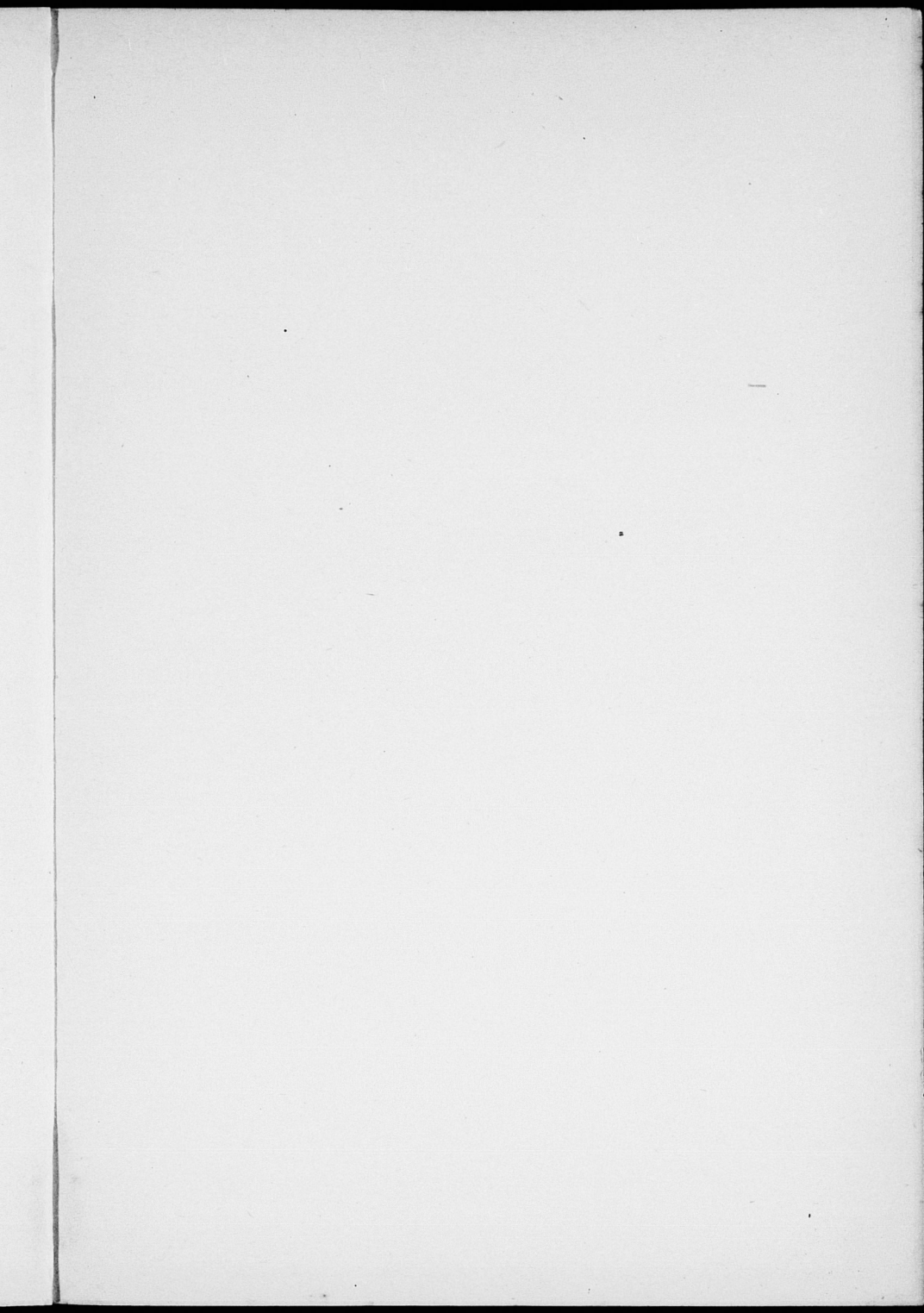
And where there is desire to be like Him—and sincere submission to Him, God TAKES THE WILL FOR THE DEED, pardons past offences for the sake of His Son, and receives us as brethren of His Well-beloved.

But we are not saved to live to ourselves. We are to be conformed to His image Who suffered for us.

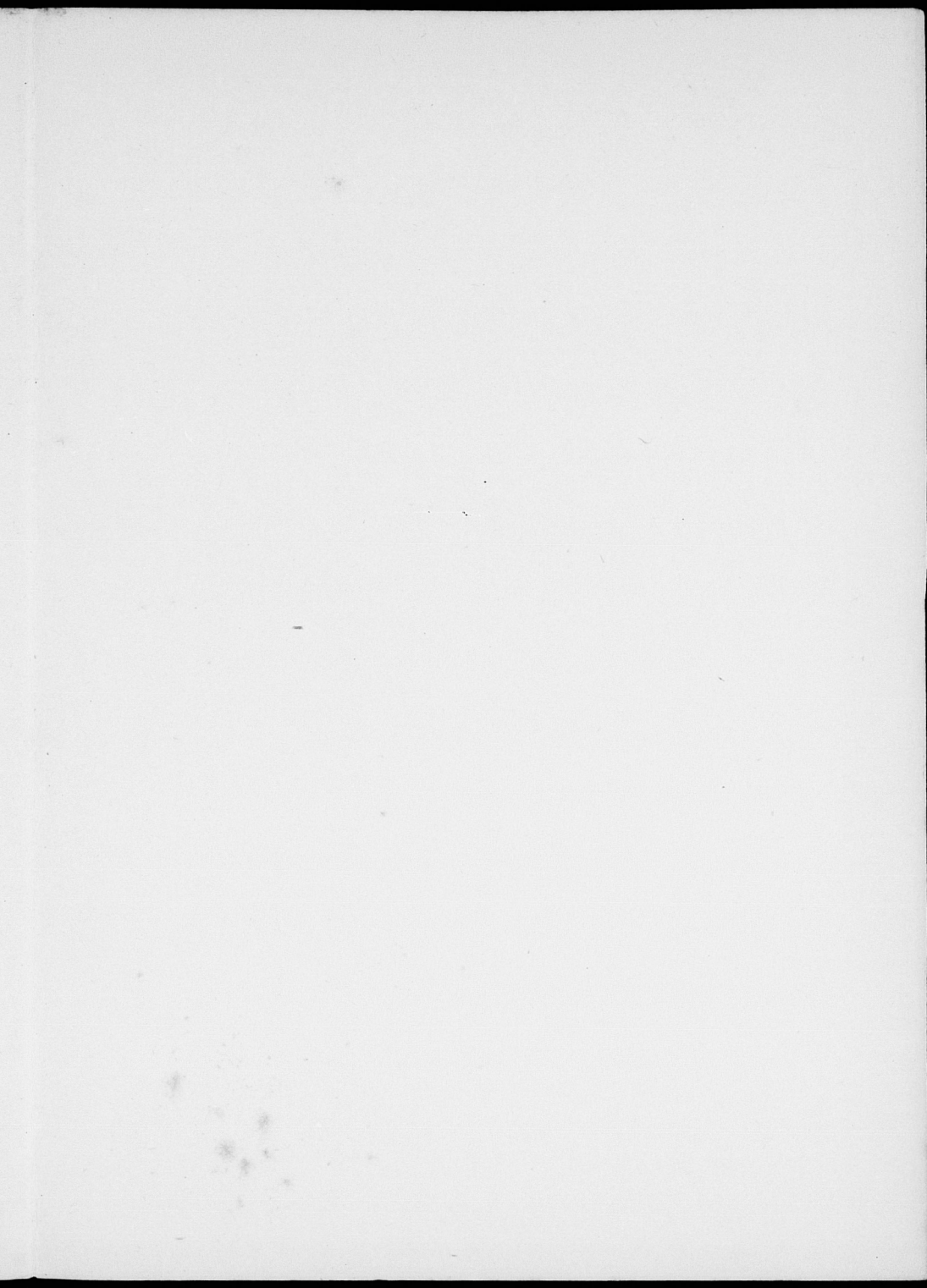
Every true life therefore will have its hours of lonely agony. We are to be like Christ ; and that likeness entails our having fellowship in His sufferings. There is no escaping OUR GOLGOTHA. The solitary struggle is sure to come wherein man will not and cannot help us, wherein God seems to have forsaken us. Here, as in another connection, it may be said, The servant is not greater than his Lord. But the Saviour has gone before us through this darkness ; and His example remains. No loneliness can ever be so terrible again ; no solitude of soul can ever be so complete to all eternity. And the worst trials only brings us the nearer Him Who is our Lord, our Life,—Who has borne our sin and destroyed it—and Who lives in risen glory to fulfil His Word, “Lo, I am with you always, even unto the end of the world.”

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have been...

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