

as they are sung or read, with a look on his face that seems to say, God is really speaking to him in those words and he to God, hasn't that made you first, a little bit ashamed of yourself; secondly, anxious to do like him? To get into the real spirit of the service too?

Now what is that but this light shining? He doesn't know that he is lighting you, but he can't help doing it. He can't keep his light to himself, it must shine on those about him and near him.

Don't you rather like our thought of to-day about light? It seems to suit the first Sunday after Epiphany, for Epiphany always seems to have a good deal to do with light.

It was the star shining far away that led the wise men to Jesus.

Surely that may be meant to teach us that it isn't a flash and a blaze that does any great work in the world, but it is the quiet, steady, calm shining; that does the greatest of all work—leads men to Jesus.

Will you not try and let your light shine? Remember that every little thing you do right will be just one ray helping on somebody else. Never mind where you live, among a great many people, or just with two or three in an out-of-the-way corner of the world, it is all the same. The big place will be the lighter, and the little corner will be the lighter too, because a disciple of Christ is there; only a boy perhaps, yet his light must shine.

#### A Great Man.

An old man used to sweep the street-crossings for gratuitous pennies, near the House of Parliament, for many years. One day he was absent. Upon enquiry he was found by a missionary ill, in a little attic chamber, barely furnished with cot and stool.

"You are lonely here," the missionary said. "Has any one called upon you?"

"Oh, yes," he replied, "several persons have called—Mr. Gladstone for one. He called and read to me."

"Mr. Gladstone called? And what did he read?"

"He sat on that stool and read the Bible to me."

What a beautiful position! The greatest statesman in the world sitting on a stool in an attic, reading the Word of God to a street-sweeper! Great men lose none of their greatness by kindness to God's poor.

#### Patience.

Patience is a virtue that needs careful cultivation. In this busy, hurrying, stirring life there is much to vex every one, even though he be constantly on his guard and succeed in escaping much that is annoying.

Impatience is the very opposite of God-likeness. If God were not patient, how could He suffer us to live at all!

This thought will help us to be patient in spite of much that is trying.

Some one has wisely said: "Do not attempt to put the world right in five minutes. You cannot do it. God did not intend you to do it. And do not be out of patience if your own little piece of the world is not in order. You have a great idea of what it ought to be, of what it might be; but you have to be patient under the discipline of bearing with its imperfections, even as God is patient."

We sometimes take credit for being patient because we do not murmur. If we say—full of self-pity and seeking pity from others—"Well, these troubles and afflictions have to be endured, there is no escaping them. It's the common lot. Man is born to trouble. Into each life same rain must fall. Some days must be dark and dreary"—if we can feel all this, we think we have the virtue of patience.

A clergyman, in visiting an invalid, remarked that no doubt her affliction was sent for some good end—perhaps to teach her something she did not know, or to convey to her some virtue she needed. In this she quite agreed; it is so easy to acknowledge general deficiencies. He proceeded to say that perhaps it was sent to teach her patience.

"Oh, no," she replied, a little aggrieved, "it could not be for that; she had learned patience long ago!"

Her affliction became heavier, heavy enough to show her that she had not the needful patience to bear it well. It lasted on until she became possessed with the joyful, willing spirit which suffers gladly, asks to be allowed to bear for Jesus' sake, and raises us "from thankless slaves to sons."

So true it is that "Though God deliver not out of trouble, yet He delivers from the ill in trouble by supporting the spirit. Nay, He delivers by trouble, for by trouble He cures the soul, and by lesser troubles He delivers from greater."

#### Where is God?

The plague was in London, and people were flying from it.

Lord Craven had his travelling carriage at the door, and a negro servant was helping to pack it. Suddenly he turned to a fellow-lackey, saying, "Since my lord leaves London for fear of the plague, his God must live in the country, I suppose."

The words were repeated as a joke to Lord Craven, but he took them very seriously.

"That poor black has taught me something," he said. "My God is truly everywhere, and can keep me as safely in the midst of this sickness as at my country seat."

So saying, he ordered his carriage to be unpacked and sent away, resolving to remain in London himself to take care of the plague-stricken.

The dwelling of Lord Craven was one of the very few into which the plague never entered.

#### Word to Conquer By.

"Never" is the only word that conquers. "Once in a while" is the very watchword of temptation and defeat. I do believe that the "once-in-a-while" things have ruined more bodies and more souls, too, than all the other things put together. Moreover, the "never" way is easy, and the "once-in-a-while" way is hard.

After you have once made up your mind "never" to do a certain thing, that is the end of it, if you are a sensible person. But if you only say: "That is a bad habit," or: "This is a dangerous indulgence; I will be a little on my guard, and not do it too often," you have put yourself in the most uncomfortable of all positions; the temptation will knock at your door twenty times in a day, and you will have to be fighting the same old battles over and over again as long as you live.

When you have once laid down to yourself the laws you mean to keep, the things you will always do and the things you will "never" do, then your life arranges itself in a system at once, and you are not interrupted and hindered, as the undecided people are, by wondering what is best, or safe, or wholesome, or too unwholesome, at different times.

#### Cultivate a Cheerful Disposition.

A cheerful disposition is one of the happiest of earthly blessings. Like mercy, it is not strained, and blessing him that gives, blesses also him that takes, and is mightiest in the mightiest. The morose man, the scold and complainer, the hectoring critic and fault-finder, has his misery pictured in his countenance, and his shadow is cast banefully wherever he appears. His opposite is the man of genial spirit, who sees the good side if there be one, who smiles, has a word of kindness, and who turns benevolently towards the world in which, because it is a pleasure for him to do so, he desires to cast a little sunshine and radiate a little Christian warmth. It so happens sometimes that because of the perversions men are addicted to, and no less in religion than in other things, they forget the blessedness of the bright eye and glowing face, and therefore manifest their piety by groan, scowl, and austere rebuke of all about them. Very brightly rose the sun this morning. A radiance full of colour and sparkle adorned the east, and spread itself over a portion of the sky, filling the earth with laughter, also, and making it gay with song. David never saw the Palestinian hills clap their hands more joyously than did these American ones, all drilled, and excavated as they

are, nor did the corn-laden vales of the sacred Orient ever send up a sweeter music than these, so discordant as they sometimes become when intruded upon by modern traffic. On the brow of the west sat a frown, black and reproving, as if to remind the opposite horizon of its vanity and thoughtlessness amidst the serious and solemn realities of its existence. But the smile went on; it won its way, also, and even in the "evening time it was light," for lo, the clouds had vanished, and the lustre of the morning, chastened into a beauty more heavenly than before, was reigning supreme at the going down of the sun. And so it is with the Christian soul which has in it the light of God; so is the life lived under the influence of Him who is the light of the world.

#### Pure and Impure, According to Use.

Things become tainted or impure by the uses to which they are put. Whether our lives realize the highest and best depends upon the use we make of them. It is said that Aesop was once ordered by his master to prepare the best possible dinner for his guests. He secured a supply of tongue, and served them in a variety of ways. Xanthus, his master, was angry. Said he: "Did I not order you to prepare the best possible dinner?" "Is there anything better?" said Aesop. "Is not the tongue the organ of truth and the promulgator of science? By it governments are founded, justice administered, the sorrowful comforted, the wayward persuaded, and the dying consoled."

"Well," said Xanthus, "to-morrow this same company shall dine with me again. To-day you have given us the best thing; to-morrow provide for us the worst." Aesop again set before the guests tongue, for, said he, "It is the instrument of strife and contention, the source of division and war. It is the organ of error, of lies, of calumny and blasphemy."

#### The Love of Christ.

There was kneeling one day in the church a poor collier lad, some ten or twelve years of age. His hair rough, his clothes were torn and ragged; his feet were bare. His hands were clasped as in prayer; a sad wistful look was on his face. I kneeled by his side. "I want to be good," he said, "I want to belong to the Saviour; I could trust Him if only I could be sure that He loves me."

His had been a hard life in the world, poor heart! How should I convince him of the fact of the love of God? I spoke to him of friends and playmates. "Is there anyone you have ever known, who, if you had to die, would be willing to die in your stead to save you? A moment's silence, and then with a sweet smile, he looked up and said, "I believe my mother would."

"In that brief pause he had looked back on life, and measured a mother's love. Perhaps there had passed before his mind the vision of her toil late at night to mend his clothes, or to earn to-morrow's bread, and convinced of the reality of a mother's love, his heart told him, it would be strong unto death."

"Then see what Jesus has done," and I spoke to him of the bleeding hands of the Crucified. He bowed his face in his hands, as he said, "I can love Him back again, and trust Him too!"

Thus was the victory of the Crucified won in that young heart. So it is ever with us all.—J. H. Lester, Missioner of Lichfield.

#### "Into the Wilderness."

There are some spirits which must go through a discipline analogous to that sustained by Elijah. The storm-struggle must precede the still, small voice. There are minds which must be convulsed with doubt before they can repose in faith. There are hearts which must be broken with disappointment before they can rise into hope. Blessed is the man who, when the tempest has spent its fury, recognizes his Father's voice in its undertone, and bares his head and bows his knee, as Elijah did. To such spirits it seems as if God had said, "In the still sunshine and ordinary ways of life you cannot meet me, but like Job, in the desolation of the tempest, you shall see My Form, and hear My Voice, and know that your Redeemer liveth."