

of fright and decay, to have been alarmed by any supposed political influences Christ exerted, not only houseless and moneyless as He was, but teaching his followers doctrines the very opposite of retaliation, physical force, and political agitation. But there would have been some ground to suspect His regal language, if He had possessed financial resources, with which to give it practical form and effect, Pilate would not so easily and so soon have said, "I find no crime in Him."

What a noble example it would have been for our Lord to have exhibited the same character of purity, gentleness, humility, brotherliness, and unflinching honour, from a lofty social position, as we know Him to have shown from His humble station. The world has always needed examples of that kind quite as much as examples of honest poverty. Agur's prayer looked both ways, desiring not only to be suitably fed, lest he should steal and take God's name in vain, but also not to be too well fed, lest he be full, and deny God, and say, "Who is the Lord?" Virtue and religion seem in the Saviour's mind to have been easier to the poor than to the rich, judging by His words about the camel and needle's eye. It is the special privilege and responsibility of the more affluent to break down the class prejudices and animosities which unhappily so often divide mankind. This responsibility rests with all classes, but the sentiment is a good one which looks for nobler deeds from those supposed to be of nobler birth, higher social grade, and more polished manners and education. The advance must be by the stronger toward the weaker, by the good toward the bad; and if Jesus had occupied a good social position He could have exerted a most mighty influence in this useful direction.

To outweigh such considerations as the foregoing there must have been reasons of tremendous force in Christ's mind, leading Him to lead the life He did; especially during His three years' teaching and work. Whatever may be said about the probable prosperity and comfort of Joseph and his family prior to that period, it is certain that during those later years Christ's life was one of want and dependency, the voluntary subjection to which is all the more extraordinary if the supposition be true that the family were "well off." Once the populace offered Him a kingly station, but He quietly retired to pray.

A variety of reasons may be given for Christ's poverty, such as