

(1) Do not think that the difficulty can be solved forever by some pet plan of your own. Our Lord said, "The poor ye have always with you," because He knew men, and saw that, while the world endured, human weakness and folly would bring men to poverty and need. We can abolish them only when we can abolish the defects of human nature.

(2) Do not think that every poor man or beggar is a fraud. Poverty is not sin, though sin brings poverty. If you stop to think of the varied qualities necessary to success in life—energy, alertness, caution, perseverance, thrift—it need not seem strange that some should fail. You yourself may have failed more than once before you succeeded. So do not give orders that the door of your house shall be slammed in the face of all beggars. Do not talk to every needy person, asking relief, as if he were a liar or a thief. Your own flesh and blood may be unfortunate. How should you like to see a brother or a son treated as you have treated the needy? Apply this test, and learn to be gentle and patient.

(3) Do not think that you ought to give relief to every one that asks for it. Some people boast that the beggar is never turned away from their doors unhelped. It is a silly boast. If the beggar is sure of getting what he needs for nothing, a premium is placed upon idleness, and honest toil is handicapped. Help men, but help them wisely.

(4) Do not think that money is the best or even a wise help for the poor. It is easy enough to draw a cheque, to send a servant to the door with a coin, and to soothe the conscience with the thought that thus our duty is discharged. But stop for a moment to think of the meaning of St. Paul's words: "Though I bestow all my goods to feed the poor . . . and have not love, it profiteth me nothing." If you heard that a son or brother was a supplicant at your door, should you think that your duty was done if you handed out a little money?

Look now at the other side,—what we ought to attempt.

(1) The most distressing poverty is that which does not go a-begging. Usually those who have reached the point of begging will secure enough for immediate needs. But in every large place there are people who will not beg, and who quietly suffer if their need is not found out. The children stay away from school because they have not proper clothing; the parents deny themselves of necessary food for the

children's sake, and slowly grow pale and pinched; the house is stripped of everything that can be sold. There is, perhaps, almost no bedding, and, in consequence, there is great suffering on a cold night. And all this is borne in silence. Even if you visit the house, you will find out the extent of the need only gradually. The people do not talk about their sufferings any more than you talk about having had a comfortable dinner. It is a part of their daily life. Some day the mother is taken ill or a child dies, and even the physician who is called in at the last moment will scarcely understand the remoter causes of the disease. These are due to poverty that will not beg. How are such people to be helped? They can be helped only by being known. The helper must move among them, win their confidence, know their situation, and, with tact and delicacy, help as God shows the way. Both time and money must be spent for this. If there is a single town or city parish in this land where there are not some whose business it is track such poverty, that parish is badly managed and needs reformation. The clergyman may preach and the people may pray, but an important part of the work of God is left undone.

(2) We owe a duty to the passing beggar. Many, but not all, are impostors, and God holds us responsible for the discriminating eye. We should always know what we are doing. If some entertain angels unaware, some also send them away in like manner. As far as possible, the beggar should be followed up and the truth or falsehood of his story uncovered. Of course, busy men and women will say that they have no time for this. Even if this is true, they can still report the case to those who make such inquiries a part of their business. Vigilance is a duty that we owe to society.

(3) We ought to be able to find better methods in this problem of the poor than we have yet reached. We should at the outset aim to separate the worthy from the unworthy poor. Probably the work test is the best means of sifting out the lazy impostors. A large Toronto firm was pestered with men asking for work. Finally, they laid in a large supply of cord wood, and every man who asked for work was at once given wood to cut. The number of applicants dropped off amazingly, and it was then quite easy to grapple with the problem of employment for the remainder. Of course, there is still a class to which the work test does not apply—the sick or disabled, the orphans, the

unfortunate. But if trouble is taken to get accurate information, it will be found that the problem of dealing with the poor is less formidable than it seems, and that the energy and money now expended are quite sufficient to grapple with the difficulty if they are wisely directed.

If it is not easy to get money, it is still less easy to get love. When we are willing to give up a little of our leisure to mingle with God's unfortunate and needy, we have begun to learn the solution of the darkest of our social problems. Science can grapple with it and aid in its solution. Sound thinking on this economic question will help to make our efforts wiser. But let us keep this before our minds and consciences;—it is only love that can heal the sore of the world. Those who are down need to be inspired with new courage and hope. Without this, no matter how often we help to raise them, they will sink again. If anything can give men new vigor to face the burdens of life, it will be brotherly Christian sympathy given as Christ gave it. It will not always be received as we might hope; but we must, at any rate, offer it, and God will not let loving effort be in vain.

THE EMPEROR'S NEW TESTAMENT.

PROFESSOR HEADLAND, of the Pekin University, reports a happy fact in connection with the Emperor's recent purchase of the New Testament. He reads it daily. The print in the purchased Testament was not very large, and a scribe copies a portion each day in large characters, and this the Emperor studies. "He is now reading St. Luke's Gospel." This information comes directly from the palace.

One of our Christians, who is a horticulturist, furnishes flowers to the eunuchs for the decoration of the palace. He is often invited to dine with them. The pastor of the church to which he belongs has been repeatedly invited with him, but has always refused, until two days ago. He accepted an invitation, and at the dinner was told about the Emperor's studies.

When asked to drink at dinner the pastor refused, on which his host remarked, "Oh, yes; I have heard that you Christians do not drink wine," and the wine was put aside and none drunk at that dinner. The eunuch who tells the story stands in the room while the Emperor reads, and has obtained not a little information about the Scriptures himself.—*Our Sunday Afternoon.*