

SOLITUDE OF CHRIST.

He might have prayed His Father for twelve legions of angels, but He would be alone. He might have enjoyed unceasingly the joy, at least, of those who always behold the Face of the Father in Heaven. He willed to share the misery of the souls who cry in their last moments; some, we may be sure, every day that passes. "My GOD, my GOD, why hast Thou forsaken me?" He submitted Himself to all those elements of our nature which sterner characters affect to scorn, to its sense of dependence, to its craving for sympathy, to its consciousness of weakness. "O go not far from me, for trouble is hard at hand, and there is none to help me," is the natural language of the feeblest sufferer in the poorest and most wretched lodging in London; but it was the language also of our Divine Saviour, contemplating with a true human apprehension, the loneliness of approaching death. . . . The crowds which sang "Hosanna" as Christ entered Jerusalem, and the crowds which cried "crucify Him," as He passed along the Way of Sorrows, touched but the surface of His awful solitude as he rode on, as He walked on—to die. Surely, my brethren, this solitude of our Saviour in His sufferings is full of great comfort for us. It shows to us, first, that at the moment of death and before it, the best Christians may experience a desolation of spirit which is no real test of their true condition before GOD. . . . the anguish of a saintly soul which fears on the threshold of eternity that GOD has left it to itself, is surely a token of

its conformity to the Divine Saviour.

And secondly, we see in the solitude of Jesus crucified, a warrant of His constant sympathy with the dying. In that "He Himself hath suffered, being tempted, He is able to succour them that are tempted." Nothing that we may experience in His Gracious Providence, no anguish of soul, no weariness or torture of body, has been unexplored by Him Who overcame all the sharpness of death, before He opened the Kingdom of Heaven to the great company of the faithful.

May He take pity upon us, as sinful and erring yet believing children, and suffer us not at our last hour for any pains of death to fall from Him.

LIDDON.

THE spirit of covetousness, which leads to an over-value and over-love of money, is independent of amount. A poor man may make an idol of his little, just as much as the rich man makes an idol of his much. We know our blessed Lord's own declaration, how the poorest person may exceed in *charity and liberality* the richest; and that is by giving more than the wealthy in proportion to the whole that is in his possession. So in like manner a poor man may be *more covetous* than a wealthy man, because he may *keep back* from the treasury of GOD more in proportion to his all than the rich man keeps back from *his* all. If the Christian character is debased, and Heaven is lost by such indulgence of covetousness as to make a man an idolator of *mammon*, it is of little consequence whether the heart be set on an idol of gold or an idol of clay.