

for abstraction from actual life, and absorption into Deity, the perfection of Oriental dreamers? Read on:—"And thy Father which seeth in secret himself shall reward thee openly." And now, what is this reward,—this open reward of secret prayer, this open result of secret devotion, this return outward, consequent upon the retreat inward? Who can question the meaning of Jesus? The reward is in the *fruits* of prayer; in righteous character; in worthy action; in efforts blessed for good; in greater power and greater success of usefulness; in increased desire and augmented energy to do the will of God and finish his work. For, surely, it is not outward prosperity, an increase of earthly goods, a larger share of temporal comforts, or any such outward things as the selfish and the sensual mind covets, to which Jesus alluded, or which that soul would think of craving which would leave the world and shut itself up in the closet for spiritual communion with God. Nay, Jesus manifestly designed, not to lead us away from outward action, from social duties, from thoughts and works of benevolence, by leading us to the closet; but in very deed to qualify us more fully, and prepare us more thoroughly, and quicken us more powerfully, for these very results.

He leads us directly and simply to the very fount of religious life,—the source of all spiritual wisdom and holy influence,—the spring of all useful and happy action, all successful work. If, then, we were consulting only for outward results,—if we were surveying the field of our associated enterprise with the single object of its more extensive culture and more successful husbandry,—if the only question with us were how to enlarge our churches, augment our associated influence, and extend