

first thought, he afterwards confessed, was a question addressed to himself, "Will you have time enough now to pray, Alfred?" For three long months that eager merchant was, like a chained eagle, confined to his couch. By God's mercy this proved to be eternal gain to his soul.

The truth is, it is want of heart for the duty that makes men neglect family prayer. Men find it a hard task to play the hypocrite even alone. But to subject themselves to the searching glance of children and servants—this is too much.—*Van Doren.*

### CHRISTIAN EXCELLENCE.

"True Christian excellence can only be the outcome of true, calm, deep piety. Beautiful and diverse as are the parts of a blossom, each one is but the modification of a leaf. For the beauties of spiritual life, no new faculties are required; all that is needed is a change in the form and colouring of the same powers that formerly were devoted to selfishness or sin. Until the flower fully blooms, no indication of its beauty can be discerned. A cactus has a form destitute of beauty. No one unaware of the fact would imagine that a plant so rugged in appearance and of such slow growth would, at the appointed time, burst into such magnificent bloom. On some back shelf in the conservatory for years, it enjoys its share of watering and sunshine, and continues its slow and rugged growth almost unnoticed. But, by and by crimson buds appear on every part, and all the past culture is repaid by an affluence of beauty that delights each beholder. Let not any one despair of making life glorious." Let them first be assured that the Divine life has been implanted and exists within their hearts, and then, waiting on God in the way that he appoints, searching His word and being mindful

of the teachings of His spirit, they may watch, and pray, and wait before the Lord, assured that in His own good time he will cause fruit to abound and abide to the glory of God and the well-being of their fellow-men.

### SECRET PRAYER.

Besides the open return there is a secret reward of secret prayer. There is a peculiar and present joy in communion with God. The deeper pleasures are the purest; and of all pleasures the purest is the peace of God. To feel that He is love—to draw so near Him as to forget the world—so near as to lose the love of sin—is of all pleasures the sweetest, of all blessedness the purest and most profound.

And next to this high communion with God—next to this joy of passions lulled, and sins slain, and of self forgotten in adoring fellowship with the Father of lights—is their sedate comfort who can pour their griefs into their Heavenly Father's bosom, or who feel that they have bespoken help against coming trials at their Heavenly Father's hand. To know that God is near—to know that He is trusted, honoured, loved—to feel that you are acting toward Him as a reverential and affectionate child, and that He is feeling toward you as a gracious and compassionate Father—there is in this itself an exquisite satisfaction, a present reward.

### ADVICE TO A BRIDE.

"Hope not for perfect happiness, said Madame Maintenon to the Princess of Savoy, on the eve of her marriage with the Duke of Burgundy: "there is no such thing on earth, and though there were it would not be found at court. Greatness is exposed to afflictions often more severe than those of a private station. Be neither