

in His army; let us destroy at once and forever these awful debts, and set forward the army of conquest. It is high time to awake and to awaken our people. And as we are in earnest, will God be with us and prosper our efforts.

"IN SECRET."

The most sacred place to a sincerely devout life is the closet. The closed door shuts out the noises of the world and the soul listens to God's voice. There thoughts go straight to the Lord, and worship is in spirit and truth.

Whatever interruption the services of the sanctuary may suffer, this of the closet need never, ought never to be interfered with. Church life may grow languid through the summer, but heart life never. The place of public worship may be closed against entrance, but the closet door should be shut with the worshipper on the inside every day. True religion consists more in the secret communion of heart, mind, and will, with God than in any external acts of adoration or sacrifice.

A considerable portion of the Sermon on the Mount is concerned with emphasizing the importance of private devotion. The Lord urges it in a series of contrasts with the characteristics of the religious life of the times which is designated by the words "Seen of men." The life he sought to instill is in striking opposition to the established custom, and is described by the words "In secret."

Even in Old Testament times when ceremony and daily sacrifices were so conspicuous a feature of worship, noble minds conceived the truth that obedience is better than sacrifice, and that the sacrifices of God are a broken and contrite spirit, with truth in the inward parts. God's eye is on the heart.

Much of religious life must, indeed, be public. The stated seasons of prayer, praise, and attention to God's Word in the house of worship are permanent and indispensable institutions, which contribute largely to the strength and growth of Christian life. It is doubtful whether a healthy, vigorous spiritual condition could exist without external exercises; not because it is dependent upon these as its source, but because these are its expression, and the life of the heart must find utterance.

It is not the outward religious act which is seen of men that gives value to the inner character, but just the reverse. The secret devotion imparts worth to the external practice. The closet prepares for the sanctuary. The life it fosters is manifested in the acts of the Church service. And whenever the public worship is not the expression of the religion of the private life and of the heart, it is empty and vain.

This danger that the visible acts of the religious life will be done for show can be counteracted only by a careful cultivation

of closet communion with God. While not underestimating the importance of the outward acts of worship, it will not do to so emphasize them as to make them mere meaningless forms. The life that is faithful "in secret" saves that which is "seen of men" from decay.

Secret prayer is one of the most essential duties in the Christian life. It seems almost false to call it a duty, in light of the incalculable blessings and joys resulting from its exercise. It is a privilege of highest value, for the closet is the birthplace of that assurance which is needed most of all—the presence of God.—*Ex.*

CHILDREN AT CHURCH.

The secret of having the children in the preaching services of the church is in having in the pulpit a "children's preacher." It is not so much necessary that sermons for children be so named as it is that sermons where children are present, or ought to be present, be preached in a simple way, so as to interest and instruct them.

The mistake many preachers make is in preaching to adults only, as though no children were present. It is not strange that that kind of preaching fails to reach children and to secure their regular attendance at the services of the church.

A minister was once wondering how he could reach the large number of children in the homes of his people. "How am I to get them interested in the church?" he said. "To be sure they attend Sunday school, but that is not enough. I seldom see them at the preaching services, and never on Wednesday night at prayer-meeting."

As a rule the children do not attend these services. Why? Parents do not require it. Why do they not require it? Because the minister so often takes no thought of the children in the preparation of his sermons, and only preaches to the older ones.

It is said that once upon a time it was announced from a certain pulpit, that on the following Sunday the pastor would like as many of the children of the Sunday school as would attend the morning service to take seats in the gallery, as they could all sit in a body. He especially asked the teachers of the Sunday schools to urge the children to come. He would "preach a sermon for the children."

Sunday came, and so did a goodly number of the children. When it came time for the sermon the minister glanced up in the gallery and said: "Girls and boys, it gives me great pleasure to have so many bright faces before me this morning. I wish you would come every Sunday and fill up those vacant seats." Then he went into his sermon with a will. But he soon forgot "the gallery." He just soared right over their little heads way up in the arches in the roof, and only came down long enough to speak to some of the boys that were whis-