

and simple, only through the influence of the closet; by remembering and feeling the secrecy of the Father; by reassuring ourselves that there is for each soul but one and its own path to God, and that a private way, — a secret way, — a near and simple way, — leading inwards and not outwards, — back into the heart and through the heart. There is no conviction that clears to us the whole sky of religion so quickly, that so harmonizes and simplifies the life of godliness, and that infuses withal into the soul such hope and joy and peace, such freshness and fervor of devotional feeling, as this of the *secrecy of the Father*. That he is not to be sought afar off, — that we need not wait, since Jesus has manifested him, till some competent human guide or guides may conduct us to him, — but that he is already nigh; so nigh, that if, with a feeling of simple trust, we will but enter into our closet, and shut the door, and look into the heart, we also may find him, and find that we ourselves are his children. So nigh, that there need not be any reaching or straining in our prayer, as if effort were needed to get at him, and our own striving could bring him down to us. So nigh that any *effort* of our own would only carry us away from him, and the very idea of his remoteness would give the feeling of his remoteness. So nigh, that we have only to hush and quiet the heart to feel the influence of his presence. So nigh as that saint found him, who said that he went to his closet to *listen* rather than to speak to God; or, as we might say, diluting that sentence for general practical use, so nigh that we might the better find and the more confidently speak to him, if we would listen before our prayer, and would let the heart realize his presence before attempting to call upon him.