

## AMEN.

There is something very full of awe in the thought of the soul alone face to face with God. It is this which gives to private prayer its peculiar character and blessedness. It is an intensely personal and individual act. There are none others to kindle the soul's fervour with the fire of sympathy; but there are also none others to withdraw its thoughts from the one awe-inspiring consciousness of being in the very presence of God.

Private Prayer has the seal of the special commendation of our Lord Jesus Christ. "But thou, when thou prayest, enter into thy closet, and, when thou hast shut thy door, pray to thy Father which is in secret."

See how the secrecy of the act is enforced. See how every least possibility of the hypocrite's display is shut out. Even God Himself is spoken of as "in secret," as though in the privacy of the shut chamber God drew nigh to the praying soul. There can be nothing there done to be seen, or spoken to be heard, of men.

So the private prayer has more than other prayers a character and sense of deep living reality. It may be formal. It may be dull and cold and lifeless. But it cannot well be hypocrisy. Think of the soul, and think of God. The soul—God hath made it, and hath endowed it with deathless life. It is as immortal as God. It must live for ever. It cannot perish and come to an end. Strangely mysteriously linked with this perishable frame, it is nevertheless created for eternity.

And it meets its God in the secret place of prayer. We do not, of course, mean that God is really more truly present there than He is everywhere. But we must speak as men speak; as the Bible, for the sake of man's infirmity and ignorance, is pleased to speak. There God is pleased to listen to the soul that prays. There He will have His creature realize His presence and His listening ear.—*Selected.*

## WHAT GOD REQUIRES.

God's service requires the best that we are or can be. There is a strong feeling that almost any life, with a prevailing tone of goodness, meets the divine demand, but that the world requires talent and force of character in order to success. Blessed be the grace that accepts the humblest and gives to every one who feels the heart beats of divine love power to become a child of God! But let it be understood that God asks for and the Christian life demands the best for Him. No intellect overtops the claims of God, or is too great for His work. There is the grandest range for the loftiest powers in the themes of the gospel. There is full scope for the most intense energy in the divine service. There is the most urgent demand for active work in making known and enforcing principles of truth and righteousness. The world does not ask for unbelief, but for a faith clear and strong, that will lift it up out of its dismal depths and bind it firmly to the throne of God. God asks for manliness, a character and life like Christ's, strong in right and holy in truth. All this does God seek, all this does the world need, all this does our own spiritual well-being require—the best we have or can be or do. In rendering it we will be blessed and a blessing.

## STOP BEFORE YOU BEGIN.

Success depends as much on not doing as upon doing; in other words, "Stop before you begin," has saved many a boy from ruin.

When quite a young lad I came very near losing my own life and that of my mother by the horse running violently down a steep hill and over a dilapidated bridge at its feet.

As the boards of the old bridge flew up behind us, it seemed almost miraculous that we were not precipitated into the stream beneath and drowned. Arriving home and relating our narrow escape to my father, he sternly said to me:

"Another time hold in your horse before he starts."

How many young men would have been saved if early in life they had said, when invited to take the first step in wrong-doing:

"No, I thank you."

If John, at that time a clerk in the store, had only said to one of the older clerks, when invited to spend an evening in a drinking saloon, "No, I thank you," he would not to-day be the inmate of an inebriate asylum.

If James, a clerk in another store, when invited to spend his next Sunday on a steamboat excursion, had said, "No, I thank you," he would to-day have been perhaps an honored officer in the Church instead of occupying a cell in the State Prison.

Had William, when at school, said when his comrade suggested to him that he write his own excuse for absence from school and sign his father's name, "No, I thank you; I will not add lying to wrong-doing," he would not to-day be serving out a term of years in prison for having committed forgery.

In my long and large experience as an educator of boys and young men, I have noticed this, that resisting the devil in whatever form he may suggest wrong-doing to us is one sure means of success in life. Tampering with evil is always dangerous.

"Avoid the beginnings of evil" is an excellent motto for every boy starting out in life.

Oh, how many young men have endeavored, when half-way down the hill of wrong-doing, to stop, but have not been able! Their own passions, appetites, lusts and bad habits had driven them rapidly down the hill to swift and irremediable ruin.

My young friend, stop before you begin to go down the hill; learn now to say to all invitations to wrong-doing, from whatever source they may come, "No, I thank you," and, and in your old age, glory crowned, you will thank me for this advice.—*Golden Days.*

## SARAH'S MISSIONARY CAT.

"There's one thing in which I am just truly glad," she said to the cat, as she lifted her by the fore-paws and rocked back and forth in the library. "Nobody wants you; my dear old cat. They are giving away their things, and selling them, and making money with them for the missionaries; but nobody will buy my cat. Flora has sold every one of her chickens, I don't see how she could do it. And Trudie Burne won't eat a single egg, because she wants to sell them for missionary money; and her brother Tom sells his strawberries, and Fannie raises little bits of cucumbers and sells them. And it seems as though there wasn't anything to keep and have a good time with, only my dear cat. I don't know how I am going to make my missionary money; I must find some way; but I'm just as glad as I can be that there is nothing that can possibly be done with you, only just to play with you."

Alas for poor little Sarah! The very next day she went with mamma to call on Mrs. Colonel Bates; and while she sat in the front parlor, in an elegant chair that was high and slippery, and waited for Mrs. Colonel to come, who should come puffing into a back parlor, where a man was waiting to see him, but the old Colonel himself.

"I declare I would give five dollars for a good mouser! Such times as we have with mice around these premises! That's the way with an old place. Old family residences are humbugs!"

"Five dollars for a good mouser?" Mrs. Colonel came soon, and she and mamma talked and talked about a number of subjects which at another time would have pleased little Sarah. Just then her heart was too full of that one sentence to attend to anything else. "Five dollars for a good mouser?" And there was no hope of Colonel Bates giving that five dollars or any other to the missionary cause, on his own account.

There was not in all the town a better mouser than Tabby, and little Sarah knew it. And five whole dollars! It made her heart beat fast, and the tears come in her eyes. It took her two days to decide the matter, during which time she had so little appetite and moped around so sadly that her mother feared she was coming down with the measles.

One morning little Sarah knew, by the way her heart beat while she was dressing, that she

had decided. Tabby was to be put in the willow basket and taken to Colonel Bates', by her own sad little self. She hurried now; she wanted no chance to change her mind. Swiftly her little feet flew over the ground, and she was at Colonel's just as that gentleman was going through the hall on his way to breakfast. He opened the door for her himself.

"If you please sir," said little Sarah, holding up the basket and speaking very fast, "I have brought Tabby; she is a good mouser, and I know the missionaries ought to have the five dollars; but I love her very much, and would you please hurry and give it to me so I won't hear her mew again?"

"What! what! what!" sputtered Colonel Bates. "What have we here? Who are you, and what am I to give you?"

"The five dollars, if you please. You said you would, you know, for a good mouser, and Tabby is the best one that ever was, my mamma says so. And the missionaries, you know, need the money; the heathen people do, and I mustn't be selfish and keep Tabby. Will you please be very good to her?" And a great tear, hot from little Sarah's blue eyes, splashed on the Colonel's hand.

"Bless my body!" he said, and stood dazed for a moment. Then he threw back his great head and laughed so loud that little Sarah was amazed; then he took out his pocket-book.

"So I promised five dollars for a mouser did I? Who told you?"

"Nobody did, sir. I heard you say it the other day when you talked with a man."

"Just so, my tongue is always getting me into scrapes. Well, here goes! Colonel Bates is a man who always keeps his word. Here's your five dollars, and if it doesn't do the heathen good, it ought to for your sake."

Now, as all this happened only last week, of course I can't tell you how Tabby behaved, nor what the effect of her society was on Colonel Bates, nor what the children of the Mission Band said when little Sarah brought her five dollars.—*The Pansy.*

At a town in South Carolina, where the Bishop stopped on one of his pastoral visits, the Church had been ruined in the late war, and was still dilapidated and unused. The ladies of the parish had been anxious to restore and reinstate it, but as yet were entirely without means. On the Bishop's annual visit, however, he was deeply affected, and could not relate it afterward without tears, to find what these ladies had in the meantime done. It was to reclaim a piece of waste land, breaking it up and digging it themselves, then, with their own hands, planting it with cotton-seed, taking care of it personally during all its growth, and finally gathering the cotton themselves, making it into bales and selling it. With these proceeds, they restored their little Church, and had its services commenced again.

This world is full of worry and anxiety. Heavy care rusts one out in a few years. Young men under heavy business pressure become grey before their time. They break down in the prime of manhood, because of the cares and burdens which they are not able to bear. "Be anxious for nothing," says the blessed book which reveals the Saviour to us. "Cast your burdens upon the Lord, who careth for you," ought to be remembered and never forgotten by those who put their trust in Him. Here are wisdom, sunshine, hope and sweet peace, such as the world has never known. The Lord will not forsake His children.

If people who are so fond of grumbling would work more and criticize less they would feel all the better and the work of the Church would be helped along. There is too much grumbling and too little working among a class of people who could make themselves very useful. Ministers grow discouraged when they find where they should have had support and sympathy nothing but complaint and indifference. Let people who feel that the work is not progressing as they think it ought to progress, or is not being done in the way it ought to be done, put their shoulder to the wheel and lend a helping hand, and they will have no time for fault-finding.