

humility, inspired and influenced their actions and were wrought in with their doings? How far was God with them, and were they with God, in what they did?

O, how much in this age do we need to have our thoughts carried down to the profounder depths of Christian doctrine and Christian experience, — to have our attention turned from the outward of religion and life to the inward, the substantial, the spiritual, the eternal! How much do we need to have impressed upon us the truth, that Christianity can advance no farther or faster than its spirit rises, enlarges, becomes pure and intense in the very hearts of God's individual children, — in yours and mine, in his and hers! That temples and ceremonies cannot make religion, except in so far as religion makes and uses them! That wealth and learning and numbers and influence and art cannot spread Christianity, till they have first bowed down and been consecrated by its holy spirit! That the root of true Christian usefulness and power lies and grows in the silent depths of the spirit, — in the closet secrecy of prayer and self-devotion to God! That Christ must come into the world in the person of every true disciple, through the lifting up of the secret gates and the everlasting doors of the heart!

Again, there is ever a tendency to complicate religion, to confuse the heart by intricacy of doctrines, precepts, and forms, to vex the sentiment of worship with rituals, to puzzle the soul with catechisms, and to delay its child-like advance to God by forcing it to keep pace and company with some one or another band of pilgrims going heavenward by some gloomy theologian's lamp, through the aisles of their own church.

This tendency can be resisted, and the heart kept fresh