

going forward in duty and for standing firmly in the hour of trial. The Bible speaks of faith under the figures of an anchor and a shield—both are, indeed, very significant—for he who has true faith has views of duty, obligations and motives, which hold him fast to principles and enable him to resist temptations to violate his conscience, altogether different from what that man has who is guided chiefly by a selfish prudence and the maxims of a worldly expediency. Self-interest, managing its own concerns shrewdly as it thinks, never dreams that it has only an eye for trifles, and is utterly blind to all that is great. The thoroughly selfish man is his own greatest enemy; but the eye of faith looking at the real, the distant and the vast, enables a man to fasten on what are at once his own highest interests, as well as the interests of others. Faith, indeed, shuts a man up simply to do the will of God, and in this simplicity of motive lies its marvellous strength. To him whose chief end is the approbation of his God, the applause of his fellow-men must be a very small affair. Whether he shall have their friendship, or encounter their hatred in the path of duty, is but little to him whose soul is inflamed with the desire of having the friendship of God. Indeed, on the whole, how little in his eyes must appear the loss of all earthly pleasure, or the things that minister to it, who firmly believes that for those who overcome, a crown of glory and a kingdom that fadeth not away, are prepared in the heavens. Nor will the faith of this cause a man to disregard the fact, that those who are true to God will never be wholly without the approbation of wise and good men.—The desire, indeed, of the approbation and love of such, is natural to the highest order of minds, and is not a little consoling even to the most powerful. This is a source of strength to upright men; in fact, they are the only men who can honestly appropriate and safely use the applause of their fellow-creatures. Nor is it fancy to suppose that such, especially in arduous duties and heavy trials, have the approval of creatures of a higher order than man. Do not angels look down with applauding delight on him, who from pure motives, is bravely performing the task assigned him by his God? Are not many of the acts of self-denial, or noble daring in what is good, that find no record on earth, joyfully noted by this unseen “cloud of witnesses?” One would fain think so.