

nursery, or a kitchen, or a hospital, may seem in the eyes of some persons mean employment; but when they are done in a spirit fully devoted to God and his glory, they are inexpressibly dignified, as was that of Stephen when they saw his face as it had been the face of an angel. The actions of angels in heaven, and of apostles and prophets on earth, are only sublimer in form, they are not sublimer in essence and intent.

Men who long for a place in parliament, or the town council, or the magisterial chair, or the hall of commerce, more than for one in heaven,—who fear popular odium, the scorn of companions, or temporal ruin more than everlasting torment, or who feel more concern for a declining trade, who are more intensified in a political election, who make their side of party politics their first consideration—however well-qualified the opposing party may be, and whose interests and actions—both in church and state—are influenced and determined from that standpoint,—surely such persons cannot be reckoned among the sanctified, but among those whom the Apostle includes as adulterers and adulteresses, as being at friendship with the world, but at enmity with God (Jas. iv. 4).

In conclusion, suffer a few words of counsel and encouragement. Nothing will so support you in the troubles of this world as a humble conviction that to serve and honor God is the chief purpose of your life. Temporal success is not insured to us. We may toil hard, tax our wisdom to the uttermost, reduce our expenditure, watch and pray, and yet after all our plans may be defeated, and an honorable and Christian industry be rewarded with disappointment. Such things are very trying both to our faith and our natural sensibilities. You may have to leave the home of your youth,—the family circle, long consecrated by the daily reading of the Word of God and prayer, it may be broken up. Your beloved wife and children may have to condescend to harder duties, and to be clothed in meaner garments, and the friend of your prosperity may know you no more. But in the midst of all this desolation, it will be like a very heaven on earth to be buoyed up and gladdened with the conviction that, throughout the whole course of events, you simply followed God as he led you in the way, and upon your tabernacle everywhere there has been the signal of Divine approval,—the pillar of a cloud by day, and of fire by night. The decided and consistent follower of Christ, walking amid crowds of fashionable and half-hearted disciples, as well as the honorable but ruined tradesman, all feel the force and power of this continual consolation. If you continue to walk by the same rule, and mind the same things, you have an infallible standard of action. There is no fear of you keeping a drinking saloon, or learning your children to dance. If darkness should seem to rest upon the future, and times of trial afflict, you will go seriously and calmly on in the struggle. Your sanctified nature and character will be certain to emerge from the whole, both undestroyed and unimpaired, like the angel-forms which “ran and returned” amid the clouded fires of Ezekiel’s vision (Ezek. i. 14).