

this line. Though it was not right, and never can be, we understand what went on in the heart of those who sought escape from the world, in cell or hermitage, for the sake of unbroken fellowship with God. It might have been efficacious, if in withdrawing from the world they had been able to leave the world behind. But we carry it in our heart. Wherever we go it goes with us. There are no monastic walls so thick, or places in forests so distant, but Satan has means to reach them. To shut oneself out from the world moreover, for the sake of a closer walk with God, is to seek on earth what can only be our portion in heaven. We may escape many things in doing it. The eye may no more see much vanity. But existence becomes abnormal. Life becomes narrow. Human nature is reduced to small dimensions. There is no imperative task on hand, no calling in life, no exertion of all one's powers. Conflict is avoided. Victory tarries.

But "To Be Near Unto God" in the midst of busy avocations yields its sweetest blessedness when it is cultivated in the face of sin and the world, as an oasis in the desert of life. And they whom the world has tried in most cruel ways to draw away from God have achieved highest honors and blessings. In spite of obstacles and worldly opposition they continued to have trysts with God, Jacob at Peniel, Moses in Horeb, David when Shimei cursed him, Paul when the people rose in uproar against him. In the heat of conflict "To Be Near Unto God" is blessed.

And apart from conflict with the world, the flesh and the devil, when clouds of adversity gather overhead, when the heart bleeds with wound upon