

abandoned that resolution. Now they are sinning, then again repenting; sometimes full of faith, hope, and love; then again they are doubting, gloomy, and cold. Some circumstances again turn their attention to the cross, and a bleeding Saviour, when they are filled with grief and penitence, and they resolve and declare in the sight of angels and men, that they will be the Lord's. But they mingle with the world—forget the Saviour—and imbibe the spirit of our Lord's enemies; till again, perhaps, some influence may awake them to their sad condition.

Would to God that all our changes were for the better. How great may be the attainments of that man, who, clothed with the christian armour, resists every evil influence, and brings all that is good to bear in the formation of his character. In view of the impressibility and flexibility of human character, may we not conclude that the aged pilgrim, who, while he tremulously leans upon the top of his staff, is filled with desire, love, and hope, has reason to rejoice that the grave is but a few steps before him. He is free from the expectation of a long life; the unhappy influence of which has lulled to sleep the consciences and fears of many a youth, till awakened by the hoarse voice of death, who gave them no time to prepare for eternity.

The foundation of all our desires and expectations of reformation improvement, and perfection, is the Gospel and its ordinances. How well calculated are these to prepare us to resist temptation, and aid us in the formation of a righteous character. Through prayer, we enter the presence of God, where we see His Holiness, and feel its influence; and we hear the voice of Him who is the fountain of light and purity, speaking to us through the Scriptures. Fasting checks the passions of our nature; watching, enables us to resist evil influences, and every inclination to do wrong; by meeting with the saints, where the influence is heavenly, we are strengthened and built up through their reproof, teaching, and exhortations; and when we approach the sacred emblems, where we are made to feel what we were, and what we are, where an agonizing Saviour is brought up to our minds, we see the love of God and Christ, and are filled with penitence, humility, gratitude, love, firmness, and zeal. The first day of the week, also, strengthens that cable by which we are held steadily and firmly to the great purpose of purifying ourselves, that we may be made like him who has gone within the veil. Who, that knows the strength of temptation, and the weakness of his own nature, will neglect the varied, yet happily blended influences of Christ's institutions?