

from God has become an immutable sentiment. This is only a particular instance of what is frequently witnessed in regard to the habitual ascendancy of particular affections. We daily see men so much enslaved to sensuality that we would as soon hope to see a goat fly through the air, as to see them abandon their pollutions. When habits of avarice become deeply rooted in a man, all experience leads us to conclude that they will become more deeply engrained—that hand and heart will relax their grasp only in death. Irreligion, comprehending the whole class of antipiritual affections, has a similar tendency to render itself immutable, and this point multitudes, we have reason to fear, have reached, during the year now closed. Their hardened hearts will never again experience the tender meltings of contrition; they will never more be capable of a pure and elevated devotion, many Sabbaths may return to them in coming years, but they will never know what meaneth the Sabbath's rest. Their deep slumber of spiritual death will not be broken by any sound less terrific than the last trumpet of the archangel, and the pronouncing of an irrevocable sentence justly appropriate to the immutable character they have framed.—God alone knows whether the day of grace is passed to any who shall peruse these remarks. A few years hence and all will be known. But be persuaded, O reader, to open your eyes on those symptoms in your spiritual condition that should alarm your fears. It is an unfavorable omen when youth has passed away in spiritual slumber—for during this period of comparative innocence and sensibility fewer obstacles to the implantation of religion in the soul exist; but should religious slumber extend itself also throughout the period of manhood, even to the commencing winter of age—ah, how oppressed must be the hope, that the averseness to God shall ever be taken away. Were any one to affirm conversion, even in such a case, impossible, it might be said to him *"ye do err, not knowing the Scriptures, or the power of God"*; and yet were any one to affirm in reference to such, that the hope of their conversion was bright and encouraging, he might justly be charged with forgetfulness of that grand law in the nature of man, by which our repeated acts and sentiments become habits, and our habits become an immutable nature. *"Can the Ethiopian change his skin or the leopard his spots? then may they also do good that are accustomed to do evil."*

These remarks have pressed themselves upon our attentions in connection with the neglected Sabbaths of the departed year, because the Sabbath and religion are intimately associated in all our thoughts. But in every review of the religious

appropriation of time, our scrutiny must extend beyond the Sabbath, since piety is an attribute of character, and must, if it really exist, pervade and manifest itself throughout all time, and in every place. On the Sabbath indeed—in the sanctuary of God, it breathes in its own pure and peculiar element. But its life and breath cannot be confined to this element: a religion so confined would evince a temporary nature and an earthly origin; it would resemble the motion produced in a dead limb by extraneous excitement, not the native activity of the living frame flowing from the inherent stimulus of life. The soul in which true piety exists is animated by the same affections on the week-day as on the Sabbath-day. Other external engagements may compel its attention and occupy its time, but they cannot alter its nature, or change the current of its affections, or dethrone the object of its supreme veneration and love. Instead of the business of life destroying our religion, that business, by our constant acting for the glory of God, is converted into so many acts of religion. For every action of the moral being assumes the character of the motive in which it originates—and Paul laboring in the fabrication of tents that he might not be burdensome to the churches displayed as much of the moral sublime, as when he reasoned before the licentious king, of righteousness, temperance, and a judgement to come. His ruling passion—a holy determination to preach the gospel of the grace of God—was the same: the external act only was different, because circumstances, in the providential appointment of God, created the diversity. Examine, reader, the general appropriation of your time by these principles. If your worldly occupations are pursued with a holy submission to His will, who has appointed your condition in life; if you are emulous to excel in them, because excellence in itself is praiseworthy and commendatory of your Christian vocation; if you pursue the paths that lead to success, not to gratify a vain ambitious pride, but to make the distinctions that success brings the means of a more extended usefulness to your fellow creatures; if indeed you habitually remember that the scenes you are now passing through, the objects that now engage you, are mainly important as they afford scope for the developement of your character as a child of God, and a subject of the government of God—then do these sentiments impress upon all your actions the stamp of religion, the tenor of your week-day conduct possesses the same essential character as the acts of your Sabbath-day worship, and your life is, in all its feelings and acts, an oblation unto the Lord. To what extent this has been your study and attainment during the past year, it becomes