

urgent. *To this end, we recommend the allotment of a portion of time for a calm review of our state in the sight of God, accompanied with prayer and fasting.* Long absence from school necessitates the scholar to review former lessons in regaining his standing, and can the Christian be recovered from the dangerous influence of past neglect, without a renewed consecration of himself in covenant to the Lord? Time is to be redeemed and set apart to this object. A suitable season for this is the opening of another year. The voices of the past come with thrilling power;—remember how it was with you in days that are past, in years that are gone. Let not the pressure of business prevent this solemn work. If so crowded with lawful duties, the greater need exists of seeing well to the interests of the immortal soul. Why should the power of the world to come prove weaker than that of the present? It may be pleaded that the ordinary means of grace are enough, and that it is a work of supererogation to set apart a special time for humiliation and fasting. We reply, ordinary means are to be highly prized, especially the Sabbath; yet the sadly defective state of religion in the soul of which we speak, leaves us in the use of ordinary means lacking life. The body is there; where is the soul? The shadow is there; where is the substance? The form is there; where is the power? Is it not time to pause, and solemnly to ask, wherefore are we left as the heath in the desert? Can the review be brief that includes our failures, our errors, our wanderings, our forgetfulness, our ingratitude, our coldness, our deadness? Further, it may be said, that the use of spare moments might do; that if the minutes that are at every man's disposal each day were rightly used for devotion, the end would be gained. This we admit; but such a state of affairs indicates health. Nothing but an active condition of the religious affections could produce that constant living and breathing in an atmosphere of devotion. A joyous state exists when the reign of winter is over and gone. Our present inquiry is as to the most likely means to bring about that blessed change. The quick, clear eye may catch a glimpse of the King in his beauty in a moment; far otherwise is it with the slumberer that must awake and rub away the film of earthliness. Would you have a weapon fit for effective use?—the rust which has grown over it in the scabbard cannot be wiped off; it must be rubbed or scoured till bright.

We are aware of an existing disposition to slight the Christian duty of fasting. It is more than hinted that correct views of the divine benevolence tend to discourage and discountenance the practice. We fail to see, however, any antagonism between correct views of the perfections of the Godhead, and the exercise of self-denial for a great and good end; the more especially when that objected to is sanctioned by the Old and New Testament. Besides, are not the bounties of God the more enjoyed when we see ourselves unworthy of them? The question further arises, whether from the tendencies of the age there is not a decided call to the duty of personal fasting, which has fallen sadly into disuse. There are so many activities in our day, that the contemplative element in our Christianity is apt to be overlooked. The old hermits that shut themselves out from the world, pushed to an extreme a truth which ought not to be forgotten. Retirement is necessary for recuperation. Religion, to be strong, must have reasons for devotion. The foundations that are laid deep and far out of sight, sustain the towers that glitter in the sun-light of heaven. Roots that spread wide and run deep, draw nourish-