

## TIME AND ETERNITY.

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"When a few years are come, then I shall go the way whence I shall not return,"  
—JOS., xvi. 22.

II. *Eternity.* Just consider that our eternal state, so far as we are concerned, is determined in time, all that is needful for the soul must be accomplished in time; as the tree falleth so will it lie. For there is no work, nor device, nor knowledge in the grave whither thou goest. If you are to be Christians, and live with Christ throughout eternity, you must be Christ's in time. While Protestants reject the Romish notion of a Purgatory, too many of them live as if they believed in some metamorphosing process after death which will turn tares into wheat, goats into sheep, and dead into living stones.

Now, when you consider the importance of the work before each of you, think you the time which you have to live so long, that you can defer the work of your souls, salvation, or that I have been tellously particular in these details; or think you that I have been saying harsh things merely for the sake of saying them, giving expression to disagreeable truths, merely for the sake of pulpit effect. Why have I been thus tedious in pointing out these things, is it not because when a few years are come, you must go the way whence you shall not return; because the time is short, the Lord is at hand, death is at hand, judgment is at hand. Oh, how short is the time for the two great works of life, repentance towards God and faith in our Lord Jesus Christ. Soon, very soon the time for pardon will be gone, soon time may end and the Lord may come suddenly at midnight, as the light ing, as a thief in the night. Soon may the mighty angels swear that there shall be time no longer. The second coming of Christ is the Scripture appeal. What I say unto you, I say unto all, Watch, for ye know not the day nor the hour when the Son of man cometh.—Infidels may scoff and ask where is the promise of his coming? The Lord by his apostles gives us a clear reason for the delay, 2 Peter iii. 8, 9.

If the time before us is not only short to itself, but also proportionably short

when measured by the magnitude of the work which we have to do, shall we not then, Christians, begin in earnest to set our house in order, shall we not be vigilant, sober and watch unto prayer, shall we not examine ourselves, give all diligence to make our calling and election sure. If we are calling upon God in prayer, striving against all sin, shunning the very appearance of evil, we are to hope that God has called us into the marvellous light of the Gospel.

"The man that calls himself elect,  
And yet can sin endure,  
That he's not chosen may suspect,  
That he's not called be sure."

2. In all candor, I must confess my fears that Christ has yet to be embraced by many of you. You may be ready to say that will not take long, we have only to believe in Christ, that is true; but experience shows that a whole life is often too short for that work. You have many hard struggles before you between penitence and unbelief, if you are to be saved; many fierce conflicts with your pride, many with your inward depravity, many with the remembrance of old sins, many with the lusts of the flesh and the lust of the eye. These are no holiday tasks, but hard work, long protracted work and continuous warfare.

Then again, some of you are quite careless and undecided, you are not vicious or profane, but amiably thoughtless; you know that you ought to be decided, you are often unhappy because that you are not decided; you are neither cold nor hot, neither decidedly worldly nor decidedly serious; you do not know what decision means, you are halting between two opinions; you know what resolves mean, you have made plenty of them, enough to sow a whole land of promise, without yielding an ephah, perhaps, of genuine Christian performance. The ship, Good Resolution, is always to be launched in the spring, but the summer with its inviting breezes passes by, and the fall finds the vessel either still on the slip of Indecision or hard and fast at anchor, in the fair haven of Intention. You know very well that you are not ready for death, if one of you should be the one to go. Oh, how difficult it is to convince such characters of the