

when we calmly and soberly reflect upon the matter, we can be at no loss for abounding evidence to support and confirm the truth thus vividly and touchingly addressed to us.

If we suramon experience to give a true unbiassed account, what is the report it presents? We may flatter and deceive ourselves with reference to the future of which we know nothing, but we cannot disguise the truth in regard to the unalterable past. Let memory, faithful to its office, review the years we have already spent. It is the work of a moment. Sooner than we can utter it we are furnished with the truthful result. *Al* the whole number of us who are *(here)* alive this day before God, thankful that we have been spared to see the commencement of another year, some are but very young, others are shooting up to manhood and prime, others have reached maturity or exceeded the average age allotted unto man, while the silvery locks of others tell them and us that they are descending into the vale of sublunary existence. What have we all, at these several stages of our unknown term of years, to say in regard to the occupation of the time we have been sojourning here below? It is no *excited* or conflicting reply we have to give. As unanimously as truly, both young and old are constrained to confess, our time has been exceedingly short. The days of the years of our pilgrimage have been few. Our winters with all their fireside enjoyments and social reunions have gone rapidly by. Our summers with all their outdoor recreations, happy excursions, and delightful walks, among the beautiful scenes in which restored nature annually clothes herself, have been equally transient and fleeting. Great and marvellous events may have left an impress upon the history of the world, strange occurrences may have befallen us as individuals, and curious experiences may have distinguished our personal career. But whatever be the nature and the number of the incidents we can recall, how brief the space of time in which they have happened! Our sons and daughters, who are quietly reaching the stature we have ourselves attained, can tell us it is not long since they became conscious of their individuality, and began to notice, think, and distinguish for themselves. Our young men and maidens are ready to avow that their youthful days have passed like a dream. *They* who have reached middle age can measure the brevity of their time by the little they have done in completing the magnificent plans of earlier years. And those amongst us, who are stooping by the scriptural limit of threescore years and ten, can speak to us wisely and instructively of the speedy lapse of the interval, which lies between their first recollections, and the present hour.

Or shall we circumscribe the sphere of our review and confine our attention to the single year of which, only for the first time as we awoke this morning, we could say, it is gone.

This day twelve months ago we rejoiced in its newness and congratulated each other, thankful to think we were spared to see it and glad to wish we might be able to enjoy it. We looked forward through its unspent weeks and days as occupying a considerable period of the future. The long reign of a rigorous winter had to pass; the active season of spring time, the flushing beauties of summer, and the glorious, even though they be the melancholy, shadows of autumn, had all to come and go. With hopeful and resolute hearts we took a prospective survey of what we might do, and we fancied there was plenty of time for it all. But now, as we are privileged to associate ourselves with the first morning of its successor, looking back upon its course, how swiftly it has receded into the irrevocable past, leaving us with a long catalogue of foiled efforts, unfinished purposes, and unavailing regrets, adding another irresistible proof to the evidence which experience supplies of the truth of the text, "but this I say, brethren, the time is short."

Or, changing yet again the trace of our reflections and turning our experience into another track, can we in any way modify, if we cannot reverse, this stern and solemn decision? We all know how to appreciate the presence of an agreeable companion, when performing a journey which otherwise would be lonely and long. By the mercy and loving-kindness of our great Creator, condescending to consider and devise for our good in this respect, we are well provided with associates in the pilgrimage of life. Husbands have their wives, children their parents, sisters their brothers, and, stepping beyond the family circle, God raises up for us all, reliable companions, kind sympathisers, bosom friends. But we all also know what it is to be called upon to mourn the loss of some one of these. Each one of us can recall the well-known features of a loving and revered parent, or an affectionate and confiding partner, or a fair and promising child, or a precious and exemplary associate—the joy of our eyes, the comfort of our hearts, the elixir of our lives—who has been called upon to stop in the broad and common road which leads to the narrow house, and bid us a last farewell as he took his departure to the invisible world beyond the confines of time. And shall we ask, what of the period of our companionship, they with us and we with them? Its exceeding shortness is one of the first characteristics that meet and impress us, as we blend together in our recollections its many joys and sorrows. Does it not seem as if such tender connections were formed only to be broken? Do we not feel it be one of the hardest things in our mortal lot that those we love and trust should be spared to us for so brief a season? Does it not require something more pure, powerful, and heavenly, than mere natural fortitude to submit, without repining, to have them snatched from our