

nection, we shall endeavor to anticipate the future, and we shall conclude by directing you to that great refuge which we ever have amid the perils and vicissitudes of this present life—commending you to God, and to the word of His grace.

We have now, my friends, been together for a period of upwards of six years. How many are the changes which have come and gone during this comparatively brief period! Those who were little more than boys and girls when I came here, have become men and women; the young have been progressing towards middle-age, or have become the heads of families; and many of those who were comparatively vigorous and hale have had the infirmities of old age insensibly creeping on them. How many, too, have gone the way of all the living during this period—the old, the middle-aged, the young, the sucking child. It is on such occasions as this, when we are called to review the few years we have been together, that we are made to feel how stealthily time has been slipping through our hands, and how imperceptibly it is bringing us all nearer the grave. We go on toiling and plodding for the meat that perisheth, and hardly perceive the inroads that time is making on us till we find ourselves old men and old women.

But it matters little, my friends, that we are every day becoming older, if we are, at the same time, becoming wiser; and, therefore, a question of chief importance to us is, Have we been improving the opportunities we have enjoyed during the six-and-a-half years of our connection?

During this period, as we have said, matters of surpassing importance to us, as individuals, have been transacted between us. Sabbath after Sabbath, during this long period, the Gospel of life has sounded forth in our midst. A serious question it surely is to both minister and people. Has this long term of usefulness—have the many sermons which have been preached from this pulpit, in this time, been productive of any good; or has it all been as so much water spilt on the dry ground? When we stand before God at last, will it be found that I have totally neglected or shamefully abused the opportunities of influencing you for good which I have enjoyed? or will it be to your condemnation that you have not availed yourselves, as you should, of the opportunities which you have enjoyed?

It is difficult to estimate sufficiently the influence of the Gospel ministry on a community, where that influence is wielded aright. The benefits which it may be expected to confer are twofold. By the sounding forth of Gospel truth, by the faithful preaching of sound morality and the recommendation of industry and good order, by the denunciation of vicious slothful habits, by a minister's forming an embodiment of these precepts

which he inculcates, in his own person, it may be expected that the community where he dwells will be gradually elevated in christian feeling and moral tone. We have always thought that, even in this secondary point of view, the benefit which a consistent minister of Christ and the faithful preaching of the truth does a community, cannot be estimated too highly. And, in a new country like this, the beneficial or injurious consequences are likely to be much greater. New countries are, necessarily, in a transition state. Every thing is unstable about them. They are not like old countries, where the character of the people, handed down from father to son, is a fixed thing, which it will require a great amount of importation from other localities to alter. Young countries, having a new career to run—being composed, for the most part, of a wide variety of nationalities, or of those who, with a new sphere of action, have thrown off the old ideas and associations of their Fatherland—are, like young persons, liable to have their character formed by accidental impressions. The presence of a few staunch men in such a community—men not easily carried away by novelties, however plausible, but maintaining a high standard of morality and integrity, is fitted to be of incalculable benefit. And, in this particular aspect, a minister's position is greatly more responsible. Though a minister should lead a careless or immoral life in an old community, it is not likely to have such an injurious effect among a people whose habits are already formed; but among a people who are still in a state of infancy, it may leave its stamp on their character for ages to come.

But the Gospel ministry has higher aims than merely improving the character of a people. It should be its chief object to direct their thoughts to another and a better world, to prevent the engrossing pursuits of this life from cheating them of their souls, to persuade them of the vast importance of those things that concern their peace, and to lead them to seek an interest in the Gospel, and to prepare generally for a future state. Viewed in this light, hardly any office can be of greater importance or responsibility than that of the Christian Ambassador. On the manner in which it is discharged, must it, under God, very much depend, whether the people to whom he ministers are serious or careless, whether they have deficient or enlightened views of divine truth, whether they have a mere form of godliness, or whether they have such a knowledge of the way of salvation and are so led to practice it, that it will result in their eternal salvation at last.

While an engine of such potency has been in operation among us for so considerable a period, the question, surely, cannot be a matter of indifference to either party, Of what avail has it been?—To me, the question cannot be a matter of indifference, How has this engine been worked? and to you, the ques-