

may fairly consider and improve in connection with the text, as being obviously included therein, the far greater shortness of the time we have, each one of us respectively, to employ in preparing to meet the Lord. What kind of meeting we shall have, whether happy or sorrowful, depends upon the manner of our present living. Death terminates the period of our probation. Our condition at the end of time will be determined by our state in the sight of God, when our earthly course is finished. The point to which I desire specially to direct your attention is, therefore, not the whole fact expressed by the words of the text, but a part thereof, namely, the brevity of our lifetime upon earth. In other words, let us regard ourselves as severally addressed by the Apostle. "But this I say, brethren, *your time is short.*"

The time allotted to each one of us here below is short. The days of the years of our pilgrimage are few. "We spend our years as a tale that is told." "As for man, his days are as grass; as a flower of the field so he flourisheth, for the wind passeth over it and it is gone; and the place thereof shall know it no more." To this fact on a very little reflection, we all readily assent. It is, however, very obvious that we are prone to be forgetful of it. Many circumstances have the effect of inducing a sinful and pernicious thoughtlessness with reference to it, and it may not be unprofitable to advert in the first place to some of these.

It is hard to convince the young that their time is short. With a few rare exceptions of early piety they do not live in the remembrance of this sobering truth. In the vigor and buoyancy of their youthful spirits they are not troubled with thoughts of death. The present existence, they admit, must come to a close, but with manhood, and prime, and old age before them, the evil day is removed far off into the distant future. They indulge in the happy recreations or thoughtless follies peculiar to their years, confident that their lease of life is long. When they begin to dream of what they will yet be and do,—picturing with vivid and glowing imaginations the positions they will occupy in the world, the vocations they will follow, the fortunes they will make, the influence they will exercise—determining that so soon as they are their own masters they will not succumb to the silly notions of their sires or be hindered by the slow movements of this dull and stupid age, but will mark out new paths for themselves, and contrive some better way of conducting business, and in short, completely revolutionize the existing order of things. Then in the eagerness of their ambition to be men, they count the years they must yet spend as children, and think them many and long. They chide the slowness of their growth and the wearisomeness of their days, and, as if to hasten round the sluggish seasons, they make the manners of their seniors the subject of

their aping airs. Their view of the length of the time is, however, only a delusion, for meanwhile the precious period of preparation for the active duties of life is passing swiftly on, and should they be spared, which may not be the case, the day is fast approaching, when looking back amid burdening cares and busy pursuits, which in their turn apparently shorten their remaining years, the former days will be only as a vision of the night when it is gone.

But such fancies are not confined to the young. Many circumstances influence the minds of multitudes of men and women and make the time seem long. A lot of sadness and sorrow has this effect. When lingering disease overtakes the strong, separating them from the occupation of their choice and the society of their fellows, shutting them up in the darksome chamber, and confining them to beds of languishing—when in their tossings to and fro, strangers to the blessings of peace and rest, they wait anxiously for the night in the expectation of refreshing sleep, and if the night cometh and bringeth no relief, they look as wistfully for the return of day—in such a case, the time does not seem swift and short, but every hour is lengthened out to a most painful tediousness. To the exile, banished to a foreign land, far away from home and friends, separated by oceans or continents from the loved and pleasant scenes of childhood, thrown among a people entirely unknown to him and having but few sympathies in common with him, as he sits and broods on his adversity, calling up the forms and faces of absent companions, the privileges and pursuits of other years, endeared to him by a thousand sweet and familiar associations, and all the dearer that he is sadly severed from them, and as he longs and prays in the sickness of his heart for an opportunity to return to his native land, that there he may enjoy the remainder of his days the intercourse of congenial society, and that at the close of life's journey he may depart hence, happy in the thought of being gathered to his fathers instead of being buried among strangers—to him there are no enjoyments and pleasures such as hasten on the flight of time, but slowly and heavily day follows day. The time does not seem short to the prisoner whose recollections of the free and happy world without are saddened by the thought that his personal liberty is taken away, who has nothing to relieve the terrible monotony of his gloomy cell but a daily visit from the sun's kindly rays through his grated window, or the heavy tramp of the gaoler on his rounds, or the dolorous sound of the iron door turning stiffly on its hinges. Nor is the time short to the heartbroken wife who pines as she watches during the long, weary, midnight hours for the return of her faithless and cruel husband, starting in her unquiet, fitful slumber at every sound she hears or imagines she hears, and wondering how he, who vowed