

DISCERNING TIME.

"A wise man's heart discerneth both time and judgment."—Eccles. viii. 5.

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Before another issue of this publication, one of time's great periods shall have closed, and a succeeding one shall have commenced its course. Another year shall have been added to the world's age; a new wrinkle furrowed in its brow. We shall be one year nearer to eternity—to the vast boundless, unbeginning, unending;—from which time, may be looked back upon, as a little episode in the grand epic of Being and Duration—one page of history, all in so tant but brief—a fragment of a volume, without a commencement or a close.

And when we reflect, that we are deeply interested in the matter, as inhabitants of the earth, as pilgrims here, travelling to an undiscovered country beyond; appearing on this scene for a little season, then stepping out into that unknown future, when we call to mind, that our days are numbered by these passing years, and that, long before earth's story ends, while yet its years are rolling on with unflagging force, and undiminished speed, our sojourning will cease, and our name and memorial, which may linger for a little while in the treasured affections of those who loved us, shall at last utterly perish from among men. When we think on what is our appointed and proper business here, and how we have conducted it, and so prepared for meeting the Judge and Master, whose scrutiny we shall encounter there. And when we think of sins committed, and guilt incurred, and wrath deserved;—of Christ and grace vouchsafed to us;—of death and judgment inevitable;—of heaven with its glories, and hell with its horrors; of this the *mercy-time*—our day of grace, so swiftly hurrying down to night:—surely the deep toll of time's great bell

reverberating o'er the world should awaken the sleeper, alarm the negligent, rouse to agony the conscience of the unsaved sinner, and startle and solemnize us all.—Surely, we are called upon to try to discern something in the time that will induce thoughtfulness, and lead us to prayer, and heaven-directed effort, which, by God's blessing, may result in the redemption of time by us, and in lasting benefit to our souls. "A wise man's heart discerneth both time and judgment." Fools only are unheeding, and content to be ignorant in such a case.

1. Discerning time, is looking at it, considering it and all about it; to know what it is, and what we have to do with it.

Time is to us, to all; the period of earthly mortal life; a portion of it already gone, beyond recall; a present moment in possession;—and a probable lengthening of our term a little farther into the future.

Time is a fragment of eternity yet not detached. It is a link in the endless chain of infinite duration. It is a point in the great circle, whose line of circumference has neither starting point nor terminus.

We are now in life; we are immortal; as such, we have begun a deathless life; we are already in eternity. A portion of that eternal being is to be spent by us here—our *appointed time* on earth: *It is measured by a few short years. They are passing—will soon be past;—and then we shall exchange our present form and mode of life for that state of existence to which no numbering of years, no measuring line can be applied.*

Discerning time is to notice and verify.

1. Its vast importance.