

you through all the subsequent stages of your being—through youth, through manhood, through death, and through eternity. But, defer until advanced years, and, though the soul be saved, you will only be as a brand plucked from the burning. At best, should your days of godly life be prolonged, you shall have to contend against old habits, to correct old errors, and implant new principles. You shall thus have to struggle hard to emancipate the soul, and body too, from the trammels of the past. Thoughts of the past shall sting the conscience, and the bitter conviction that your life of sin so affected society, that those you might have benefitted, have been injured, and hastened to ruin. Whereas, the old saint, whose youth and advancing years have been in the ways of righteousness, can look on the past, with pleasure and humble gratitude. He now enjoys sweet communion with his reconciled God. He realizes joy in the Holy Ghost. He can dwell amid the hopes and joys, and sympathies of a higher and better state of being. Having finished his course, —doing the work assigned to him by his Lord, he desires to depart, to be with Christ in the regions of immortality.

III. Consider the importance and necessity of Prayer. Men have measured the distances of remote stars, and mastered many abstruse problems, who failed to form a profitable estimate of their time. The weakest faculties and very limited knowledge can reckon the mere number of days of the longest life; but the loftiest efforts and the highest intellectual attainments cannot determine when he may be summoned hence. It is equally impossible for mere mental effort to form a just estimate of the value of time, or of the greatness of the work of salvation, until he draws near unto God, and learns that from Him he derives every breath, and that, through the advocacy of the Great Intercessor before the Throne, his life is prolonged; until he prize time, under His Teaching, who only grants one moment at once, to all His intelligent beings. Reason, observation, experience concur in telling you that time is short, that the interests of the soul, and the favor of God, are of unspeakable importance. But, have you hitherto failed to redeem time so as to secure the great end of your being? Be assured the sole reason is, that you did not desire to be taught of God. If you have not earnestly sought divine aid, to improve your day of grace, and means of grace, wonder not that your best efforts have been vain efforts.

The devout Christian has learned, from sad experience, to ascribe the many blanks in his religious history to his not assiduously seeking the aid of God to enable him rightly to value his time and talents. The Father of all mercies has appointed prayer as the medium of intercourse between heaven and earth, between God and the soul. This is the means of obtaining all promised blessings. It were truly singular, then, if time,—without

which we can enjoy no blessing,—could be improved without holding communion with God in prayer. In the exercise of prayer, the soul is brought into close contact with the God of all grace, and all we are, and have, are consecrated to Him; and we thus receive vigor and elasticity of mind. Time occupied in prayer, is time consecrated. To learn this, is one of the most profitable lessons in our Christian experience. The soul thus brought under the power of the world to come, must be invigorated for holy duties. We are thus elevated above things seen, and made to realize an earnest of heavenly communion and heavenly blessedness. Let us learn to hold spiritual intercourse with God, and, whatever blessing we need, He will readily bestow. This truth is broadly taught us in the Word of God, and confirmed to the soul by the Holy Spirit. This fact is supported by a great army of the faithful, in all ages of the Church. No other truth has been better tested and confirmed by the faithful of all times. The tried efficacy of prayer is ratified by myriads of witnesses who encircle the throne of Jehovah. Trial in this, as in all other religious duties, is the best proof. Prove God in this. The privilege is not confined to a select few. The way is open to all. The Holy Spirit is offered to all. The invitation is given to all. "If any lack wisdom, let him ask it of God, who giveth liberally, and upbraideth not."

Our text invites to united effort. It is not teach *me*; number *my* days; apply *my* heart. It is teach *us*; *our* days; *our* hearts. True, we must be schooled in redeeming time, acquiring wisdom, and calling upon God, in working out our personal salvation. If we have not learned to value time, wisdom, prayer, for ourselves, we are ill qualified to work in the Church and in the world.

Our days, since our fathers set their foot on these shores, have been strewn with unnumbered blessings. We have enjoyed constant repose from the curse of war, and we have not borne the expense of securing peace. We have had the guardian care of one of the most benignant Sovereigns under heaven. Our interests have been protected by some of the wisest and most exemplary statesmen of any age. We have had the guardian care and support of one of the fairest and freest Churches of the Reformation. We have had the purest historical character and scriptural standards to aid our faith, secure our confidence, and regulate our practice. We have a long succession of the most exemplary piety of the excellent of the earth. And to us have been committed the oracles of God. Our Church has sustained severe losses and bitter persecution from quarters most difficult to be endured. She has been burning, but, blessed be God! she has not been consumed. On a review of the past, it becomes us to consider whether we are coming forth seven times purified, and greatly benefitted. What