

our works here, we shall be judged in a future world. According therefore as you now sow, hereafter you shall reap. The time is now passing that decides your fate for ever. The hours are at this instant on the wing, upon which eternity depends. In this view, let me exhort you to look back on your past life. Call your former hours to an account. Ask them what report they have carried to Heaven. Is there anything in your life to distinguish it from mere existence? Do you discern anything but shadows in that mirror which remembrance holds up? Is the book of memory one vast blank, or blotted all over? If this be the case,—and I am afraid it is the case with a great part of men.—*what better* are ye than the animals of the field or the forest? Like you, they sleep and they wake; like you, they eat and they drink; like you, they perform the various functions of nature. Alas! my brethren did Almighty God create you after his own image, that you might sink that image to the resemblance of a beast? For what have you done since you came into being, to distinguish yourselves from the brutes that perish? Have you glorified God in all your actions? Have you made your calling and election sure, by a living faith in the Lord Jesus Christ, by repentance from dead works, and by universal purity of heart and life? Have you enriched your mind with the treasures of wisdom? Have you adorned your life with the beauties of holiness? Have you laid up many deeds of piety and charity, as a good foundation against the time to come? Unless you have done these things, you have done nothing. You have been blanks in the universe. You are as if you had never been. You have been fast asleep; nor has your sleep been the less sound, that you have dreamed you were awake.

I now call upon you to arise, or be for ever fallen. It is now high time to awake. Almighty God now calls upon you to finish the work which he hath given you to do. Glory, and honor, and immortality are set before you. Up then and be doing, and the Lord shall be with thee. With such views of your duty, and upon these principles of action, you will never join in the apology which some make for themselves, that the general tenor of their life is innocent, and that at least they have the negative merit to do no harm. Perhaps this account may be true; but let me ask such persons, have you ever considered the parable of the master who called his servants to account? He delivered talents to them, according as he saw fit, with this charge, "Occupy till I come." The servant who received the one talent was negligent and slothful. He wrapt up his talent in a napkin, and hid it in the earth. He thought he did well, if he secured the capital till his Lord's return. But the master received the talent with indignation. He cast the unprofitable servant into utter darkness, and condemned him to weeping, and wailing, and

gnashing of teeth. The poor wretch was neither a thief nor a murderer. He had not wasted his Lord's goods. He had your plea—he had done no harm. But he was found guilty of idleness and sloth; he received the sentence, and was condemned to punishment. That which is the ground of your security, could not save him from condemnation.

But, in good earnest, do you no harm? Is it no harm to wander from the cradle to the grave, in a labyrinth of amusements, either vain or childish? Is it no harm to waste in dissipation and expensive pleasure, that wealth which might have saved an honest family from beggary and want? Is it no harm to squander in one continued round of vanity and folly, those precious hours on which your future happiness depends? If there be harm in human actions, *this* is harm. It is a criminal negligence which will turn the scale of your eternal doom.

To you, my younger friends, this duty recommends itself under the most interesting claims. You are now in that period when time can be improved to the best advantage. With you, every hour of life is precious. The misimprovement of youthful days is more than loss of time. It were of little consequence to throw away a few days from your life; but along with these,—you cut off the substantial improvements, the real joys of maturer age. Figure to yourselves the loss which the year would sustain, if the spring were taken away;—such a loss you sustain. No tears, nor lamentations, nor bitter upbraidings, will ever recall that golden period. The star sets to rise no more; the flood rolls away never to return.

Your own experience, my aged brethren, will urge the instant necessity of redeeming the time. Consider the fate that awaits you soon. A few steps will bring you to the threshold of that house which is appointed for all living. Man that is born of woman is of few days. He cometh forth as a flower, and is cut down; he flieth as a shadow, and continueth not. By the unalterable law of nature all things here hasten to an end. An irresistible rapidity hurries every thing to the abyss of eternity; to that awful abyss, to which all things go, and from which nothing returns. The great drama of life is perpetually going on. Age succeeds to age, and generation to generation. Not long ago, our fathers trode the path which their fathers had trodden before them; we have come into their room, and now supply their places. In a little time we must resign to another race, who in their turn also shall pass away, and give place to a new generation. The race of men, said a Jewish writer, is like the leaves of the trees. They come forth in the spring, and clothe the wood with robes of green. In autumn they wither, they fall; the winter wind scatters them on the earth. Another race comes in their season, and clothes the forest again.

Consider the world, my friends, as you saw