

evil influences and do evil, his soul has a bias toward evil, and he becomes worse and worse as he grows older. How important that we receive the seed of the gospel into the soil of our hearts, so that we may bring forth the fruits of righteousness in the characters we form and the influence we exert. Let this consideration dwell in our minds then, and we will be impressed with the importance and reality of life.

4. The importance and reality of life will be still more impressed on us, if we consider the bearing of the present on the future. There is a future life. Man's capacities and powers are made for it. Man's conscience demands it. The Bible declares it. We do not pass into nonentity when we die. There is a bright and blessed heaven, and there is a dark and dismal hell. Now the present has a relation to the future. The present is sowing time. The eternal future is the reaping time; and we must reap as we sow. According to the characters which we form here will be our destiny hereafter. This is the period for turning to God by the faith of his gospel and thus becoming meetened for an eternity of bliss. Blessed are they who improve it, wretched they who abuse it by neglecting the great salvation. What is the short span of our existence here to the interminable future which lies before us? What is the river to the vast ocean into which it empties itself? What is the life of an infant, who departs to heaven as soon as born to the life of an aged man? Far, far less is human life to the everlasting future?

Who shall imagine immortality, or picture its illimitable prospect!  
 How feebly shall a flattering tongue express the vast idea!  
 For consider the primeval woods that bristle over broad Australia;  
 And count their autumn leaves, millions multiplied by millions;  
 Thence look up to a moonless sky from a sleeping isle of the Ægean;  
 And add to these leaves yon starry host, sparkling in the midnight numberless;  
 Thence traverse an Arabia, some continent of eddying sand,  
 Gather each grain, let none escape, add them to the leaves, and to the stars.  
 Afterward gaze on the sea, the thousand leagues of an Atlantic;  
 Take drop by drop, and add their sum to the grains, and leaves and stars.  
 The drops of ocean, the desert sands, the leaves and stars innumerable,  
 (Albeit in that multitude of multitudes, each small unit were an age;)   
 All might reckon for an instant, a transient flash of time,  
 Compared with this intolerable blaze, the measureless enduring of eternity.  
 With what mighty importance is the period of our lifetime invested  
 in our estimation, when we consider that our conduct during the  
 brief and fleeting present will determine our destiny in the never-  
 ending future.