

"These as they change, Almighty Father, these  
Are but the varied God. *The rolling year*  
*Is full of Thee.*"

So felt the devout and "Sweet Singer of Israel" when he said, "*Thou* renewest the face of the earth:" "*Thou* crownest the year with thy goodness:" "*Thou* hast made summer and winter."

In the *Spring season*, when genial warmth, and vegetable life, and the blossom and the bud, and the songs among the branches, come in upon the human heart with their welcome influences, how important to consider, whether "the day spring from on high" has had a welcome to our spirits, whether the coldness of our moral nature has been removed by the rays of the Sun of Righteousness, whether the joy of God's salvation has begun to gladden our hearts.

In *Summer*, when "the valleys are covered over with corn," when there is "the ear and then the full corn in the ear," how important to consider what growth is advancing in our souls.

"The mind untaught's a waste—when fends and tempests howl:" and the soul, not taught of God, yields not the peaceable fruits of righteousness."

In *Autumn*, when the leaves wither and fall and the fruits of the earth are gathered in, how important to consider that "we all do fade as a leaf," and that "whatsoever a man soweth, that shall he also reap."

And, in *Winter*, when the balmy breezes, the beauties and the fragrance of the natural world are far away, and man left all the more to himself, to the world within, how important to indulge sober thought, and to seek, in reliance on the grace of the Lord of all, to cherish those principles which are according to godliness, to cultivate those spiritual tastes of which heaven will be a never-ending gratification, and to indulge those bright prospects which no change in the seasons can materially affect, and which a change of worlds cannot impair.

There are three particular directions of thought to which the idea of winter peculiarly tends to turn the mind, viz:—old age, seasons of adversity, and the state of the unrenewed.

*Old age.* How common to think and speak of old age as the winter of human life.

And now "dread winter spreads his latest glooms  
And reigns tremendous o'er the conquered year:  
How dumb the vegetable kingdom lies!  
How dumb the tuneful!

Behold, fond man!

See here, thy pictured life: pass some few years,  
Thy flow'ry spring, thy summer's ardent strength,  
Thy sober Autumn fading into age,  
And pale concluding winter comes at last,  
And shuts the scene. Ah! whither now are fled  
Those dreams of greatness—those unsolid hopes  
Of happiness—those longings after fame—  
Those restless cares—those busy bustling days—  
Those gay spent festive nights—those veering thoughts  
Lost between good and ill that shared thy life:  
All now are vanished! virtue sole survives,  
Immortal, never failing friend of man,  
His guide to happiness on high."

"Virtue sole survives," says the poet. But is it always so? Alas, not seldom, how sadly different. The old age of some is desolate indeed: friend after friend having drooped and disappeared, till not one friend of youth or