

precision and care, sown with the most valuable grain, and every preparation made to secure the full benefit of that genial warmth which the approaching summer's sun is ere long to shed down upon the earth. Others, again, we see bearing the too evident traces of idleness and neglect; the process of cultivation not incomplete, but of the most slovenly and superficial kind; little done either to extirpate the weeds or to enrich the soil. While, worse than these, we may meet with others still for which nothing has been done at all, which have been left to the mere force of nature, and exposed, like an open common, to be trodden under foot. In this aspect of the fields, I believe we have a faithful picture of the condition in which the multitudes of young men arrive at the close of the spring-time of human life. Perhaps the very audience now address may contain examples of the variety now described, reaching even from the highest to the lowest extreme. Many of you, I cannot doubt, have enjoyed in your early years the inestimable advantage of a good education, and of being subjected to the wholesome restraints of a sound moral and religious discipline. Their own idleness, or the limited means of their parents, may have deprived others of a large share of these blessings. What circumstances still more adverse may have left a certain number to struggle through their bleak and unpropitious spring with scarcely a hand to help, or a tongue to guide their course. But whatever may be the state in which you have arrived at the termination of your spring, what I am chiefly anxious to show is this: that your *summer*, the pregnant period on which you have now entered, and which is the immediate theme of my discourse, is a period as momentous to you all. I do not say indeed that the evils necessarily resulting from a spring neglected or misapplied can ever be wholly remedied; but much, nevertheless, may be done even thereby by the active and energetic application of the proper means, to secure a harvest which, if not reaching to the hundred-fold of the Saviour's parable, at least attain to the thirty-fold. While, on the other hand, I affirm, with equal confidence, that even the spring which has been most diligently improved will not of itself make the harvest sure. There is in every heart, as there is in every field of that earth which has been cursed for sinful man's sake, materials which it needs but the heat of a summer's sun, the sun of the first fresh and fiery temptation of a present world, — to call forth into rank and exuberant vegetation; and to cause them, like a rush of noxious weeds, to overgrow, choke, and