

and deal with it here, if we are to keep in view the great end which these Lectures are designed to promote. A familiar representation, according to which the successive stages of man's existence upon earth have been often and very fitly compared to the seasons of the year, may serve not only to define with sufficient clearness the precise period of life to which my remarks shall have reference, but to furnish at the same time, in a simple and intelligible form, some of those materials to be afterwards employed in showing that the period in question is one of unspeakable moment. In the figurative representation now alluded to, infancy, childhood, and a limited number of the years which immediately follow, are pictured forth as the counterpart of spring. That later portion of the period of youth which is verging rapidly towards manhood is likened to the warmth and the bloom of summer. Manhood itself, getting all its fully developed powers, finds its corresponding emblem in the mellow hues and ripe fruits of autumn. While declining age, verging imperceptibly into feebleness and decay, is strikingly shadowed forth in the shortening days, the chilling frosts, the bare and desolate landscapes, which close up the expiring year. And now,—

“ ’Tis done! dread *Winter* spreads his latest gloom,
And reigns tremendous o’er the conquer’d year.”
How dead the vegetable kingdom lies!
How dumb the tuncful! Horror wide extends
His desolate domain. Behold, fond man!
See here thy pictured life: pass some few years,
Thy flowering spring, thy summer’s ardent strength,
Thy sober autumn fading into age,
And pile concluding *Winter* comes at last
And shuts the scene!”

Reverting, then to this figurative representation of human life, it be understood, that the period of youth of which I am about to speak is not the spring, but the summer of the year. I may perhaps assume that my hearers, with few exceptions, have either already passed through, or at least drawing very near to the border of, the first of these great sections of man's earthly career. At an early culture, indeed, your hearts and minds may have received, what seeds of knowledge and religious principle may have been cast in, I cannot tell. Widely different, I have no doubt, the treatment of some has been from the treatment of others. If we walk abroad among the fields in the closing days of summer, how diversified is the appearance they present to the eye! In some we find thoroughly fenced round, dressed with the utmost