No. 61.
On Spring
Psalm civ. 30. — "Thou renorest the face of the earth."

How beautifully is the work of Omniscience described in these simple concise expressions. It is before us at once, a picture of the operation of God's power. Many other volumes could be, how totally nature dies and dies, grows and decays by the hand of the Almighty. It is the reflection one, of his image, who loved to see in it the God of nature, of one, who could not stand amidst the glories of creation, without feeling his heart burn within him to thank of that Being who chose these glories came, who could not see the earth changing water into life, without carrying his thanks to that mighty God, whose smile gives life to the earth.
all that it has of beauty and fertility. Indeed, no other
abundant evidence, that David, the great poet
and king of Israel, was an admiring student of nature,
that he loved to walk abroad his thoughts among
the great and glorious beauties of the Most High, as they
are exhibited in the creation around us. This
notion of delight in the contemplation of these
works of God, as they affect a devout and devoutly
mind, is in the psalm from which our text is
referred. After bringing before us in a majestic style
of eloquence the wonders of the heavens, the wonders
of the land, the wonders of the deep, pertaining to
the floods of the air, the seas of the field, the
flora of the field, as he hastens towards the conclusion,
he speaks beautifully of the entire dependence of
the myriad of beings on all the universe, on Him,
who first gave them existence. Then, secondly, it is
the spirit, says he, "of they are created," and adds
in the emphatical and energetic language of the

The text: "if thou renewest the face of the earth..."

I have thought, my dear sir, that these words might
at the present time afford us a peculiarly appropri-
ate and interesting subject of reflection. God is now no
longer the face of the earth, yet surely becomes as
above to notice the hand, it is everywhere, it is every
era. I believe no portion of the year has so much that
is calculated directly to lead the mind from the works
of creation to the great Creator, as the season of spring.
It seems like the bright morning hours of nature, when
a new impulse is given to all the multiplied forms
of existence, when the world of vegetation is spreading
of nurture before our eyes. For when every animal, every
plant is breaking from the dreary sleep of winter,
which it had lately been "in the snows" (1). In the
language of the king of Israel one may say, "to be
the winter is past, the rain is over and gone."
The season of fear in the earth, the time of the sowing of seeds is
come, if the voice of the turtle is heard in our land. This
is the season of nature's youth; by when we thus see begin-
ing up as it were beneath the Creator's hand, we cannot but feel the presence of His in the very air we breathe, yet is nothing so fitting to the life and beauty the animal and vegetable worlds. At such a time, it becomes us to pause and to reflect that this wonderful agency is going on around us, to connect it with the idea of the still more wonderful Agent to raise from the effect to the cause, from the work to Him who fashion ed it. — The spring should be with us a season of reflection as well as of action; yet that time, when every thing else is starting into life and action, surely these sentiments of adoration, of the soul to God, should not be suffered to remain idle or asleep. Let us then employ our thoughts on some of those topics, oh that season of the year, when God reneweth the face of the earth, is adapted to suggest.

1. This opening season calls us powerfully to think of the unchangeable power and the unchangeable goodness of God. Known this is a reflection confined to no time or season. Every where, at all times, we learn that the Almighty is great; every where at all times, we learn that He is good. It is not in truth a horn, nor we have to seek out, yea, we must go far to be taught. Still it seems to me that the impression of this truth is deeper at that part of the year, at this present thing than at any other. There is something in the transition from one season to another, just past to that now earth, no, oh! though it be in gradual, has almost all the powerful effect of a sudden or rapid change. York developed in a most striking manner the operation of God's power. Look round on these fields, oh! are they green and blooming? Consider what was then condition not many weeks ago. The minds of winter had locked up all their forces of vegetation, y left them as it were, measuring their own desolation. The trees were stripped of their pride, y seemed to stretch their branches only the meet the blast of the storm. The few faint beams, oh, the Sun cast on this waste scene, served to enlighten, not to warm. Each hill and each valley seemed to feel its dreariness of desolation, while the smile of Heaven was withdrawn from it. — Yea, though it raises us as to bless God that we had homes in which find shelter.
enjoyment of life, and who, in his wisdom, to communicate to his children a sense of happiness. But now, how different is the scene. Spring has drawn off his arm of winds, of frosts, of snow, and hail. Every vestige is left of the dead desolation which they imprinted on the earth. Everything now is full of life and joy; each scene discloses the renovating hand of the Creator. As we look around us, we see progressive beauty and increasing fertility following the footsteps of the Almighty in the midst of His works. Now, my friends, how can we observe this mighty change? This wonderful renovation of nature, without arguing with the patriarch of old, truly God is here. How can we see the silence and barrenness of winter, contrasted, as we may say in a few days, into the animation and gladness of spring, without feeling most peculiarly, powerfully, that it is nothing else, than one of the forms of almighty power, which is ever passing before our eyes? God, it is true, appears in all His works; He appears no less in the storms of winter, than in the sunshine of the present season. But when we have long been accustomed to see His power manifested in particular cases, so unreflecting, careless are we, that we neglect to notice it. But when our attention is called to a change, like that which is now going on around us, we are awakened to a more immediate perception of the operation of that Being, who works and change orders each event. We pass in full view from one state of things to another quite different, and cannot but feel that He who hath wrought this difference is peculiarly present with us. And in addition to this reflection, we are to remember that this change is not effected once or twice, or a few times only; but that it occurs round, since the creation of the world, has come round, every year, bringing with it the same fruits of the power and majesty of God. If we had only observed the revolution of the seasons but once, it would be enough to fill our hearts with adoring thoughts and feelings. But years after year, the same scene is repeated. But it is precisely because it is so common, that we fail to observe it. Yet, on the contrary, how should
to be peculiarly the time of happiness. Why is this so?

The wonder of the Almighty's works in renewing the face of the earth are now before us, but our fathers who are sleeping in their graves saw the same wonders in their day. Their fathers two years before them were witnesses of the same display of the glory and magnificence of Heaven's power. This renovation of the earth is one of the most striking wonders, if we may so speak, the annual miracle of the God of nature, the annual remembrance of Him, whom the world excludes from our hearts, if in whom our own noble pursuits cause us to forget... And while the spring of the year bears testimony to the power of the Most High, does it not also tell us with an impressive voice of his bounty and goodness? It is peculiarly at this season, when even the wilderness of the solitary place is made glad and the desert springs and blossoms as the rose, that we are led to trace the imprints of God's love on that creation, so near. He who sees his hand scattering life and joy, wherever it moves... It seems
out any effort of our own; yet the season man is
taught this lesson in most possible language. It
is in man, that the earth contains within its bow
the principles of subject to the vegetable method
is in vain that the showers descend & the sun shines
upon it. - If man do not perform his part, of the
labor of industry he not employed in the gifts
of providence. If you do not sow the seed, there
will be no miracle to send you a harvest; if you
do not nurture & often the soil, there will be no
buds of the produce?; if you refused to send
upon your fields the toil of cultivation, what
would become of their bloom & fertility? GOD dis-
possesses us of his blessings except through the
medium of our own exertions. He gives us the means,
but he expects us to use those means diligently &
faithfully. - He ensures upon us advantages, but
it is for us to improve all these advantages, that we
may reap the fruits they are designed to afford. Our
place, faith, designs that we shall be the instruments
of promoting our own felicity & interest, as well as those
of others; if this we are to do by being industrious in
the use of all the powers, all the opportunities, all
the help, yet he has main fully bestowed upon
us. This is a general principle in the government
of God. - Yet it is seen manifesting itself in various
ways. It is displayed in the means of religion, which
are listened to many upon us. Divine instructions are
communicated to us, & powerful motives to acture,
are set before us. But they will all be of no avail
if we do not use them with diligence & zeal. We
cannot be made good, while we readily neglect the means
of becoming good. - We cannot arrive at heaven, if
we do not take a step in the faith of heart that
in. If we are Slothful servants in this world, we
shall never reach the happiness of sons in the
world to come. - Such is the general principle in
the administration of the divine government. We
must use the means, or we shall not secure the
end: if this principle is suggested to us by inspec-
tions on the present season of the year. It is
the season when, after a time of repose, we are again
called forth to commence our annual labors, y'when
the great work of nature is going on around us. We
are thus summoned anew to the task of using
the means of the bounty of Heaven has conferred
upon us, we are taught to feel that we are but a
part of the system of God, that to us some share is
delegated; some power is assigned, to contribute to
our own happiness and to the happiness of the world
around us. "It would be well, if we would suffer
nature to teach us these unsearching lessons."

Each spring we return, as it were, as a seal
in the device of God, y'kindled the most el
sions of religion, that of being fellow workers with
him in the cause of humanity."

3. We may derive from this season still other
remains. The Spring presents us with a most beautiful
symbolic emblem of the God of Nature. In the light &
warmth of this especial season, we have a representa-
tion of the light & warmth of God. And the time
that preceded the God's inspiration, bears a strong re-
semblance to that portion of the year, when precedes
the spring. That was a dark & gloomy period in the
history of the world. It reminds us of the winter of
our year, for it was the winter of the moral world.
It was a season, when coldness & darkness were spread
over the souls of men; when the true principles of
religion & virtue were chilled, blasted; there were
no clearing ways to expand & give them nourishment.

When the pathway of men in moral concerns lay a
mist of uncertainty & doubt, the faint appearance of
light which led them on, often shone only to mislead
them. It was then that salutary reigned triumph-
ant; others were erected to gods, the reason
of man's bounds; sacrifices of blood were offered to
vindicate & justify their dictates. We who live in an
time when the dawning of the God shines upon us, can
hardly estimate the wants of the moral miseries of
those, who were left to grope their way amidst
the confused & opposite decisions of men, for if
we could give no sanction to the order of their best
precepts. We can scarcely esti-
mate the cheats & situations of those, who knew not
Chiefly the character of the Deity is understood not con-
stantly the relation in which they stood to him; it
requires no violent effort to represent to ourselves
a time of mental deadness & secretion under the image
of the cloudy sky & the blank minds of winter—but
the star of Bethlehem appeared & then the light &
joy of spring arose on the world. God by his con
voced the face of the earth; but it was a mental reviva-
lization was spread upon the mountains, the
feet of the messengers, who came to announce it were
soon from afar. On these who sat in darkness & the
shadow of death, bright dawned. And so it has
been ever since. The Gospels, has, if memory can speak,
made the moral world more flourishing & salutary,
thus it has come to the souls of men, like spring
to the earth. Almost all the blessings of society
are derived more or less remotely from our religion.
Whatever has elevated & purfied the standard of
morals—whatever has made man more the friend &
brother of man—has accelerated him from the thrall-
dom of opinion & barbarity. Yes all this & far more
by more we are indebted to the Gospels. In many a
wilderness it has given fertility. In many a
place of awe it has bred comfort & joy. Such is
another of the reflections suggested to us by the recall
some of spring; & it is a most salutary habit of mind
thus to connect our best ideas in religion with our
best ideas of nature...

4. I will mention one other analogy. The seasons
of the year have been compared to the life of man.
Youth is the spring. This is an impressive & very
resemblance. The season of spring is the season of prepa-
ration for what is to come. So likewise is youth the
time of preparation for ripe years. Spring is the sea
time when the principles of life in the vegetable world
are bursting from their enclosures & starting forthwith
the

...
full of joy & animation; so in youth the feelings are gay, & the heart is light & flushed with a thousand new desires.

The analogy might be carried farther; but you soon will see its beauty. Yours is that season of life when nature now reminds us; & I am constrained to urge it thai you remember, that you are now forming your future destiny & giving a character to your future years. It has been piously observed by one, that "self-sprinjng put forth me blossoms, summer will have little beauty, autumn will be without fruit;" so if the seeds of knowledge are not seen in youth, it is to be feared, that man will not have anything to make it useful or respected. Old age will be without fruits or consolation. Enrich this truth my young friend, write it on your hearts, if you wish to be wise, in the hearts of parents, with a heart of steel. You are the time of life, when the heart beats bright with anticipation of the happiness of coming years; 

I do not wish these glad feelings. Should not from a single drop of bitterness into the cup of your joy, but I would ask you to be moderate in your expectations if you mean to be happy, remembering that sometimes the worm creeps even into the fruits of youth. The spring is not unmarked with sadness, beauty, & joy, the winter & the frost often blast its leaves & chill its blossoms. Let the opening season be as fruitful as the autumn of life may come to you loaded with rich fruits; be industrious men in the morning, & in the evening, when it will be bright & happy, I have thus led your thoughts to a few reflections in this season of the year. May it, it is good, so to indulge often in such contemplations; it is good for us, now that we are preparing the earth to yield to us its tribute of fruits, to go abroad & see the Almighty in his works, it is good for us to meditate on nature, till we hear from every side the voice of God. Nature is the book of God. Every page of it is bright with the display of his wisdom. Why will we bury ourselves among
the works of the creature, & record the wonders of the Creator, that are perpetually springing up around us. How rare are we to see a curious piece of mechanism, (or production) of painting? & yet, the hills, & the rising of Solomon in all his glory could not equalize, nor those all to shame. Yet so then, love to meditate on nature, & on nature's God. With the subject, that has now occupied our thoughts, there is connected a sublime, & elevating reflection. When the winter of this life, & of the tomb shall be passed, the dawning of a brighter resurrection will rise on the right time. Let us then, so prepare ourselves in that world, that that meaning of resurrection may bring to us joy and gladness;—that the children of God, if they are called to pass this life under a dark sky, are not to feel it, remembered that:

"The storms of winter time will quickly pass,
And our unbounded joy encircle all!"

May 1870.
The work of the word should be understood within us. We should consider spring as the symbol of the resurrection; the sign given by nature that the life that has been lost, not lost, but has passed into another form of life. The resurrection of nature is proceeding at this moment: so shall there be a resurrection for them who shall rise (as nature is a beauty and loveliness in the natural world).

Others, who are the God of nature, who didst at first create, and dost ever support the universe; we praise thee, for all the wonders of nature are constant, thy former glory, and they have made them all: the earth is full of the riches. Thou hast not been, and all things are filled with good; thou hast created thy face, thou art troubled; thou hast removed thy breath, thy die return to the dust; thou condescendest for thy spirit. They are created by thee, renewed, the face of the earth. May our heart be filled with adoration and gratitude, when we reflect on the works of thy hand at the present season of the year, by the wonders of nature, may we learn to trace the God of nature, may our hearts bePrised, ours thoughts to thee, the great first cause of all. In all the works of nature may we learn to trace the God of nature, may our hearts be Prised, our thoughts to thee, the great first cause of all. In all the works of nature may we learn to trace the God of nature, may our hearts be Prised, our thoughts to thee, the great first cause of all.
templating thee, as those art manifested to us in the
glories of creation. With thee, O Lord, be with us &
bless us during this season during all our lives. We
finally receive us to thyself an the kingdom of thy
glory, through Jesus.

At home, May 15th, 1826. forenoon.
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