

LOOKING BACKWARD.

DR. TALMAGE SAYS IT IS WELL TO REVIEW THE PAST.

He Would Arouse the Soul to Remembrance of Dangers Escaped and Sorrows Suffered—Old Memories Have a Purifying Influence.

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WASHINGTON, May 7.—This sermon of Dr. Talmage calls the roll of many stirring memories and interprets the meaning of life's vicissitudes. The text is Psalms xxxix, 3, "While I was musing, the fire burned."

Here is David, the psalmist, with the forefinger of his right hand against his temple and the door shut against the world, engaged in contemplation. And it would be well for us to take the same posture often, while we sit down in sweet solitude to contemplate.

In a small island off the coast of Nova Scotia I once passed a Sabbath in delightful solitude, for I had resolved that I would have one day of entire quiet before I entered upon autumnal work. I thought to have spent the day in laying out plans for Christian work, but instead of that it became a day of tender reminiscence. I reviewed my pastorate; I shook hands with an old departed friend, whom I shall greet again when the curtains of life are lifted. The days of my boyhood came back, and I was 10 years of age, and I was 8, and I was 5. There was but one house on the island, and yet from Sabbath daybreak, when the bird chant woke me, until the evening melted into the bay of Fundy, from shore to shore there were ten thousand memories, and the groves were a hum with voices that had long ago ceased.

Youth is apt too much to spend all its time in looking forward. Old age is apt too much to spend all its time in looking backward. People in midlife and on the apex look both ways. It would be well for us, I think, however, to spend more time in reminiscence. By the constitution of our nature we spend most of the time looking forward. And the vast majority of people live not so much in the present as in the future. I find that you mean to make a reputation, you mean to establish yourself, and the advantages that you expect to achieve absorb a great deal of your time. But I see no harm in this if it does not make you discontented with the present or disqualify you for existing duties. It is a useful thing sometimes to look back, and to see the dangers we have escaped, and to see the sorrows we have suffered, and the trials and wanderings of our earthly pilgrimage, and to sum up our enjoyments. I mean, so far as God may help me, to stir up your memory of the past, so that in the review you may be encouraged and humbled and urged to pray.

A Precious Harvest.
There is a chapel in Florence with a fresco by Guido. It was covered up with two inches of stucco until our American and European artists went there, and after long toil removed the covering and retraced the fresco. And I am aware that the memory of the past, with many of you, is all covered up with obliations, and I now propose, so far as the Lord may help me, to take away the covering, that the old picture may shine out again. I want to bind in one sheaf all your past advantages, and I want to bind in another sheaf all your past adversities. It is a precious harvest, and I must be cautious how I swing the scythe.

Among the greatest advantages of your past life were an early home and its surroundings. The bad men of the day, for the most part, dip their heated passions out of the boiling spring of an unhappy home. We are not surprised to find that Byron's heart was a concentration of sin when we hear his mother was abandoned and that she made sport of his infirmity and often called him "the lame brat." He who has vicious parents has to fight every inch of his way if he would maintain his integrity and at last reach the home of the good in heaven. Perhaps your early home was in a city. It may have been when Pennsylvania avenue, Washington, was residential as now it is commercial, and Canal street, New York, was far up town. That old house in the city may have been demolished or changed into stores, and it seemed like sacrilege to you—for there was more meaning in that small house than there is in a granite mansion or a turreted cathedral. Looking back, you see it as though it were yesterday—the sitting room, where the loved one sat by the plain lamp light, the mother at the evening stand, the brothers and sisters perhaps long ago gathered into the skies, then plotting mischief on the floor or under the table; your father with firm voice commanding a silence that lasted half a minute.

Happy Days Gone By.
Oh, those were good days! If you had your foot hurt, your mother always had a soothing salve to heal it. If you were wronged in the street, your father was always ready to protect you. The year was one round of frolic and mirth. Your greatest trouble was an April shower, more sunshine than shower. The heart had not been ransacked by trouble, nor had sickness broken it, and no lamb had a warmer sheepfold than the home in which your childhood nestled.

Perhaps you were brought up in the country. You stand now today in memory under the old tree. You clubbed it for fruit that was not quite ripe, because you couldn't wait any longer. You hear the brook rumbling along over the pebbles. You step again into the furrow where your father in his shirt sleeves shouted to the lazy oxen. You frighten the swallows from the rafters of the barn and take just one egg and silence your conscience by saying they will not miss it. You take a drink again out of the very bucket that the old well fetched up. You go for the cows at night and find them pushing

their heads through the bars. Ofttimes in the dusty and busy streets you wish you were home again on that cool grass, or in the rag carpeted hall of the farmhouse, through which there came the breath of new mown hay or the blossom of backbeast.

You may have in your windows now beautiful plants and flowers brought from across the seas, but not one of them stirs in your soul so much charm and memory as the old ivy and the yellow sunflower that stood sentinel along the garden walk and the forgetmenots playing hide and seek mid the long grass. The father who used to come in unburned from the field and sit down on the doorkill and wipe the sweat from his brow may have gone to his everlasting rest. The mother who used to sit at the door a little bent over, cap and spectacles on, her face mellowing with the vicissitudes of many years, may have put down her gray head on the pillow in the valley, but forget that home you never will. Have you thanked God for it? Have you rehearsed all these blessed reminiscences? Oh, thank God for a Christian father! Thank God for a Christian mother! Thank God for an early Christian altar at which you were taught to kneel! Thank God for an early Christian home!

A Great Mission.
I bring to mind another passage in the history of your life. The day came when you set up your own household. The days passed along in quiet blessedness. You twain sat at the table morning and night and talked over your plans for the future. The most insignificant affair in your life became the subject of mutual consultation and advertisement. You were so happy you felt you never could be any happier. One day a dark cloud hovered over your dwelling, and it got darker and darker, but out of that cloud the shining messenger of God descended to incarnate an immortal spirit. Two little feet started on an eternal journey, and you were to lead them, a gem to flash in heaven's coronet, and you to polish it; eternal ages of light and darkness watching the starting out of a newly created creature. You rejoiced and you trembled at the responsibility that in your possession an immortal treasure was placed. You prayed and rejoiced and wept and wondered; you were earnest in supplication that you might lead it through life into the kingdom of God. There was a tremor in your earnestness. There was a double interest about that home. There was an additional interest why you should stay there and be faithful, and when in a few months your house was filled with the music of the child's laughter you were struck through with the fact that you had a stupendous mission.

Have you kept that vow? Have you neglected any of these duties? Is your home as much to you as it used to be? Have those anticipations been gratified? God help you in your solemn reminiscence, and let his mercy fall upon your soul if your kindness has been ill requited! God have mercy on the parent on the wrinkles of whose face is written the story of a child's sin! God have mercy on the mother who, in addition to her other pangs, has the pang of a child's iniquity! Oh, there are many, many sad sounds in this sad world, but the saddest sound that is ever heard is the breaking of a mother's heart!

Sweet Memories.
I find another point in your life history. You found one day you were in the wrong road. You could not sleep at night. There was just one word that seemed to sob through your banking house, or through your office, or your shop, or your bedroom, and that word was "eternity." You said: "I'm not ready for it. Oh, God, have mercy!" The Lord heard. Peace came to your heart. In the breath of the hill and in the waterfall's dash you heard the voice of God's love. The clouds and the trees hailed you with gladness. You came into the house of God. You remember how your hand trembled as you took up the cup of the communion. You remember the old minister who consecrated it, and you remember the church officials who carried it through the aisle. You remember the old people who at the close of the service took your hand in theirs in congratulating sympathy, as much as to say, "Welcome home, you lost prodigal!" And, though those hands be all withered away, that communion Sabbath is resurrected today. It is resurrected with all its prayers and songs and tears and sermons and transfiguration. Have you kept those vows? Have you been a backslider? God help you. This day kneel at the foot of mercy and start again for heaven. Start now as you started then. I rouse your soul by that reminiscence.

But I must not spend any more of my time in going over the advantages of your life. I just put them in one great sheaf, and I call them up in your memory with one loud harvest song, such as the reapers sing. Praise the Lord, ye blood bought immortals on earth! Praise the Lord, ye crowned spirits of heaven!

But some of you have not always had a smooth life. Some of you are now in the shadow. Others had their troubles years ago; you are a mere wreck of what you once were. I must gather up the sorrows of your past life, but how shall I do it? You say that it is impossible, as you have had so many troubles and adversities. Then I will just take two—the first trouble and the last trouble. As when you are walking along the street, and there has been music in the distance, you unconsciously find yourselves keeping step to the music, so when you started life your very life was a musical time beat. The air was full of joy and hilarity; with the bright, clear air you made the boat skip. You went on, and life grew brighter, until, after awhile, suddenly a voice from heaven said, "Halt!" and quick as the sunshine you halted, you grew pale, you confronted your first sorrow. You had no idea that the flush on your child's cheek was an unhealthy flush. You said it cannot be anything serious.

Death in slippers feet walked round about the cradle. You did not hear the tread, but after awhile the truth flashed on you. You walked the floor. Oh, if you could, with your strong, stout hand, have wrenched that child from the destroyer! You went to your room and you said: "God, save my child! God, save my child!" The world seemed going out in darkness. You said, "I can't bear it, I can't bear it." You felt as if you could not put the long lashes over the bright eyes, never to see them again sparkle. If you could have taken that little one in your arms, and with it leaped the grave, how gladly you would have done it! If you could let your property go, your houses go, your land and your storehouse go, how gladly you would have allowed them to depart if you could only have kept that one treasure!

God's Consolation.
But one day there came up a chill blast that swept through the bedroom, and instantly all the lights went out, and there was darkness—thick, murky, impenetrable, shuddering darkness. But God did not leave you there. Mercy spoke. As you took up the bitter cup to put it to your lips God said, "Let it pass," and forthwith, as by the hand of angels, another cup was put into your hands. It was the cup of God's consolation. And as you have sometimes lifted the head of a wounded soldier and poured wine into his lips, so God puts his left arm under your head and with his right hand he pours into your lips the wine of his comfort and his consolation, and you looked at the empty cradle and looked at your broken heart, and you looked at the Lord's chastisement, and you said, "Even so, Father, for so it seemeth good in thy sight."

Ah, it was your first trouble. How did you get over it? God comforted you. You have been a better man ever since. You have been a better woman ever since. In the jar of the closing gate of the sepulcher you heard the clanging of the opening gate of heaven, and you felt an irresistible drawing heavenward. You have been spiritually better ever since that night when the little one for the last time put its arms around your neck and said: "Good night, papa! Good night, mamma! Meet me in heaven!"

But I must come to your latest sorrow. What was it? Perhaps it was sickness. The child's tread on the stair or the tick of the watch on the stand disturbed you. Through the long weary days you counted the figures in the carpet or the flowers in the wall paper. Oh, the weariness of exhaustion! Oh, the burning pangs! Would God it were morning! Would God it were night! Was your frequent cry. But you are better, or perhaps even well. Have you thanked God that today you can come out in the fresh air; that you are in your place to bear God's name, and to sing God's praise, and to implore God's help, and to ask God's forgiveness? Bless the Lord who healeth all our diseases and redeemeth our lives from destruction!

Tears Wiped Away.
Perhaps your last sorrow was a financial embarrassment. I congratulate some of you on your lucrative profession or occupation, on ornate apparel, on a commodious residence—everything you put your hands on seems to turn to gold. But there are others of you who are like the ship on which Paul sailed where two seas met, and you are broken by the violence of the waves. By an unadvised inurement, or by a conjunction of unforeseen events, or by fire or storm, or a senseless panic, you have been flung headlong, and where you once dispensed great charities now you have hard work to win your daily bread. Have you forgotten to thank God for your days of prosperity, and that through your trials some of you have made investments which will continue after the last bank of this world has exploded, and the silver and gold are molten in the fires of a burning world? Have you, amid all your losses and discouragements, forgot that there was bread on your table this morning, and that there shall be a shelter for your head from the storm, and there is air for your lungs, and blood for your heart, and light for your eye, and a glad and glorious and triumphant religion for your soul?

Perhaps your last trouble was a bereavement. That heart which in childhood was your refuge, the parental heart, and which has been a source of the quickest sympathy ever since, has suddenly become silent forever. And now sometimes, whenever in sudden annoyance and without deliberation you say, "I will go and tell mother," the thought flashes on you, "I have no mother." Or the father, with voice less tender, but with heart as loving, watchful of all your ways, exultant over your success without saying much, although the old people do talk it over by themselves, his trembling hand on that staff which you now keep as a family relic, his memory embalmed in grateful hearts—is taken away forever. Or there was your companion in life, sharer of your joys and sorrows, taken, leaving the heart an old ruin, where the ill winds blow over a wide wilderness of desolation, the sands of the desert driving across the place which once bloomed like the garden of God. And Abraham mourns for Sarah at the cave of Machpelah. As you were moving along your path in life, suddenly, right before you, was an open grave. People looked down, and they saw it was only a few feet deep and a few feet wide, but to you it was a cavern down which went all your hopes and all your expectations. But cheer up in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ, the Comforter. He is not going to forsake you. Did the Lord take that child out of your arms? Why, he is going to shelter it better than you could. He is going to array it in a white robe and palm branch and have it all ready to greet you at your coming home. Blessed the broken heart that Jesus heals! Blessed the importunate cry that Jesus compassionate!

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WE ARE ON THE "CORNER."

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Blessed the weeping eye from which the soft hand of Jesus wipes away the tear! Glorious Eternity.

Some years ago I was sailing down the St. John river, which is the Rhine and the Hudson commingled in one scene of beauty and grandeur, and while I was on the deck of the steamer a gentleman pointed out to me the places of interest, and he said: "All this is interval land, and it is the richest land in all the provinces of New Brunswick and Nova Scotia." "What," said I, "do you mean by interval land?" "Well," he said, "this land is submerged for a part of the year; spring freshets come down, and all these plains are overflowed with the water, and the water leaves a rich deposit, and when the waters are gone the harvest springs up, and there is a richer harvest than I know of elsewhere." And I instantly thought, "It is not the heights of the church, and it is not the heights of this world that are the scene of the greatest prosperity, but the soul over which the floods of sorrow have gone, the soul over which the freshets of tribulation have torn their way, that yields the greatest fruits of righteousness and the largest harvest for time and the richest harvest for eternity." Bless God that your soul is interval land!

There is one more point of absorbing reminiscence, and that is the last hour of life, when we have to look over all our past existence. What a moment that will be! I place Napoleon's dying reminiscence on St. Helena beside Mrs. Judson's dying reminiscence in the harbor of St. Helena, the same island, 20 years after. Napoleon's dying reminiscence was one of delirium—"Tete d'armee"—"Head of the army." Mrs. Judson's dying reminiscence, as she came home from her missionary toil and her life of self sacrifice for God, dying in the cabin of the ship in the harbor of St. Helena, was, "I always did love the Lord Jesus Christ." And then the historian says she fell into a sound sleep for an hour and woke amid the songs of angels. I place the dying reminiscence of Augustus Caesar against the dying reminiscence of the apostle Paul. The dying reminiscence of Augustus Caesar was, addressing his attendants, "Have I played my part well on the stage of life?" and they answered in the affirmative, and he said, "Why, then, don't you applaud me?" The dying reminiscence of Paul the apostle was, "I have fought a good fight, I have finished my course, I have kept the faith; henceforth there is laid up for me a crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous Judge, will give me in that day, and not to me only, but to all them that love his appearing." Augustus Caesar died amid pomp and great surroundings, Paul uttered his dying reminiscence looking up through the wall of a dungeon. God grant that our dying pillow may be the closing of a useful life and the opening of a glorious eternity.

The Oldest Russian Newspaper.
Russia is not usually associated with newspaper progress, but it is a singular fact that the *Viedomosti* of St. Petersburg is one of the oldest newspapers in Europe, for it can boast a continuous existence of 172 years. Printing was unknown in Russia until a short time before its first appearance. Just two centuries ago Peter the Great licensed one Ivan Andreivich Tessing to print at Amsterdam and export into Russia certain books, for the most part of an educational character. In 1704 he himself had types cut and sent them with a font cast by Tessing to Moscow, where, under priestly directions, a specimen number of the *Viedomosti* was got up. It was not, however, until 1726 that the *Viedomosti* started on its career in St. Petersburg.—London Chronicle.

Who is to Blame.
Kidney trouble has become so prevalent that it is not uncommon for a child to be born afflicted with weak kidneys.

If the child urinates too often, if the urine scalds the flesh, or if, when the child reaches an age when it should be able to control the passage, and it is yet afflicted with bed-wetting, depend upon it, the cause of the difficulty is kidney trouble, and the first step should be towards the treatment of these important organs. This unpleasant trouble is due to a diseased condition of the kidneys and bladder and not to a habit as most people suppose. If the adult has rheumatism; pain or dull ache in the back; if the water passes in irregular quantities; or at irregular intervals or has a bad odor; if it stains the linen or vessel the color of rust; if the feet swell; if there are puffiness or dark circles under the eyes; your kidneys are the cause and need doctoring. Treatment of some diseases may be delayed without danger, not so with kidney disease.

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Southern Railway



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- 7:37 a. m.—No. 11 daily, for Charlotte, Atlanta and all points South. Connects at Salisbury for Asheville, Knoxville and Chattanooga. Through sleeper New York to Nashville.
- 8:10 a. m.—No. 8 daily, for Danville, Richmond and local stations.
- 12:05 p. m.—No. 36 daily, United States Fast Mail for Washington, Richmond and all points North. Carries through Pullman Drawing Room Buffet Sleeper New Orleans to New York; Jacksonville to New York. Pullman Tourist Sleeping Car on Mondays via New Orleans and Southern Pacific, San Francisco to Washington.
- 7:34 p. m.—No. 35 daily, United States Fast Mail for Charlotte, Atlanta and all points South and Southwest. Connects at Charlotte for Columbia, Augusta, Savannah, Jacksonville and local stations. Pullman Drawing Room Buffet Sleeper New York to New Orleans; New York to Jacksonville; Charlotte to Birmingham; Charlotte to Augusta. Pullman Tourist Sleeper Wednesday Washington to San Francisco.
- 10:43 p. m.—No. 28 daily, Washington and Southwestern Limited for Washington and all points North. Pullman Sleepers to Richmond, Washington and New York.
- 6:45 p. m.—No. 7 daily, for Charlotte and local points.
- 8:10 a. m.—No. 8 daily, for Raleigh, Goldsboro and local points. Connects at Selma with train for Tarboro, Norfolk and local points; at Goldsboro for Newbern and Morehead City.
- No. 18 leaves Greensboro 12:10 p. m. daily for Raleigh, Goldsboro and local points.
- 10:50 p. m.—No. 12 daily, for Raleigh, Norfolk, and local points east. Pullman Sleeper Greensboro to Norfolk.
- 8:15 a. m.—No. 105 for Winston, Wilkesboro and local points. Daily to Winston-Salem. Daily except Sunday to Wilkesboro.
- 12:30 p. m.—No. 107, daily except Sunday for Winston-Salem.
- 7:32 p. m.—No. 109 daily for Winston-Salem.

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