

## REV. DR. TALMAGE.

The Eminent Washington Divine's  
Sunday Sermon.

Subject: "David and Absalom."

TEXT: "Is the young man Absalom safe?"  
—II Samuel xviii., 23.

The heart of David, the father, was wrapped up in his boy Absalom. He was a splendid boy, judged by the rules of worldly criticism. From the crown of his head to the sole of his foot there was not a single blemish. The Bible says that he had such a luxuriant shock of hair that when once a year it was shorn, what was cut off weighed over three pounds. But notwithstanding all his brilliance of appearance he was a bad boy, and broke his father's heart. He was plotting to get the throne of Israel. He had marshaled an army to overthrow his father's government. The day of battle had come. The conflict was begun. David, the father, sat between the gates of the palace waiting for the tidings of the conflict. Oh, how rapidly his heart beat with emotion.

The two great questions were to be decided—the safety of his boy and the continuance of the throne of Israel. After a while a servant, standing on the top of the house, looks off and sees some one running. He is coming with great speed, and the man on the top of the house announces the coming of the messenger, and the father watches and waits, and as soon as the messenger from the field of battle comes within hailing distance the father cries out. Is it a question in regard to the establishment of his throne? Does he say: "Have the armies of Israel been victorious? Am I to continue in my imperial authority? Have I overthrown my enemies?" Oh, no! There is one question that springs from his heart to the lip, and springs from the lip into the ear of the besweated and bedusted messenger flying from the battlefield—the question, "Is the young man Absalom safe?" When it was told to David, the king, that though his armies had been victorious, his son had been slain, the father turned his back upon the congratulations of the nation and went up the stairs of his palace, his heart breaking as he went, wringing his hands sometimes and then again pressing them against his temples as though he would press them in, crying: "O Absalom! my son! my son! Would to God I had died for thee. O Absalom! my son! my son!"

My friends, the question which David, the king, asked in regard to his son is the question that resounds to-day in the hearts of hundreds of parents. Yea, there are a great multitude of young men who know that the question of the text is appropriate when asked in regard to them. They know the temptations by which they are surrounded. They see so many who started life with as good resolutions as they have who have fallen in the path, and they are ready to hear me ask the question of my text, "Is the young man Absalom safe?" The fact is that this life is full of peril. He who undertakes it without the grace of God and a proper understanding of the conflict into which he is going must certainly be defeated. Just look off upon society to-day. Look at the shipwreck of men for whom fair things were promised and who started life with every advantage. Look at those who have dropped from high social position and from great fortune, disgraced for time, disgraced for eternity. All who sacrifice their integrity come to overthrow. Take a dishonest dollar and bury it in the center of the earth, and keep all the rocks of the mountain on top of it; then cover these rocks with all the diamonds of Golconda, and all the silver of Nevada, and all the gold of California and Australia, and put on the top of these all banking and moneyed institutions, and they cannot keep down that one dishonest dollar. That one dishonest dollar in the center of the earth will begin to heave and rock and upturn itself until it comes to the resurrection of damnation. "As the partridge sitteth on eggs and hatcheth them not, so he that getteth riches and not by right shall leave them in the midst of his days, and at his end shall be a fool."

Now, what are the safeguards of young men? The first safeguard of which I want to speak is a love of home. There are those who have no idea of the pleasures that concentrate around that word "home." Perhaps your early abode was shadowed with vice or poverty. Harsh words and petulance and scolding may have destroyed all the sanctity of that spot. Love, kindness and self sacrifice, which have built their altars in so many abodes, were strangers in your father's house. God pity you, young man; you never had a home. But a multitude in this audience can look back to a spot that they can never forget. It may have been a lowly roof, but you cannot think of it now without a dash of emotion. You have seen nothing on earth that so stirred your soul. A stranger passing along that place might see nothing remarkable about it; but, oh! how much it means to you. Fresco on palace wall does not mean so much to you as those rough hewn rafters. Parks and bowers and trees on fashionable watering place or country seat do not mean so much to you as that brook that ran in front of the plain farm house and singing under the weeping willows. The barred gateway swung open by porter in full dress does not mean as much to you as that swing gate, your sister on one side of it and you on the other, she gone fifteen years ago into glory; that scene coming back to you to-day, as you sweep backward and forward on the gate, singing the songs of your childhood. But there are those here who have their second dwelling place. It is your adopted home. That is also sacred forever. There you established the first

family altar. There your children were born. In that room flapped the wing of the death angel. Under that roof, when you work is done, you expect to lie down and die. There is only one word in all the language that can convey your idea of that place, and that word is "home."

Now, let me say that I never knew a man who was faithful to his early and adopted home who was given over at the same time to any gross form of wickedness. If you find more enjoyment in the club room, in the literary society, in the art salon, than you do in these unpretending home pleasures, you are on the road to ruin. Though you may be cut off from your early associates, and though you may be separated from all your kindred, young man, is there not a room somewhere that you can call your own? Though it be the fourth story of a third-class boarding house, into that room gather books, pictures and a harp. Hang your mother's portrait over the mantle. Bid unholy mirth stand back from that threshold. Consecrate some spot in that room with the knee of prayer. By the memory of other days, a father's counsel, a mother's love and a sister's confidence, call it home.

Another safeguard for these young men is industrious habits. There are a great many people trying to make their way through the world with their wits instead of by honest toil. There is a young man who comes from the country to the city. He fails twice before he is as old as his father was when he first saw the spires of the great town. He is seated in his room at a rent of \$2000 a year, waiting for the banks to declare their dividends and the stocks to run up. After awhile he gets impatient. He tries to improve his penmanship by making copy plates of other merchants' signatures. Never mind—'tis right in business. After awhile he has his estate. Now is the time for him to retire to the country, amid the flocks and the herds, to culture the domestic virtues.

Now the young men who were his school-mates in boyhood will come, and with their ox teams draw him logs, and with their hard hands will help to heave up the castle. That is no fancy sketch; it is every-day life. I should not wonder if there were a rotten beam in that palace. I should not wonder if God should smite him with dire sicknesses and pour into his cup a bitter draft that will thrill him with unbearable agony. I should not wonder if that man's children grew up to be to him a disgrace and to make his life a shame. I should not wonder if that man died a dishonorable death and were tumbled into a dishonorable grave and then went into the gnashing of teeth. The way of the angolly shall perish.

O young man, you must have industry of head or hand or foot, or perish. Do not have the idea that you can get along in the world by genius. The curse of this country to-day is geniuses—men with large self conceit and nothing else. The man who proposes to make his living by his wits probably has not any. I should rather be an ox, plain and plodding and useful, than to be an eagle, high flying and good for nothing but to pick out the eyes of carcases. Even in the Garden of Eden it was not safe for Adam to be idle, so God made him a horticulturist, and if the married pair had kept busy dressing the vines they would not have been sauntering under the trees, hankering after fruit that ruined them and their posterity. Proof positive of the fact that when people do not attend to their business they get into mischief. "Go to the ant, thou sluggard; consider her ways and be wise, which, having no overseer or guide, provideth her food in the summer and gathereth her meat in the harvest." Satan is a roaring lion and you can never destroy him by gun or pistol or sword. The weapons with which you are to beat him back are pen and type and hammer and adz and saw and pickax and varnish and the weapon of honest toil. Work, work, or die.

Another safeguard that I want to present to young men is a high ideal of life. Sometimes soldiers going into battle shoot into the ground instead of into the hearts of their enemies. They are apt to take aim too low, and it is very often that the captain, going into conflict with his men, will cry out, "Now, men, aim high!" The fact is that in life a great many men take no aim at all. The artist plans out his entire thought before he puts it upon canvas, before he takes up the crayon or the chisel. An architect thinks out the entire building before the workmen begin. Although everything may seem to be unorganized, that architect has in his mind every Corinthian column, every Gothic arch, every Byzantine capital. A poet thinks out the entire plot of his poem before he begins to rhyme the cadences of tinkling rhythms. And yet there are a great many men who start the important structure of life without knowing whether it is going to be a rude Tartar's hut or a St. Mark's cathedral, and begin to write out the intricate poem of their life without knowing whether it is to be a Homer's "Odyssey" or a rhymer's botch. Out of 1000, 999 have no life plot. Bostel and sourd and caparisoned, they hasten along, and I run out and say: "Hello, man! Waitheraway?" "Nowhere!" they say. Oh, young man, make every day's duty a filling up of the great life plot. Alas, that there should be on this sea of life so many ships that seem bound for no port! They are swept every whither by wind and wave, up by the mountains and down by the valleys. They sail with no chart. They gaze on no star. They long for no harbor. Oh, young man, have a high ideal and press to it, and it will be a mighty safeguard. There never were grander opportunities opening before young men than are opening now. Young men of the strong arm and of the stout heart and of the bounding step, I marshal you to-day for a great achievement.

Another safeguard is a respect for the Sabbath. Tell me how a young man spends

his Sabbath, and I will tell you what are his prospects in business, and I will tell you what are his prospects for the eternal world. God has thrust into our busy life a sacred day when we are to look after our souls. Is it exorbitant, after giving six days to the feeding and clothing of these perishable bodies, that God should demand one day for the feeding and clothing of the immortal soul?

Our bodies are seven day clocks, and they need to be wound up, and if they are not wound up they run down into the grave. No man can continuously break the Sabbath and keep his physical and mental health. Ask those aged men, and they will tell you they never knew men who continuously broke the Sabbath who did not fall in mind, body or moral principle. A manufacturer gave this as his experience. He said: "I owned a factory on the Lehigh. Everything prospered. I kept the Sabbath, and everything went on well. But one Sabbath morning I betought myself of a new shuttle, and I thought I would invent that shuttle before sunset, and I refused all food and drink until I had completed that shuttle. By sundown I had completed it. The next day, Monday, I showed to my workmen and friends this new shuttle. They all congratulated me on my great success. I put that shuttle into play. I enlarged my business, but, sir, that Sunday's work cost me \$30,000. From that day everything went wrong. I failed in business, and I lost my mill." Oh, my friends, keep the Lord's day. You may think it old fogy advice, but I give it to you now: "Remember the Sabbath day and keep it holy. Six days shalt thou labor and do all thy work, but the seventh is the Sabbath of the Lord thy God; in it thou shalt not do any work." A man said that he would prove that all this was a fallacy, and so he said, "I shall raise a Sunday crop." And he plowed the field on the Sabbath, and then he put in the seed on the Sabbath and he cultured the ground on the Sabbath. When the harvest was ripe, he reaped it on the Sabbath, and he carried it into the mow on the Sabbath, and then he stood out defiant to his Christian neighbors, and said: "There, that is my Sunday crop, and it is all garnered." After awhile a storm came up and a great darkness, and the lightning; of heaven struck the barn, and away went his Sunday crop.

There is another safeguard that I want to present. I have saved it until the last because I want it to be the more emphatic. The great safeguard for every young man is the Christian religion. Nothing can take the place of it. You may have gracefulness enough to put to blush Lord Chesterfield, you may have foreign languages dropping from your tongue, you may discuss laws and literature, you may have a pen of unequalled polish and power, you may have so much business tact that you can get the largest salary in a banking house, you may be as sharp as Herod and as strong as Sampson, and with as long locks as those which hung Absalom, and yet you have no safety against temptation. Some of you look forward to life with great despondency. I know it. I see it in your faces from time to time. You say, "All the occupations and professions are full, and there's no chance for me." Oh, young man, cheer up! I will tell you how you can make your fortune. Seek first the kingdom of God and His righteousness, and all other things will be added. I know you do not want to be mean in this matter. You will not drink the brimming cup of life and then pour the dregs on God's altar. To a generous Saviour you will not act like that; you have not the heart to act like that. That is not manly. That is not honorable. That is not brave. Your great want is a new heart, and in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ I tell you so to-day, and the blessed Spirit presses through the solemnities of this hour to put the cup of life to your thirsty lips. Oh, thrust it not back. Mercy presents it—bleeding mercy, long suffering mercy. Despoil all other friendships, prove recreant to all other bargains, but despise God's love for your dying soul—to not do that. There comes a crisis in a man's life, and the trouble is he does not know it is the crisis. I got a letter in which a man says to me:

"I start out now to preach the gospel of righteousness and temperance to the people. Do you remember me? I am the man who appeared at the close of the service when you were worshipping in the chapel after you came from Philadelphia. Do you remember at the close of the service a man coming up to you all a-tremble with conviction, and crying out for mercy, and telling you he had a very bad business, and he thought he would change it? That was the turning point in my history. I gave up my bad business. I gave my heart to God, and the desire to serve Him has grown upon me all these years, until now woe is unto me if I preach not the gospel."

That Sunday night was the turning point of that young man's history. This very Sabbath hour will be the turning point in the history of 100 young men in this house. God help us! I once stood on an anniversary platform with a clergyman who told this marvelous story. He said:

"Thirty years ago two young men started out to attend Park Theatre, New York, to see a play which made religion ridiculous and hypocritical. They had been brought up in Christian families. They started for the theatre to see that vile play, and their early convictions came back upon them. They felt it was not right to go, but still they went. They came to the door of the theatre. One of the young men stopped and started for home, but returned and came up to the door, but he had not the courage to go in. He again started for home and went home. The other young man went in. He went from one degree of temptation to another. Caught in the whirl of frivolity and sin, he sank lower and lower. He lost his business position. He lost his morals,

He lost his soul. He died a dreadful death, not one star of mercy shining on it. I stand before you to-day," said that minister, "to thank God that for twenty years I have been permitted to preach the gospel. I am the other young man."

Oh, you see that was the turning point—the one went back, the other went on. The great roaring world of business life will soon break in upon you, young men. Will the wild wave dash out the impressions of this day as an ocean billow dashes letters out of the sand on the beach? You need something better than this world can give you. I beat on your heart, and it sounds hollow. You want something great and grand and glorious to fill it, and here is the religion that can do it. God save you!

## TEMPERANCE.

HE JUST QUIT.

A navigator of ripe years and rare skill was discharged by his employers for drunkenness. He had used liquor for more than thirty years, but he began a new life. "What!" sneered an old-time companion, "won't take a drink? Haven't sworn off, have you?" "No," was the answer, "I've just quit." To "swear off" is to begin a dreary struggle. To "just quit" is to win a quick, sure victory.—Sunday-School Times.

THE SALOON AND THE HOME.

The saloon devours the money on whose wise expenditure much of the happiness of the home depends. If the wife has toiled at the wash tub till every muscle aches and her whole being is weary, it is simply exasperating to have her husband leave her and go to spend in one hour in the saloon the money that would have paid needed help.

Clothes wear out. No amount of washing or mending can keep things forever neat. The rags will come, and when they come those who wear them will look shabby. Not even cleanliness can be fully maintained when there is a lack of changes and a lack of towels, and these cost money. The saloon cuts off the supply. Fuel and light cost money. A smouldering fire and a dim lamp can not make a cheery room. The saloon puts the fire that should be in the grate into the man's stomach. The rations grow short. The children worry, and the wife is spiritless from exhaustion. The man looks over the bare table and grumbles, "There's no comfort at home." Then he claims he is driven to the saloon because it is so bright and his home so wretched, and authors, moralists and divines support him in the claim. This is putting effect for cause. The fact is, that if we could put out the saloon lights and fires—every one—empty the barrels, smash the crockery, and make the saloon cark as the traffic is, those homes would soon grow bright. Dickens represents one of his wretched characters showing a cup of foul water to a visitor, and saying: "If you had such water, wouldn't you drink gin?" Very touching! But if that man had been willing to pay for water the price of his gin, he could have had the clearest ice water to drink.

The saloon becomes bright by making the home dark. Science tells us that when you light your fire of wood or coal, and the ruddy flame springs up and fills the room with its glow, you are simply basking in the imprisoned sunlight of long ago. So, when the saloon throws its light across the highway, a blaze of splendor, you simply see concentrated into one dazzling focus the light that it has stolen from scores of darkened homes. Yet the more of every good it sucks out of a man's life, and the more hopelessly wretched he becomes, the fairer the saloon seems by contrast, till he grows to esteeming his destroyer his only refuge and hope. The lower the saloon casts him down, the more necessary the saloon becomes to him. But his wife and children can not flee to its glare and oblivion. Our civilization will not yet tolerate that. They must stay in the desolate home. Now if this were honest poverty, forced upon them by hard necessity, which the man was doing all he could to share and brighten, a true wife would rally all the beauty and truth of woman's devotion to bear up and sustain her husband amid it all. But when she knows that the husband who brought her to it has deserted her in the midst of it for a selfish and swinish delight which will sink him—and then—lower yet, how can she endure it?—Sacred Heart Review.

A NATIONAL VIEW.

The sin of the tipping habit, which is rampant in this country, consists chiefly in this, that it starts many men on the road to alcoholic excess. It first tempts men to drink who do not wish to drink and do not wish to refuse. Then it brings them successively to the points where they take liquor because they like it, because they crave it, because they cannot get along without it. And soon the habit of tipping would seem to be a national conspiracy for the making of drunkards, its pernicious influence being all the more deadly that it is concealed under an innocent and respectable guise.

DRUNKARDS' RETREATS.

Drunkards' retreats have now nearly 75 instances in England for fifteen years. The principle on which they are conducted is to make the patient stop drinking at once and to make them abstain entirely for a long period, twelve months when possible, keeping them busy during that time. The patients always come in an advanced state of alcoholism. It has been found, as the Lancet reports, that no harm, but good, is done by the sudden and complete disuse of alcohol in such cases; that a large number of the cases are permanently cured, and that habitual drunkenness in women is by no means a hopeless disease.