

REV. DR. TALMAGE.

The Brooklyn Divine's Sunday Sermon.

Subject: "Would You Like to Live Your Life Over Again?"

TEXT: "All that a man hath will he give for his life."—Job, i., 4.

That is untrue. The Lord did not say it. Satan said it to the Lord, when the evil one wanted Job still more afflicted. The record is: "So went Satan forth from the presence of the Lord and smote Job with sore boils." And Satan has been the author of all captious disease since then, and he hopes by poisoning the blood to poison the soul. But the result of the diabolical experiment which left Job victor proved the falsity of the Satanic remark: "All that a man hath will he give for his life."—Job, i., 4.

But Satan's falsehood was built on a truth. Life is very precious, and if we would not give up all there are many things we would surrender rather than surrender it. We see how precious life is from the fact that we do everything to prolong it. Hence all sanitary regulations, all study of hygiene, all fear of draughts, all waterproofs, all doctors, all medicines, all the effort of the human mind, an admiral of the British navy was court-martialed for turning his ship around in time of danger and so damaging the ship. It was proved against him that he had turned the ship to be heard he said, "Gentlemen, I did turn the ship around and admit that it was damaged, but do you want to know why I turned it? To experiment on the next journey would be demotion. You got through, as Job says, by the skin of the teeth. Next time you might not get through at all. Satan would say: "I know him now better than I did before, and here I am for good years been studying his weaknesses, and I will have a stronger web of circumstances to catch him next time. And Satan would counter his forces on this one point, and he would state that man would be worse than the first. My friends, our faces are in the right direction. Better go forward than backward, even if we had the choice. The greatest disaster I can think of would be for you to return to boyhood in 1890. Oh, life were a smooth Luzerne or Cayuga Lake. I would like to get into a yacht and sail over the ocean, but twice—yes, a thousand times. But life is an uncertain sea, and some of the ships crash on the leebergs of indifference, and some take fire of evil temptations, and some lose their bearings and run into the skerris, and some are never heard of. Surely on such a treacherous sea as that your voyage is enough.

Besides all this, do you know if you could live your wish and live life over again it would put you so much further from rest on with your friends in heaven? If you are in the moon of life or the evening of life you do not get very far from the golden gate at which you are to meet your transported and superannuated loved ones. You are now, let us say, twenty years or ten years or one year from celestial conjunction. Now suppose you went back to a great banquet, and you got Oakland, four or five miles this side of it, and then came back to Hoboken or Harlem to get a better start; as though you were going to England to be crowned and having come a night of the mountains of Wales you put back to Sandy Hook in order to make a better voyage. The further you go you get in life, if a Christian, the further you are to the renewal of broken companionship. No; the wheel of time turns in the right direction, and it is well it turns so fast. Three hundred and twenty-five revolutions in a year and forward, rather than three hundred and sixty-five revolutions in a year and backward. But bear ye: bear ye while I tell you how you may practically live your life over again and be all the better for it. You may put into the remaining years of your life all you have learned of wisdom in your past life. You may make the coming ten years worth the preceding forty or fifty years. When a man says he would like to live his life over again because he would do so much better, and yet goes right on living as he has always lived, do you not see he stifles himself? He proves that if he could go back he would do almost the same as he has done. If a man can grow apples some in a year and in another time and is thrown into fearful cramps and goes on Thursday: "I wish I had been more prudent in my diet; oh, if I could live Wednesday over again," and then on Friday eats apples just as green, he proves that it would have been no advantage for him to live Wednesday over again. And if we deprecate our past life and with the idea of improvement, long for an opportunity to live over again, yet go on making the same mistakes and committing the same sins, we only deprecate that the repetition of our existences would afford no improvement. If I grow apples before and it would be green apples over again. As soon as a ship captain strikes a rock in the lake or sea he would like to go back and see the rocks and marines beneficent stand off from that rock. And all our mistakes in the past ought to be buoy warnings to us to keep in the right channel. There is no excuse for us if we split on the same rock where we split before. Going along the sidewalk at night where excavations are being made, we frequently see a lantern on a fence, and we turn aside for that lantern says, keep out of this hole. And all along the pathway of life lanterns are set as warnings, and by the time we come to mid-life we ought to know where it is safe to walk and where it is unsafe.

Beside that, we have all these years been learning how to be useful, and in the next decade we ought to accomplish more for God and the church and the world than in any previous four decades. The best way to atone for past indolence or past transgression is by future assiduity. Yet you often find Christian men who were not converted until they were forty or fifty, as old age comes on, saying: "Well, my work is about done and it is time for me to rest." They gave forty years of their life to Satan and the world, a little fragment of their life to God, and now they want to rest. Whether it belongs to comedy or tragedy, I say not. The man who gave one-half of his earthly existence to the world and of the remaining two-quarters one to Christian work and the other to rest, would not, I suppose, get a very brilliant reception in heaven. If there are any dried leaves in heaven they would be appropriate for his garland; or if there is any broom with broken steps it would be appropriate for his coronation; or any harp with relaxed string it would be appropriate for his fingering. My brother, you give nine-tenths of your life to sin and Satan, and then get converted and then rest awhile in sanctified laziness, and then go up to get your heavenly reward, and I warrant it will not take the cash—of the royal larding house a great while to count out to you all your dues. He will not ask you whether you will have it in bills of large denomination or small. I would like to put one sentence in my sermon in Italy, and have it understood, and three exclamations points at the end of the sentence, and that sentence is this: As we cannot live our lives over again, the nearest we can come to atone for the past is by redoubled holiness and industry in the future.

WHERE THEY LIVE LONG.

Places in Connecticut Noted For Their Numerous Old People.

People who want to live to a green old age should remove to Plainville, in Connecticut, early in life. In that high and hilly place, where the air is pure and dry, it is hinted that old people do not die in the usual way; they merely shrivel and dry up like a hop, and a high wind finally whisks them away out to sea. Springy old age meets a man at every turn in Plainville village. Old age fills the offices there, keeps the stores, tills the farms; ruddy faced old ladies keep house for jaunty old fellows. One is not much thought of, in Plainville, nor reckoned to have attained a discreet and sober understanding until he has reached the age of three-score years and ten at least. At 70 years the folks begin to call a man 'Squire So-and-So'; at 80 he is a sage, and his wisdom has weight. The pushing he carefully enumerated surmised just what a spot for old people Plainville is until old Mr. Sanford died there recently at a great and merry old age. "He was 90 odd years," his neighbors said; then some one tried to count the old folks in the place. He quickly discovered that it was a task to do so, and that there are about as many old people as young folks in Plainville. First he counted old Mr. Sanford's widow (she is pretty old, being 89 years, lacking only a few months of being 90); then he carefully enumerated all the old folks right in Mr. Sanford's own neighborhood in the western part of the town, and, not extending his canvass beyond a quarter of a mile from the Sanford chimney tops, he reported these smart and chipper old folks: Phil Goodale, aged 83 years; Mrs. Goodale, 75; Jeremiah Neale, 84; Mrs. Neale, 82; Solomon Curtis, 80; Mrs. Curtis, over 90; Deacon E. H. Lewis, 83; Mr. Carpenter, 82; Capt. William Wheeler, 81; Elijah Eaton, 78; Amos Webster, over 80; Wm. Webster, over 80.

The district in which all the old ladies and gentlemen noted dwell is not a village, or even a hamlet, but an old-fashioned typical Connecticut country neighborhood, with here and there a quiet comfortable old farm house. In the eastern part of Plainville live the oldest inhabitants of the town, Mrs. Tiltotson who is 90 years and 5 months old. Then there is William Harris, 82 years of age in the same neighborhood. Within two years in this end of the town two couples have died, both of whom had celebrated their golden wedding, namely, Mr. and Mrs. Norris Clark, both over 80 years and Mr. and Mrs. Lewis Curtis, aged respectively 89 and 85 years.

Then the curious investigator of Plainville longevity went down to the town clerk's office and examined the vital statistics of the town in the twenty-five years. He found that a very large proportion of the deaths noted in the records were of persons who were more than 70 years old. Consumption is almost unknown in the town, and people have long weak lungs who come to the town to live usually rally right off, and in a year or two have leaped upon the track in the general race for longevity. Plainville is a discouragingly beautiful place for a young doctor who has his spurs to win. The natural cause for its salubrity is apparent. Though it is in the Farmington valley, it is the highest valley land between Massachusetts and Long Island sound, its altitude above tide water being not less than 190 feet. The air is always pure, and there is no malaria in the crystal streams, limpid well water and high, strong soil.

Middletown city, embowered among the highest Connecticut foothills, is another wonderfully healthful place; some think that it is the most healthful city in the world. Two or three score of its citizens are more than 70 years old, and a score of Middletown's real old people are over 80. For a little town, Enfield takes the palm for healthfulness in a competition with all the rest of the world. Since 1865 twenty-five persons have died in that place who were over 100 years old and in the same period no less than 13 who were between 80 and 90 years of age. There are still living in Enfield seven persons over 90 years old, and of one street in the village reside fifty persons who are between 70 and 90 years of age. "Better call Enfield Longevityville," chuckled an Enfield sage one day. The oldest lady in the sky scraping hard old hill town of Andover, Tolland county, died recently at the age of 97 years. She was the widow Abigail Bingham. Mrs. Parmela Spalding, of Abington in old Windham county, is pretty old. This is her history: Born in 1796, united with the Abington village church in 1817; wedded in 1825; has been a good woman all her life, and a model housewife for about 65 years. She is as smart as ever, and her eyesight and hearing are wonderfully acute. She is like nearly all very old ladies, there being an unusual amount of sunniness in her kindly face.

SUNDAY SCHOOL LESSON.

SUNDAY, MARCH 23, 1890.

Christ Forgiving Sin.

LESSON TEXT.

(Luke 5: 17-26. Memory verses, 24-26.)

LESSON PLAN.

TOPIC OF THE QUARTER: Jesus the Saviour of Men.

GOLDEN TEXT FOR THE QUARTER: Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace, good will toward men.—Luke 2: 14.

LESSON TOPIC: Forgiving the Sinful.

1. Suffering, vs. 17, 18.

2. Faith, 19, 20.

3. Forgiveness, vs. 20, 26.

GOLDEN TEXT: Who can forgive sins, but God alone?—Luke 5: 21.

DAILY HOME READINGS:

M.—Luke 5: 17-26. Forgiving the sinful.

T.—Matt. 9: 2-8. Matthew's parable narrative.

W.—Mark 2: 1-12. Mark's parable narrative.

T.—Rom. 3: 1-20. All under sin.

F.—Rom. 3: 21-31. Justified by faith.

S.—Rom. 5: 1-11. Peace with God.

S.—Heb. 11: 23-40. Omnipotence of faith.

LESSON ANALYSIS.

I. SUFFERING.

I. Many Witnesses: There were Pharisees and doctors of the law sitting by (17). The multitudes marvelled, saying, It was never so seen (Matt. 9: 33). Many were gathered together (Mark 2: 2).

Thou seest the multitude thronging thee (Mark 5: 21).

Many thousands of the multitude were gathered (Luke 12: 1).

II. Healing Power: The power of the Lord was with him to heal (17).

I am the Lord that healeth thee (Exod. 15: 26).

The Lord... who healeth all thy diseases (Psa. 103: 2, 3).

I will come and heal him (Matt. 8: 7).

He... gave them authority... to heal all manner of disease (Matt. 10: 1).

III. Helpless Suffering: A man that was palsied; and they sought to bring him in (18).

A man sick of the palsy, lying on a bed (Matt. 9: 2).

They could not come nigh unto him for the crowd (Mark 2: 4).

Sir, I have no man... to put me into the pool (John 5: 7).

How can I, except some one shall guide me (Acts 8: 31).

1. "On one of those days... he was teaching" (1) Days of opportunity for man; (2) Days of toil for Jesus.—(1) The days; (2) The Teacher; (3) The teachings.

2. "The power of the Lord was with him to heal" (1) The need of healing; (2) The source of healing; (3) The instrument of healing.—(1) Human necessity; (2) Divine help, and to lay him before him. (1) The sufferer; (2) The Saviour; (3) The seekers.

II. FAITH.

I. Serious Hindrance: Not finding by that way they might bring him in (19).

All these things are against me (Gen. 42: 26).

Them that were entering in ye hindered (Luke 11: 52).

He... could not get for the crowd, because he was little (Luke 19: 3).

Satan hindered us (1 Thess. 1: 18).

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