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REV. DR. TALMAGE.

THE BROOKLYN DIVINE'S SUNDAY SERMON.

Subject: "The Generations."

Text: "One generation passeth away, and another generation cometh."—Ecclesiastes i., 4.

According to the longevity of people in their particular century has a generation been called 100 years, or fifty years, or thirty years. By common consent in our nineteenth century a generation is fixed at twenty-five years.

The largest procession that ever moved is the procession of years, and the greatest army that ever marched is the army of generations. In each generation there are about nine full regiments of days. These 9125 days in each generation march with wonderful precision. They never break ranks. They never ground arms. They never pitch tents. They never halt. They are never off on furlough. They came out of the eternity past, and they move on toward the eternity future. They cross rivers without any bridge or boats. The 600 immortals of the Crimea dashing into them cause no confusion. They move as rapidly at midnight as at midnoon. Their haversacks are full of good bread and bitter aloes, clusters of richest vintage and bottles of agonizing tears. With a regular tread that no order of "double quick" can hasten or obstacle can slacken, their tramp is on and on and on and on while mountains crumble and pyramids die. "One generation passeth, and another generation cometh."

This is my twenty-fifth anniversary sermon—1869 and 1894. It is twenty-five years since I assumed the Brooklyn pastorate. A whole generation has passed. Three generations we have known—that which preceded our own, that which is now at the front, and the one coming on. We are at the heels of our predecessors, and our successors are at our heels. What a generation it was that preceded us! We who are now in the front regiment are the only ones competent to tell the new generation just now coming in sight who our predecessors were. Biography cannot tell it. Autobiography cannot tell it. Biographies are generally written by special friends of the departed—perhaps by wife or son or daughter—and they only tell the good things. The biographers of one of the first Presidents of the United States make no record of the President's account books, now in the archives at the Capitol, which I have seen, telling how much he lost or gained daily at the gaming table. The biographers of one of the early Secretaries of the United States never described the scene that day witnessed when the Secretary was carried dead drunk from the State apartments to his own home. Autobiography is written by the man himself, and no one would record for future times his own weaknesses and moral deficits. Those who keep diaries put down only things that read well. No man or woman that ever lived would dare to make full record of all the thoughts and words of a lifetime. We who saw and heard much of the generation marching just ahead of us are far more able than any book to describe accurately to our successors who our predecessors were. Very much like ourselves, thank you. Human nature in them very much like human nature in us. At our time of life they were very much like we now are. At the time they were in their teens they were very much like you are in your teens, and at the time they were in their twenties they were very much like you are in your twenties. Human nature got an awful twist under a fruit tree in Eden, and though the grace of God does much to stighten things every new generation has the same twist, and the same work of straightening out has to be done over again.

A mother in the country districts, expecting the neighbors at her table on some gala night, had with her own hands arranged everything in taste, and as she was about to turn from it to receive her guests saw her little child by accident upset a pitcher all over the white cloth and soil everything, and the mother lifted her hand to slap the child, but she suddenly remembered the time when a little child herself, in her father's house, where they had always before been used to candles, on the purchase of a lamp, which was a matter of rarity and pride, she took it in her hands and dropped it, crashing into pieces, and looking up in her father's face, expecting chastisement, heard only the words, "It is a sad loss, but never mind; you did not mean to do it."

History repeats itself. Generations wonderfully alike. Among that generation that is past, as in our own, and as it will be in the generation following us, those who succeeded became the target, shot at by those who did not succeed. In those times, as in ours, a man's bitterest enemies were those whom he had befriended and helped. Hates, jealousies and revenges were just as lively in 1869 as in 1894. Hypocrisy sniffled and looked solemn then as now. There was just as much avarice among the apple barrels as now among the cotton bales and among the wheelbarrows as among the locomotives. The tallow candles saw the same sins that are now found under the electric lights. Homespun was just as proud as is the modern fashion plate. Twenty-five years—yea, twenty-five centuries have not changed human nature a particle. I say this for the encouragement of those who think that our times monopolize all the abominations of the ages.

One minute after Adam got outside of paradise he was just like you, O man! One step after Eve left the gate she was just like you, O woman! All the faults and vices are many times centenarians. Yea, the cities Sodom, Gomorrah, Pompeii, Herculaneum, Heliopolis and ancient Memphis were as much worse than our modern cities as you might expect from the fact that the modern cities have somewhat yielded to the restraints of Christianity, while those ancient cities were not limited in their abominations.

Yes, that generation which passed off within the last twenty-five years had their bereavements, their temptations, their struggles, their disappointments, their successes, their failures, their gladnesses and their griefs, like these two generations now in sight, that in advance and that following. But the twenty-five years between 1869 and 1894—how much they saw! How much they discovered! How much they felt! Within that time have been performed the miracles of the telephone and the phonograph. From the observatories other worlds have been seen to heave in sight. Six Presidents of the United States have been inaugurated. Transatlantic voyage abbreviated from ten days to 5½. Chicago and New York, once three days apart, now only twenty-four hours by the vestibule limited. Two additional railroads have been built to the Pacific. France has passed from monarchy to republicanism. Many of the cities have nearly doubled their populations. During that generation the chief surviving heroes of the Civil War have gone into the encampment of the grave. The chief physicians, attorneys, orators, merchants, have passed off the earth or are in retirement waiting for transition. Other men in editorial chairs, in pulpits, in Governors' mansions, in legislative, Senatorial and Congressional halls.

There are not ten men or women on earth now prominent who were prominent twenty-five years ago. The crew of this old ship of a world is all changed. Others at the helm, others on the "lookout," others climbing the ratlines. Time is a doctor who, with potent anodyne, has put an entire generation into sound sleep. Time, like another Cromwell, has roughly prorogued parliament, and with iconoclasm driven nearly all the rulers except one queen from their high places. So far as I observed that generation, for the most part they did their best. Ghastly exceptions, but so far as I knew them they did quite well, and many of them gloriously well. They were born at the right time, and they died at the right time. They left the world better than they found it. We are indebted to them for the fact that they prepared the way for our coming. Eighteen hundred and ninety-four reverently and gratefully salutes 1869. "One generation passeth away, and another generation cometh."

There are fathers and mothers here whom I baptized in their infancy. There is not one person in this church's board of session or trustees who was here when I came. Here and there in this vast assembly is one person who heard my opening sermon in Brooklyn, but not more than one person in every 500 now present. Of the seventeen persons who gave me a unanimous call when I came, only three, I believe, are living.

But this sermon is not a dirge. It is an anthem. While this world is appropriate as a temporary stay, as an eternal residence it would be a dead failure. It would be a dreadful sentence if our race were doomed to remain here a thousand winters and a thousand summers. God keeps us here just long enough to give us an appetite for heaven. Had we been born in celestial realms we would not be able to appreciate the bliss. It needs a good many rough blasts in this world to qualify us to properly estimate the superb climate of that good land where it is never too cold or too hot, too cloudy or too glaring. Heaven will be more to us than to those supernal beings who were never tempted or sick or bereaved or tried or disappointed. So you may well take my text out of the minor key and set it to some tune in the major key. "One generation passeth away, and another generation cometh."

Nothing can rob us of the satisfaction that uncounted thousands of the generation just past were converted, comforted and harvested for heaven by this church, whether in the present building or the three preceding buildings in which they worshiped. The two great organs of the previous churches went down in the memorable fires, but the multitudinous songs they led year after year were not recalled or injured. There is no power in earth or hell to kill a hallelujah. It is impossible to arrest a hosanna. What a satisfaction to know that there are many thousands in glory on whose eternal welfare this church wrought mightily! Nothing can undo that work. They have ascended, the multitudes who served God in that generation. That chapter is gloriously ended. But that generation has left its impression upon this generation.

A sailor was dying on shipboard, and he said to his mates: "My lads, I can only think of one passage of Scripture, 'The soul that sinneth, it shall die,' and that keeps ringing in my ears. 'The soul that sinneth, it shall die.' Can't you think of something else in the Bible to cheer me up?" Well, sailors are kind, and they tried to think of some other passage of Scripture with which to console their dying comrade, but they could not. One of them said: "Let us call up the cabin boy. His mother was a Christian, and I guess he has a Bible." The cabin boy was called up, and the dying sailor asked him if he had a Bible. He said "Yes," but he could not exactly find it, and the dying sailor scolded him and said, "Ain't you ashamed of yourself not to read your Bible?" So the boy explored the bottom of his trunk and brought out the Bible, and his mother had marked a passage that just fitted the dying sailor's case, "The blood of Jesus Christ, His Son, cleanseth from all sin." That helped the sailor to die in peace. So one generation helps another, and good things written or said or done are reproduced long afterward.

During the passing of the last generation some peculiar events have unfolded. One day while resting at Sharon Springs, N. Y., I think it was in 1870, the year after my settlement in Brooklyn, and while walking in the park of that place, I found myself asking the question: "I wonder if there is any special mission for me to execute in this world? If there is, may God show it to me!" There soon came upon me a great desire to preach the gospel through the secular printing press. I realized that the vast majority of people, even in Christian lands, never enter a church, and that it would be an opportunity of usefulness infinite if that door of publication were opened.

And so I recorded that prayer in a blank book and offered the prayer day in and day out until the door opened. It opened in a different way from that which I had expected, for it came through the misrepresentation and persecution of enemies, and I have to record it for the encouragement of all ministers of the gospel who are misrepresented, that if the misrepresentation be virulent enough and bitter enough and continuous enough there is nothing that so widens one's field of usefulness as hostile attack, if you are really doing the Lord's work. The bigger the lie told about me, the bigger the demand to see and hear what I really was doing. From one stage of sermonic publication to another the work has gone on until week by week, and for twenty-three years, I have had the world for my audience, as no man ever had, and to-day more so than at any other time. The syndicates inform me that my sermons go now to about 25,000,000 of people in all lands. I mention this not in vain boast, but as a testimony to the fact that God answers prayer. Would God I had better occupied the field and been more consecrated to the work! May God forgive me for lack of service in the past and double and quadruple and quintuple my work in future.

In this my quarter century sermon I record the fact that side by side with the procession of blessings have gone a procession of disasters. I am preaching to-day in the fourth church building since I began work in this city. My first sermon was in the old church on Schermerhorn street to an audience chiefly of empty seats, for the church was almost extinguished. That church filled and overflowing, we built a larger church, which after two or three years disappeared in flame. Then we built another church, which also in a line of fiery succession disappeared in the same way. Then we put up this building, and may it stand for many years, a fortress of righteousness and a lighthouse for the storm tossed, its gates crowded with vast assemblages long after we have ceased to frequent them!

We have raised in this church over $1,030,000 for church charitable purposes during the present pastorate, while we have given, free of all expense, the gospel to hundreds of thousands of strangers, year by year. I record with gratitude to God that during this generation of twenty-five years I remember but two Sabbaths that I have missed service through anything like physical indispositions. Almost a fanatic on the subject of physical exercise, I have made the parks with which our city is blessed the means of good physical condition. A daily walk and run in the open air have kept me ready for work and in good humor with all the world. I say to all young ministers of the gospel, it is easier to keep good health than to regain it when once lost. The reason so many good men think the world is going to ruin is because their own physical condition is on the down grade. No man ought to preach who has a diseased liver or an enlarged spleen. There are two things ahead of us that ought to keep us cheerful in our work—heaven and the millennium.

And now, having come up to the twenty-fifth milestone in my pastorate, I wonder how many more miles I am to travel? Your company has been exceedingly pleasant, O my dear people, and I would like to march by your side until the generation with whom we are now moving abreast and step to step shall have stacked arms after the last battle. But the Lord knows best, and we ought to be willing to stay or go.

Most of you are aware that I propose at this time, between the close of my twenty-fifth year of pastorate and before the beginning of my twenty-sixth year, to be absent for a few months in order to take a journey around the world. I expect to sail from San Francisco in the steamer Alameda May 31. My place here on Sabbaths will be fully occupied, while on Mondays and every Monday I will continue to speak through the printing press in this and other lands as heretofore. Why do I go? To make pastoral visitation among people I have never seen, but to whom I have been permitted a long while to administer. I want to see them in their own cities, towns and neighborhoods. I want to know what are their prosperities, what their adversities and what their opportunities, and so enlarge my work and get more adaptedness. Why do I go? For educational purposes. I want to freshen my mind and heart by new scenes, new faces, new manners and customs. I want better to understand what are the wrongs to be righted and the waste places to be reclaimed. I will put all I learn in sermons to be preached to you when I return. I want to see the Sandwich Islands, not so much in the light of modern politics as in the light of the gospel of Jesus Christ which has transformed them, and Samoa and those vast realms of New Zealand, and Australia and Ceylon and India. I want to see what Christianity has accomplished. I want to see how the missionaries have been lied about as living in luxury and idleness.

I want to know whether the heathen religions are really as tolerable and as commendable as they were represented by their adherents in the parliament of religions at Chicago. I want to see whether Mohammedanism and Buddhism would be good things for transplantation in America, as it has again and again been argued. I want to hear the Brahmans pray. I want to test whether the Pacific Ocean treats its guests any better than does the Atlantic. I want to see the wondrous architecture of India, and the Delhi and Cawnpore where Christ was crucified in the massacre of His modern disciples, and the disabled Juggernaut unwheeled by Christianity, and to see if the Taj which the Emperor Sha Jehan built in honor of his empress really means any more than the plain slab we put above our dear departed. I want to see the fields where Havelock and Sir Colin Campbell won the day against the sepoys. I want to see the world from all sides. How much of it is in darkness, how much of it is in light, what the Bible means by the "ends of the earth," and get myself ready to appreciate the extent of the present to be made to Christ as spoken of in the Psalms, "Ask of me, and I shall give thee the heathen for thine inheritance and the uttermost parts of the earth for thy possession," and so I shall be ready to celebrate in heaven the victories of Christ in more rapturous song than I could have rendered had I never seen the heathen abominations before they were conquered. And so I hope to come back refreshed, reenforced and better equipped, and to do in ten years more effectual work than I have done in the last twenty-five.

And now, in this twenty-fifth anniversary sermon, I propose to do two things—first, to put a garland on the grave of the generation that has just passed off and then to put a palm branch in the hand of the generation just now coming on the field of action, for my text is true, "One generation passeth away, and another generation cometh." Oh, how many we revered and honored and loved in the last generation that quit the earth! Tears fell at the time of their going, and dirges were sounded, and signals of mourning were put on, but neither tears nor dirge nor somber veil told the half we felt. Their going left a vacancy in our souls that has never been filled up. We never get used to their absence. There are times when the sight of something with which they were associated—a picture, or a book, or a garment, or a staff—breaks us down with emotion, but we bear it simply because we have to bear it. Oh, how snow white their hair got, and how the wrinkles multiplied, and the sight grew more dim, and the hearing less alert, and the step more frail, and one day they were gone out of the chair by the fireside, and from the plate at the meal, and from the end of the church pew, where they worshiped with us. Oh, my soul, how we miss them! But let us console each other with the thought that we shall meet them again in the land of salutation and reunion.

And now I twist a garland for that departed generation. It need not be costly, perhaps, just a handful of clover blossoms from the field through which they used to walk, or as many violets as you could hold between the thumb and the forefinger, plucked out of the garden where they used to walk in the cool of the day. Put these old fashioned flowers right down over the heart that never again will ache, and the feet that will never again be weary, and the arm that has forever ceased to toil. Peace, father! Peace, mother! Everlasting peace! All that is fine in our souls goes out to you.

But what shall we do with the palm branch? That we will put in the hand of the generation coming on. Yours is to be the generation for victories. The last and the present generation have been perfecting the steam power, and the electric light, and the electric forces. To these will be added transportation. It will be your mission to use all these forces. Everything is ready for you to march right up and take this world for God and heaven. Get your heart right by repentance and the pardoning grace of the Lord Jesus, and your mind right by elevating books and pictures, and your body right by gymnasium and field exercise, and plenty of ozone and by looking as often as you can upon the face of mountain and of sea. Then start! In God's name, start! And here is the palm branch. From conquest to conquest, move right on and right up. You will soon have the whole field for yourself. Before another twenty-five years have gone, we will be out of the pulpits, and the offices, and the stores, and the factories, and the benevolent institutions, and you will be at the front. Forward into the battle! If God be for you, who can be against you? "He that spared not His own Son, but delivered Him up for us all, how shall He not with Him also freely give us all things?"

And, as for us who are now at the front, having put the garland on the grave of the last generation, and having put the palm branch in the hand of the coming generation, we will cheer each other in the remaining onsets and go into the shining gate somewhere about the same time, and greeted by the generation that has preceded us we will have to wait only a little while to greet the generation that will come after us. And will not that be glorious? Three generations in heaven together—the grandfather, the son and the grandson; the grandmother, the daughter and the granddaughter. And so with wider range and keener faculty we shall realize the full significance of the text, "One generation passeth away, and another generation cometh."

An Oyster Kills a Duck.

The oyster is apparently a helpless creature, but sometimes he comes out ahead of his enemies, as is shown by a recent find in Chesapeake Bay. A deckhand on the steamboat Tangier discovered a duck floating dead on the water and picked it up. To his surprise he found an oyster, with its shell tightly closed on the bill of the duck. Evidently the duck had found the oyster with his shell opened, and tried to make a meal of him. The oyster had shut his shell on the duck's bill, and clung there in spite of the bird's efforts to shake it off; and its weight had gradually wearied the duck, and finally pulled its head under water, and drowned it. The duck and oyster were brought to Baltimore and proved quite a curiosity.—New Orleans Picayune.

Brain Surgery.

Sawing out sections of the skull in order to give the brain room to develop symetrically seems a rather delicate and dangerous operation, but it is one that has on several occasions been performed with perfect success. Children apparently in a condition of hopeless idiocy have been treated upon this plan and are in prospect of developing the faculties usual in those of like age. The removal of the bone which has become unduly hardened permits growth, and the clouded intellect may become clear and normal.—Chicago Tribune.

The subject of the above portrait is the Rev. Charles Prosser, a much beloved and most devout minister of the gospel of Carmel, Northumberland Co., Pa. Mr. Prosser's usefulness, was, for a long time, greatly impaired by a distressing, obstinate disease. How his malady was finally conquered we will let him tell in his own language. He says: "I was a great sufferer from dyspepsia, and I had suffered so long that I was a wreck; life was rendered undesirable and it seemed death was near; but I came in contact with Dr. Pierce's Golden Medical Discovery and his 'Pleasant Pellets.' I took twelve bottles of 'Discovery,' and several bottles of the 'Pellets,' and followed the hygenic advice of Dr. Pierce, and I am happy to say it was indeed a cure, for life is worth living now."

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Yours truly,
J. F. Hudson

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