TWENTY TO SEVENTY.

DR. TALMAGE ON THE CHANGES AND LESSONS OF THE AGES OF MAN.

The Age of Preparation and Danger of Forming Bad Habits—The Age of Manly Toil—Middle Age and Dignity—Old Age and What?

BROOKLYN, March 5.—A most striking and characteristic sermon was preached by Rev. Dr. Talmage to a great audience in the Tabernacle today, the subject announced being "From Twenty to Seventy." The text selected was Psalm xc, 10, "The days of our years are threescore and ten."

The seventieth milestone of life is here planted as at the end of the journey. A few go beyond it: multitudes never reach it. The oldest person of modern times expired at 169 years. A Greek of the name of Stravaride lived to 132 years. An Englishman of the name of Thomas Parr lived 152 years. Before the time of Moses people lived 150 years, and if you go far enough back they lived 500 years. Well, that was necessary, because the story of the world must come down by tradition, and it needed long life safely to transmit the news of the past. If the generations had been short lived, the story would so often have changed lips that it might have got all astray.

But after Moses began to write it down and parchment told it from century to century it was not necessary that people live so long in order to authenticate the events of the past. If in our time people lived only 25 years, that would not affect history, since it is put in print and is no longer dependent on tradition. Whatever your age, I will today directly address you, and I shall speak to those who are in the twenties, the thirties, the forties, the fifties, the sixties, and to those who are in the seventies and beyond.

YOUTH SHOULD BE AMBITIOUS.

First, then, I accost those of you who are in the twenties. You are full of expectation. You are ambitious—that is, if you amount to anything—for some kind of success, commercial or mechanical or professional or literary or agricultural or social or moral. If I find some one in the twenties without any sort of ambition, I feel like saying: "My friend, you have got on the wrong planet. This is not the world for you. You are going to be in the way. Have you made your choice of poorhouses? You will never be able to pay for your cradle. Who is going to settle for your board? There is a mistake about the fact that you were born at all."

But supposing you have ambition, let me say to all the twenties: Expect everything through divine manipulation, and then you will get all you want or something better. Are you looking for wealth? Well, remember that God controls the money markets, the harvests, the droughts, the caterpillars, the locusts, the sunshine, the storm, the land, the sea, and you will get wealth. Perhaps not that which is stored up in banks, in safe deposits, in United States securities, in houses and lands, but your clothing and board and shelter, and that is about all you can appropriate anyhow. You cost the Lord a great deal. To feed and clothe and shelter you for a lifetime requires a big sum of money, and if you get nothing more than the absolute necessities you get an enormous amount of supply.

Expect as much as you will of any kind of success; if you expect it from the Lord, you are safe. Depend on any other resource and you may be badly chagrined, but depend on God and all will be well. It is a good thing in the crisis of life to have a man of large means back you up. It is a great thing to have a moneyed institution stand behind you in your undertaking. But it is a mightier thing to have the God of heaven and earth your coadjutor, and you may have him. I am so glad that I meet you while you are in the twenties. You are laying out your plans, and all your life in this world and the next for 500,000,000 years of your existence will be affected by those plans. It is about 8 o'clock in the morning of your life, and you are just starting out. Which way are you going to start? Oh, the twenties!

"Twenty" is a great word in the Bible. Joseph was sold for 20 pieces of silver. Samson judged Israel 20 years. Solomon gave Hiram 20 cities. The flying roll that Zechariah saw was 20 cubits. When the sailors of the ship on which Paul sailed sounded the Mediterranean sea, it was 20 fathoms. What mighty things have been done in the twenties! Romulus founded Rome when he was 20. Keats finished life at 25. Lafayette was a world renowned soldier at 23. Oberlin accomplished his chief work by 27. Bonaparte was victor over Italy at 26. Pitt was prime minister of England at 22. Calvin had completed his immortal "Institutes" by the time he was 26. Grotius was attorney general at 24.

Some of the mightiest things for God and eternity have been done in the twenties. As long as you can put the figure "2" before the other figure that helps describe your age I have high hopes about you. Look out for that figure "2." Watch its continuance with as much earnestness as you ever watched anything that promised your salvation or threatened you demolition. What a critical time, the twenties! While they continue you decide your occupation and the principles by which you will be guided. You make your most abiding friendships. You arrange your home life. You fix your habits. Lord God Almighty, for Jesus Christ's sake, have mercy on all the men and women in the twenties!

PREPARE FOR DISAPPOINTMENTS.

Next I accost those in the thirties. You are at an age when you find what a tough thing it is to get recognized and established in your occupation or profession. Ten years ago you thought all that was necessary for success was to put on your shutter the sign of physician or dentist or attorney or broker or agent, and you would have plenty of business. How many hours you sat and waited for business and waited in vain three persons only know—God, your wife and yourself. In commercial life you have not had the promotion and the increase in salary you anticipated, or the place you expected to occupy in the firm has not been vacated. The produce of the farm, with which you expected to support yourself and those depending on you, and to pay the interest on the mortgage, has been far less than you anticipated, or the prices were down, or special expenses for sickness made drafts on your resources that you could not have expected.

In some respects the hardest decade of life is the thirties, because the results are generally so far behind the anticipations. It is very rare indeed that a young man does as did the young man last Sunday night when he came to me and said, "I have been so marvelously prospered since I came to this country that I feel, as a matter of gratitude, that I ought to dedicate myself to God." Nine-tenths of the poetry of life has been knocked out of you since you came into the thirties. Men in the different professions and occupations saw that you were rising and they must put an estoppel on you or you might somehow stand in the way. They think you must be suppressed.

From 30 to 40 it is an especially hard time for young doctors, young lawyers, young merchants, young farmers, young mechanics, young ministers. The struggle of the thirties is for honest and helpful and remunerative recognition. But few old people know how to treat young people without patronizing them on the one hand or snubbing them on the other. Oh, the thirties! Joseph stood before Pharaoh at 30. David was 30 years old when he began to reign. The height of Solomon's temple was 30 cubits. Christ entered upon his active ministry at 30 years of age. Judas sold him for 30 pieces of silver.

Oh, the thirties! What a word, suggestive of triumph or disaster! Your decade is the one that will probably afford the greatest opportunity for victory, because there is the greatest necessity for struggle. Read the world's history and know what are the thirties for good or bad. Alexander the Great closed his career at 32. Frederick the Great made Europe tremble with his armies at 35. Cortes conquered Mexico at 30. Grant fought Shiloh and Donelson when 38. Raphael died at 37. Luther was the hero of the reformation at 35. Sir Philip Sydney got through by 32.

The greatest deeds for God and against him were done within the thirties, and your greatest battles are now and between the time when you cease expressing your age by putting first a figure "2" and the time when you will cease expressing it by putting first a figure "3." As it is the greatest time of the struggle, I adjure you, in God's name and by God's grace, make it the greatest achievement. My prayer is for all those in the tremendous crises of the thirties. The fact is that by the way you decide the present decade of your history you decide all the following decades.

When I was in Russia, I was disappointed in not seeing the battlefield of Borodino. Why was there fought such a battle at that small village? It was 70 miles from Moscow. Why that desperate struggle, in which 125,000 Frenchmen grappled with 160,000 Russians, and 30,000 dead Frenchmen and 52,000 dead Russians were left on the field? It was because the fate of Moscow, the sacred city of Russia, was decided there—decided 70 miles away. And let me tell you, people of the thirties, you are now at the Borodino, whence will resound its successes or its moral disasters clear on into the seventies if you live to the threescore and ten of the text.

AT FORTY MAN KNOWS HIS WEAKNESS.

Next I accost the forties. Yours is the decade of discovery. I do not mean the discovery of the outside, but the discovery of yourself. No man knows himself until he is 40. He overestimates or underestimates himself. By that time he has learned what he can do or what he cannot do. He thought he had commercial genius enough to become a millionaire, but now he is satisfied to make a comfortable living. He thought he had rhetorical power that would bring him into the United States senate; now he is content if he can successfully argue a common case before a petit jury.

He thought he had medical skill that would make him a Mott or a Grosse or a Willard Parker or a Sims; now he finds his sphere is that of a family physician, prescribing for the ordinary ailments that afflict our race. He was sailing on in a fog and could not take a reckoning, but now it clears up enough to allow him to find out his real latitude and longitude. He has been climbing, but now he has got to the top of the hill, and he takes a long breath. He is half way through the journey at least, and he is in a position to look backward or forward. He has more good sense than he ever had. He knows human nature, for he has been cheated often enough to see the bad side of it, and he has met so many gracious and kindly and splendid souls he also knows the good side of it.

Now calm yourself. Thank God for the past and deliberately set your compass for another voyage. You have chased enough thistledown. You have blown enough soap bubbles. You have seen the unsatisfying nature of all earthly things. Open a new chapter with God and the world. This decade of the forties ought to eclipse all its predecessors in worship, in usefulness and in happiness. "Forty" is a great word in the Bible. God's ancient people were 40 years in the wilderness. Eli judged Israel 40 years. David and Solomon and Jehoash reigned 40 years. When Joseph visited his brethren, he was 40 years old.

Oh, this mountain top of the forties! You have now the character you will probably have for all time and all eternity. God, by his grace, sometimes changes a man after the forties, but after that a man never changes himself. Tell me, O men and women who are in the forties, your habits of thought and life, and I will tell you what you will forever be. I might make a mistake once in a thousand times, but not more than in that proportion.

My sermon next accosts the fifties. How queer it looks when in writing your age you make the first of the two figures a "5." This is the decade which shows what the other decades have been. If a young man has sown wild oats and he has lived to this time, he reaps the harvest of it in the fifties, or if by necessity he was compelled to overtoil in honest directions he is called to settle up with exacting nature some time during the fifties.

Many have it so hard in early life that they are octogenarians at 50. Sciaticas and rheumatisms and neuralgias and vertigos and insomnias have their playground in the fifties. A man's hair begins to whiten, and, although he may have worn spectacles before, now he asks the optician for No. 14 or No. 12 or No. 10. When he gets a cough and is almost cured, he hacks and clears his throat a good while afterward. Oh, ye who are in the fifties, think of it! A half century of blessing to be thankful for, and a half century subtracted from an existence which in the most marked cases of longevity hardly ever reaches a whole century.

By this time you ought to be eminent for piety. You have been in so many battles you ought to be a brave soldier. You have made so many voyages you ought to be a good sailor. So long protected and blessed you ought to have a soul full of doxology. In Bible times in Canaan every 50 years was by God's command a year of jubilee. The people did not work that year. If property had by misfortune gone out of one's possession, on the fiftieth year it came back to him. If he had fooled it away, it was returned without a farthing to pay.

If a man had been enslaved, he was in that year emancipated. A trumpet was sounded loud and clear and long, and it was the trumpet of jubilee. They shook hands, they laughed, they congratulated. What a time it was, that fiftieth year! And if under the old dispensation it was such a glad time, under our new and more glorious dispensation let all who have come to the fifties hear the trumpet of jubilee that I now blow. That was the allusion made by Mr. Toplady, the great hymnologist, when he wrote:

Blow ye the trumpet, blow
The gladly solemn sound;
Let all the nations know,
To earth's remotest bound,
The year of jubilee is come.
Return ye ransomed sinners home.

Ye who have sold for naught
Your heritage above
Shall have it back unbought—
The gift of Jesus' love.
The year of jubilee has come.
Return ye ransomed sinners home.

My sermon next accosts the sixties. The beginning of that decade is more startling than any other. In his chronological journey the man rides rather smoothly over the figures "2" and "3" and "4" and "5," but the figure "6" gives him a big jolt. He says: "It cannot be that I am 60. Let me examine the old family record. I guess they made a mistake. They got my name down wrong in the roll of births." But, no; the older brothers or sisters remember the time of his advent, and there is some relative a year older, and another relative a year younger, and, sure enough, the fact is established beyond all disputation.

Sixty! Now your great danger is the temptation to fold up your faculties and quit. You will feel a tendency to reminisce. If you do not look out, you will begin almost everything with the words, "When I was a boy." But you ought to make the sixties more memorable for God and the truth than the fifties, or the forties, or the thirties. You ought to do more during the next 10 years than you did in any 30 years of your life because of all the experience you have had. You have committed enough mistakes in life to make you wise above your juniors. Now, under the accumulated light of your past experimenting, go to work for God as never before.

When a man in the sixties folds up his energy and feels he has done enough, it is the devil of indolence to which he is surrendering, and God generally takes the man at his word and lets him die right away. His brain, that under the tension of hard work was active, now suddenly shrivels. Men, whether they retire from secular or religious work, generally retire to the grave. No well man has a right to retire. The world was made for work. There remaineth a rest for the people of God, but it is in a sphere beyond the reach of telescopes. The military charge that decided one of the greatest battles of the ages—the battle of Waterloo—was not made until 8 o'clock in the evening, but some of you propose to go into camp at 2 o'clock in the afternoon.

WAITING FOR THE END.

My subject next accosts those in the seventies and beyond. My word to them is congratulation. You have got nearly if not quite through. You have safely crossed the sea of life and are about to enter the harbor. You have fought at Gettysburg, and the war is over. Here and there a skirmish with the remaining sin of your own heart and the sin of the world, but I guess you are about done.

There may be some work for you yet on small or large scale. Bismarck of Germany vigorous in the eighties. The prime minister of England strong at 84. Haydn composing his oratorio, "The Creation," at 70 years of age. Isocrates doing some of his best work at 74. Plato busy thinking for all succeeding centuries at 84. William Blake at 67 learning Italian so as to read Dante in the original. Lord Cockburn at 87 writing his best treatise. John Wesley stirring great audiences at 85. William C. Bryant, without spectacles, reading in my house "Thanatopsis" at 83 years of age.

Christian men and women in all departments serving God after becoming septuagenarians and octogenarians and nonagenarians prove that there are possibilities of work for the aged, but I think you who are passed the seventies are near being through. How do you feel about it? You ought to be jubilant, because life is a tremendous struggle, and if you have got through respectably and usefully you ought to feel like people toward the close of a summer day seated on the rocks watching the sunset at Bar Harbor or Cape May or Lookout mountain.

I am glad to say that most old Christians are cheerful. Daniel Webster visited John Adams a short time before his death and found him in very infirm health. He said to Mr. Adams: "I am glad to see you. I hope you are getting along pretty well?" The reply was: "Ah, sir, quite the contrary. I find I am a poor tenant occupying a house much shattered by time. It sways and trembles with every wind, and, what is worse, sir, the landlord, as near as I can make out, does not intend to make any repairs."

Dr. Beman, after passing into the seventies, was asked by my friend, Rev. Dr. Spear, "Dr. Beman, how is your health now?" and he replied, "I have on me an incurable disease." "What is that?" asked my friend, and the septuagenarian replied, "Old age." Both of the old men I have mentioned intended their remarks for facetiousness, and old people have a right to be facetious. An aged woman sent for her physician and told him of her ailments, and the doctor said: "What would you have me do, madam? I cannot make you young again." She replied: "I know that, doctor. What I want you to do is to help me grow old a little longer."

The young have their troubles before them. The old have their troubles behind them. You have got about all out of this earth that there is in it. Be glad that you, an aged servant of God, are going to try another life and amid better surroundings. Stop looking back and look ahead. Oh, ye in the seventies, and the eighties, and the nineties, your best days are yet to come; your grandest associations are yet to be formed; your best eyesight is yet to be kindled; your best hearing is yet to be awakened; your greatest speed is yet to be traveled; your gladdest song is yet to be sung.

The most of your friends have gone over the border, and you are going to join them very soon. They are waiting for you. They are watching the golden shore to see you land. They are watching the shining gate to see you come through. They are standing by the throne to see you mount. What a glad hour when you drop the staff and take the scepter; when you quit the stiffened joints and become an immortal athlete! But hear! hear! a remark pertinent to all people whether in the twenties, the thirties, the forties, the fifties, the sixties, the seventies, or beyond. What we all need is to take the supernatural into our lives.

Do not let us depend on brain and muscle and nerve. We want a mighty supply of the supernatural. We want with us a divine force mightier than the waters and the tempests, and when the Lord took two steps on bestormed Galilee, putting one foot on the winds and the other on the waves, he proved himself mightier than hurricane and billow. We want with us a divine force greater than the fires, and when the Lord cooled Nebuchadnezzar's furnace until Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego did not even have to fan themselves he proved himself mightier than the fire.

We want a divine force stronger than wild beast, and when the Lord made Daniel a lion tamer he proved himself stronger than the wrath of the jungles. There are so many diseases in the world we want with us a divine physician capable of combating ailments, and our Lord when on earth showed what he could do with catalepsy and paralysis and ophthalmia and dementia. Oh, take this supernatural into all your lives! How to get it? Just as you get anything you want—by application. If you want anything, you apply for it.

By prayer apply for the supernatural. Take it into your daily business. Many a man has been able to pay only 50 cents on the dollar who if he had called in the supernatural could have paid 100 cents on the dollar. Why do 98 men out of 100 fail in business? Because there are not more than two men out of a hundred who take God into their worldly affairs. "Behind the great unknown standeth God within the shadows keeping watch upon his own."

CAST ALL YOUR CARES ON GOD.

A man got up in a New York prayer meeting and said: "God is my partner. I did business without him for 20 years and failed every two or three years. I have been doing business with him for 20 years and have not failed once." Oh, take the supernatural into all your affairs! I had such an evidence of the goodness of God in temporal things when I entered active life I must testify. Called to preach at lovely Belleville, in New Jersey, I entered upon my work. But there stood the empty parsonage, and not a cent had I with which to furnish it. After preaching three or four weeks the officers of my church asked me if I did not want to take two or three weeks' vacation. I said "Yes," for I had preached about all I knew, but I feared they must be getting tired of me.

When I returned to the village after the brief vacation, they handed me the key of the parsonage and asked me if I did not want to go and look at it. Not suspecting anything had happened, I put the key into the parsonage door and opened it, and there was the hall completely furnished with carpet and pictures and hatrack, and I turned into the parlors, and they were furnished, the softest sofas I ever sat on, and into the study and found it furnished with bookcases, and I went to the bedrooms, and they were furnished, and into the pantry, and that was furnished with every culinary article, and the spiceboxes were filled, and a flour barrel stood there ready to be opened, and I went down into the dining room, and the table was set and beautifully furnished, and into the kitchen, and the stove was full of fuel, and a match lay on the top of the stove, and all I had to do in starting housekeeping was to strike the match. God inspired the whole thing, and if I ever doubt his goodness, all up and down the world, call me an ingrate. I testify that I have been in many tight places, and God always got me out, and he will get you out of the tight places.

But the most of this audience will never reach the eighties, or the seventies, or the sixties, or the fifties, or the forties. He who passes into the forties has gone far beyond the average of human life. Amid the uncertainties take God through Jesus Christ as your present and eternal safety. The longest life is only a small fragment of the great eternity. We will all of us soon be there.

Eternity! how near it rolls;
Count the vast value of your souls.
Beware and count the awful cost
What they have gained whose souls are lost.

Winter Amusement In Boston.

The most intellectual amusement of this arctic season has been punging. (With a hard g, not a soft one.) Small boys and girls engage in it chiefly, and it is a great education for the mind as well as for the body. It trains the perceptive faculties beautifully. You see an elegant pung coming along, with a projecting runner behind, which you can easily stand upon. You have only an instant in which to look at the driver and guess whether he is the sort of man who will let you "catch on." You guess that he is; he has a whip, but he looks mild and gentle.

You scramble onto the rear of his vehicle. Swish! slash! whack! "Git off o' there! Git off, durn ye!" Swish! whack! You find out that you have made a terrible error of judgment. A few experiences of this sort, with whacks from nice looking men and, on the contrary, some beautiful rides on the pungs of men of very dark and forbidding countenances, teach you that things are not what they seem and make you a much better judge of human nature than you would otherwise be.

Moreover, punging is excellent exercise and develops both strength and agility. It also cultivates fertility of resource. One small boy rode all the way to Newton Highlands on a series of hospitable pungs, and then had to find some way to ride home, and as most of the pungs were going the other way this taxed his ingenuity pretty sharply. But he got home just the same. And it was immense fun.—Boston Transcript.

Reading to the Children.

A child's tastes for reading and the style of books he or she learns to admire are governed largely by the parents. Nearly all children enjoy having some one read to them. Now, if before they can peruse interesting books for themselves their taste becomes cultivated through the selections they hear, there will be no danger of their wandering astray into those bypaths of literature that are not healthful, mind invigorating resorts. Some skeptic probably observes that we would advise reading the "Iliad" to a 4-year-old listener. Indeed no! That would be very silly, being far beyond the comprehension of the infant mind, but there is poetry as worthy and as pure as Homer's that little folks learn to appreciate and love.

Then in prose, what child will not delight in Andersen and Grimm's fairy tales, and later on "Robinson Crusoe," "Swiss Family Robinson," "Arabian Nights," "Gulliver's Travels," "Nicholas Nickleby" and "David Copperfield?" Scott, Dickens, Thackeray, Cooper, Irving and Hawthorne are all as delightful to the youths and maidens in their teens as to the aged bookworm. Reading aloud around the evening lamp is a family delight that has laid the foundation in many youthful minds of a knowledge of the best and noblest works in English literature.—Philadelphia Times.

A Sign of Spring.

Soon shall we see that freckle small
Upon her dainty face,
Which tells admirers one and all
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—Washington Star.

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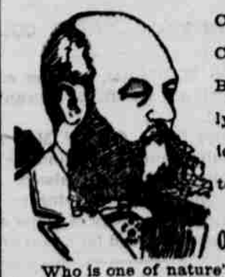

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JOHN KNIGHT,
Sheriff Marion Co., Or.

February 28, 1893. 2-1-w-dw