

TALMAGE'S SERMON.

HE GIVES A TALK PARTICULARLY TO YOUNG MEN.

Love of Home—Industrious Habits—A High Ideal of Life—Respect for the Sabbath—The Christian Religion—A Turning Point.

The Son of David. In his sermon last Sunday Rev. Dr. Talmage, preaching to the usual crowded audience, took up a subject of universal interest to young men. His text was selected from II Samuel, xviii, 29, "Is the young man Absalom safe?"

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 struck a luxuriant shock of hair that when a man's eyes fell upon it shrank. But notwithstanding all his brilliancy 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! Two great questions were to be decided—the safety of his boy and the continuance of the throne of Israel. After awhile 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 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 hearing distance the father cries out:

"Is it true that you have just had a skirmish, having no overseer or guide, provided a horse to you in the summer and gathered her men in the harvest? Is there a lion or a bear? 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 be-sweated 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 God I had died for thee, O Absalom, my son, my son!"

Absalom Safe?

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 good resolutions as they have who have given in the past, and they are ready to hear me in 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 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 the rocks with all the diamonds of Golconda, and all the silver of Nevada, and all the gold of California and Australia, and put on top of these all banking and monied institutions; then they can not 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 partidge 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."

Safeguard.

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 pleasure that concentrate around that word "home." Perhaps your early abode was shadowed with vice or poverty. Harsh words and petulance and scowling 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 very poor abode, but it was safe; it was 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. Friends on palace walls do not mean so much to you as those rough hewn rafters. Parks and bowers and seats at fashionable watering place or country seat do not mean so much to you as that brook that ran in front of the plain farmhouse and singing under the weeping willows. The barred gateway swung open by porter in full dress does not mean so much to you as that swing gate, your sister on one side of it and you on the other. She, gone fifteen years, into glory! That scene coming back to you, to you, you sweep backward and forward on the air, singing the songs of your childhood. By the way, are those here who have their second dwelling place? It is your adopted home. That also is sacred for ever. 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 your 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 end, to any sort of life of wickedness. If you find more enjoyment in the subroom, 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 mantel. Bid unhappy mirth stand back from that threshold. Consecrate some spot in that room with the kiss of prayer. By the memory of other days, a father's counsel, a mother's love and a sister's confidence, call it home.

Prime Virtue.

Another safeguard for these young men is industrious habit. 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 \$2,000 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 pennilessness by making copy plates of other merchants' signatures! Never mind, all is right in business. After awhile he has his estate. Now is the time for him to retire to the country, amid the rocks and the herds, to culture and domesticate virtue.

Now the young men who were his schoolmates 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 everyday life. I should not wonder if there were a rotten beam in that palace. I should not wonder if God should smile upon 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 turned into a dishonorable grave, and then went into the gnashing of teeth. The way of the young man Absalom safe?"

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