

"THY DAYS OF THY YOUTH"

"Remember now thy Creator in the days of thy youth, while the evil days come not, nor the years draw nigh, when thou shalt say, I have no pleasure in them." Ecclesiastes 12:1.

In many respects this is a young man's age. But how quickly youth flits away. It is a shorter period than childhood or manhood and womanhood. Yet much is crowded into those years. It is the time that people learn to do things. It is the time when learning is comparatively easy. It is the time of strength, abundance of energy, zeal and zest. But youth is a period that soon passes. It is the brief period during which we stand on the shore preparing for the voyage across the ocean of life. And it is the brevity of this period that is emphasized in the expression, "in the days of thy youth." They are so brief in their duration and so rapid on their flight. They come enriched with countless, priceless treasures, but they will soon be gone.

In a novel Disraeli had one character say, "Youth is a blunder, manhood is a struggle, and old age is a regret." That statement is not true. For those who live right, youth is opportunity, manhood is achievement, and old age is holy memory." Youth has numerous commendable qualities. Among them are frankness, idealism, strength, enthusiasm, adventure, optimism and trustworthiness.

Of all periods in life this is the most important in determining what manner of man the youth shall become. It is also the period when the inquiry, "Wherewithal shall a young man keep his way clean?" presses for an answer. It is an incalculable gain for all after years to escape moral pollution in youth. The greatest strength is in those who have never indulged in evil.

"The days of thy youth" are those in which: --

I. The foundations of adulthood are built.

Youth is the time when the habits of life are formed. This is true in all phases of life -- working, serving, and giving.

II. Enduring friendships are formed.

Of course, men and women make friends when they have passed their youth, but they do not make them so easily, and they are not likely to be so enduring as those formed in youth. The older one gets, the more he values his friends. The man who is without friends is, indeed, the poorest of mortals. Next to God and our parents, no one affects our lives for good or evil like our friends. If you know a man's friends, you can form a fairly accurate opinion of him. "Birds of a feather flock together." "They that lie down with the dogs, get up with fleas." A man's friendships help to make him or to break him. True friendship ennobles, purifies and exalts.

The knowledge of what your friend expects of you spurs you on to high endeavor.

"I would be true, for there are those who trust men,

I would be pure, for there are those who care."

There is one friendship I trust each of you, who has not already made, will make immediately, and that is friendship with Jesus Christ. "Remember now thy Creator in the days of thy youth." Most of the spiritual leaders in every age have made their choices for God "in the days of their youth." Five-sixths of all our religious choices are made under twenty, and eleven-twelfths of all religious decisions are made under twenty-five. No

other friendship will do so much for you as friendship with Christ, and no other friendship will enable you to do so much for others. If you would achieve the highest and best in life, cultivate definite and intimate friendship with Jesus Christ "in the days of thy youth."

The days of youth are the most favorable for remembering the Lord. They are the days of special privilege and promise. There are few, if any, for whom there are such precious privileges as the young. More than this, the days of youth are days that are most receptive and most retentive of what may influence them. It follows then that there should be all possible care that the good should be received and the evil excluded. It is what is first taken into the mind that sinks the deepest and lasts the longest. It will influence all that follows, so one should be sure that it is for the good.

Youth is the season for great happiness and the rich enjoyment of life. Each day fills the life with increased strength. And yet how many in the days of their youth fail to remember their Creator! Isn't it a strange thing that anybody would not remember his Creator? We owe every breath to him. Every heartbeat is in the hands of the Creator Who made you.

I. Remember Whom? "Thy Creator." This text implies that: --

1. Man has a Creator.
2. Man may forget his Creator.

It is easy to remember God in the days of adversity, but it is not an easy task in times of prosperity when one has money in his pocket, is enjoying the best of health, his family is well, his business is flourishing and he is passing through a period of prosperity -- it is so easy to forget about God. This is very much in contrast with the days of adversity, for in times of sickness and business reverses one can remember God very easily.

II. Remember How?

1. By thinking of His person.
2. By reflecting on His character.
3. By acknowledging His goodness.
4. By meditating on His Word.
5. By obeying Him.

III. Remember Why?

1. He is our Creator.
2. He is infinitely worthy of being remembered.
3. Happiness is impossible without it.

IV. Remember When?

"In the days of thy youth."

1. Not then only.
2. But then firstly.
 - a. The first portion of life is due to God.
 - b. It is the formative period of life.

One is more open to impression than in later years. The heart is better prepared to give entrance to light and the right. That is the best time to accept His strength and guidance for all of the future. Habits formed in youth leave their

mark upon us in all the remainder of life. Youth is the most important period for acquiring correct religious habits.

- c. It is foolish to live a Godless life.

To leave God out of life is an act of sheer folly. To forget Him is to act with the utmost foolishness. Wisdom demands that you rest your heart in the Lord in simple faith, make His Word the rule of your conduct, follow Him with patient and persistent service, and endeavor to do His will from day to day.

- d. Youth is the most favorable time for remembering Him.

He is more easily remembered then because the evil days of temptation and sin, business and worry, affliction and sorrow, disease and decay have not come.

- e. Rightly remembering Him in the days of thy youth will greatly bless every subsequent period of life. It will be a great blessing to you, and then it will make you a blessing to others. Do not neglect the spiritual side of your nature. Do not put off the right decision until a more convenient season.

- f. It might be the only time that is allotted to you.

The youngest and the healthiest are often speedily removed from us.

- g. A time will come when you will wish that you had done so.

Whether you want to remember it or not, a judgment day is approaching. Some make fun of the idea of a judgment day, but they can't laugh it away.

"Rejoice, O Young man, in thy youth; and let thy heart cheer thee in the days of thy youth, and walk in the ways of thine heart, and in the sight of thine eyes; but know thou, that for all these things God will bring thee into judgment." Ecclesiastes 11:9.

"Let us hear the conclusion of the whole matter: Fear God, and keep His commandments: for this is the whole duty of man. For God shall bring every work into judgment, with every secret thing, whether it be good, or whether it be evil." Ecclesiastes 12:13-14.

"And the times of this ignorance God winked at; but now commandeth all men everywhere to repent: Because He hath appointed a day, in the which He will judge the world in righteousness by that man whom He hath ordained: whereof He hath given assurance unto all men, in that He hath raised Him from the dead." Acts 17:30-31.

"And as it is appointed unto men once to die, but after this the judgment." Hebrews 9:27.

But, don't forget that you can be saved. God loves you. Christ died for you. And the door to salvation is now open to you. "Come now for all things are ready." "Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ and thou shalt be saved."