

## "THE 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 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 are Christians and live in conformity to the will of God, youth is an opportunity, manhood is achievement and old age is a holy memory.

Youth is a period that soon passes. How quickly it flits away! It is merely a matter of days. It is the brief period during which we stand on the shore preparing for the voyage across the ocean of life. 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 in their flight. They come enriched with numerous and priceless treasures, but they are soon gone. Youth is a shorter period than childhood or adulthood. Yet much is crowded into those years. It is the time when learning is comparatively easy. It is the time when people learn to do things. It is the time of strength. It is the time when one has an abundance of energy, zeal and zest.

It is very doubtful if young people properly evaluate and rightly appreciate their youth as they should. Many of them are so impatient because they are so young. They feel the limitations that beset them, and quite frequently they resent them. They look around them and see that the better positions are filled with those who are older, and they wish they were old enough to obtain some of the good things which older people have. That desire was expressed by a girl of whom a friend inquired, "How old are you?" She said, "I'll be seventeen next year." Here answer revealed her anxiety to be seventeen rather than sixteen. Because she did not know the value of her youth she was wishing that it was gone. To young people youth is the time of apprenticeship and training; the time when they have to master the work by which they are to make their living in the future. Just as the apprentice is eager for the day when his apprenticeship will be ended, so young people are eager to be done with their youth.

There are two great tests of life with which young people have to grapple and struggle. There is the pull of pride and the lust of the flesh. Young people have an urge to have their fling and to throw everything out of the way in order to realize their desires. In his "Frederick the Great" Carlyle referred to the licentious conduct of a youthful prince in the following manner: "Bright young soul, with its fine strengths and gifts, wallowing like a young rhinoceros in a mud-bath. Some way it is wholesome for a human soul. Not we!"

It seems to me that these words deserve to be written in letters of gold for the perusal of every youth setting out in life, and more especially in these days, when by many it seems to be regarded as a necessity in the life of the young that a certain period should be spent in sewing wild oats; or in Carlyle's expressive phrase, taking mud-baths. I should like to remind all who are thinking in these terms of the folly and shame and sorrow which result to those who accept this theory of the transition from youth to adulthood.

Of all periods in life youth is the most important in determining what manner of person he or she shall become. It is 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 the years to come to escape moral pollution in youth. The greatest strength belongs to those who have never indulged in evil. If you will read the biographies of those who have served God faithfully in their maturity, you will find that they all look back with anguish and regret on the sins of their youth, when that was their manner of life in those days.

"The days of thy youth" are those in which 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 -- in worshipping, in working, in serving and in giving.

"The days of thy youth" are those in which enduring friendships are formed. Of course, men and women make friends after they have passed their youth, but they do not make them as easily and readily, and they are not likely to be so intimate or 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 influences us for good or evil like our friends. If you know a person's intimate friends, you can form a fairly accurate opinion of him or of her. "Birds of a feather flock together." "You cannot lie down with the dogs and get up without fleas." A man's friends help to make him or to break him. True friends of the right sort are invaluable.

"I would be true,  
For there are those who trust me,  
I would be pure,  
For there are those who care."

There is one friendship I trust each of you will establish immediately, if you have not done so already, and that is with Jesus Christ. He is the best friend that any person of any age can ever have. Do not wait until you are broken with the disappointments of life and stained with the defilements of sin before you come to Christ and trust Him as your Saviour. "Remember now thy Creator in the days of thy youth." While you are young make a cheerful, wholehearted and complete surrender of yourself to Him. Give to Him the brightest and fairest part of your life, and He will then make the remainder of it brighter and fairer still. No other friend can ever do for you anything to compare with what Christ will do for you. If you have any desire or intention of achieving the highest and best in life, be sure to cultivate an intimate friendship with Christ "in the days of thy youth."

It is doubtful if any text is more directly pointed or more solemnly meant for the rising generation than this one: "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." This verse teaches us that every person has a Creator. It definitely implies that a person may forget his Creator. It is easy to remember in the days of adversity, but it is not so easy in times of prosperity, when one is enjoying the best of health, when the family is well, when one has a good income and when one has a good checking account. Such blessings and prosperity make it easy for a person to forget his Creator. But, in times of sickness, adversity and business reverses one can remember God very easily.

We should remember Him because He is our Creator, because He is infinitely worthy of being remembered and because we cannot be happy without Him. Let us remember Him by thinking of His person, by reflecting on His character, by acknowledging His goodness, by meditating on His Word, by trusting Him, by loving Him, and by obeying Him.

Every person should remember his Creator in the days of his youth. The very first portion of life is due to God. This formative period of life is more open to impression than it will be in later years. In youth the acceptance of Christ is easier than it would be later. Both His strength and guidance should be accepted in youth. Habits formed in youth leave their mark upon us in all the rest of life.

It is foolish and sinful to leave God out of one's life. To forget one's Creator is to act with sheer folly. Wisdom demands that we exercise simple faith in Christ, make God's Word the rule for our conduct, follow Him persistently in service, and endeavor

to do His will from day to day. Youth is the most favorable time for remembering our Creator. He is more easily remembered then because the evil days of temptation and sin, business and worry, afflictions and sorrows, disease and decay have not come.

If you will remember your Creator in the days of your youth, it will save you from bitter regrets in later life. Between his eighteenth and twenty-fifth years J. B. Gough, the famous temperance orator of the nineteenth century, lived a terribly dissipated life. Then he received Christ as His Saviour and was saved and transformed. But the sad memory of these misspent years never left him. In his old age he was addressing a vast audience of young men when he cried, "Young men, keep your record clean." Then he paused longer than usual and the audience wondered what it meant. He regained his voice, then repeated more feebly, "Young men, keep your record clean." There followed another, still longer pause. Again he cried, in a wavering voice, "Young men, keep your record clean." With that he fell in death.

John Newton, whose hymns we often sing, such as "Amazing Grace," could never forget the depraved years of his early life. The thought of them was always rankling in his mind. The only way to save ourselves from all such bitter regrets is to remember our Creator in the days of our youth.

Remembering our Creator in the days of youth will preserve us for high and noble service. It is wonderful for the soul to be saved and for the life also to be spent in His blessed service. If I had my life to live over, I would give it all to my Maker, Redeemer, Saviour, Lord and Master.

The days of youth are the most favorable for remembering the Lord. They are days of special privilege and great promise. There are few, if any, for whom there are such precious privileges as the young. More than this, the days of youth are most receptive and retentive of what may influence them. That is why it is so important that the good 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.

Since each of us owes every breath to the Creator, isn't it strange that any of us would fail to remember Him? Your every heartbeat is under the control of Him Who made you, be sure that you remember Him, not only in the days of your youth but throughout life. Remember your Creator in the days of your youth and He will greatly enrich and bless every subsequent period of your life. Such appropriate remembrance of Him will not only be a great blessing to you, but it will make you a tremendous blessing to others.

Because of the proneness of youth to put off spiritual matters to the future, and to think that a future time will be more favorable, this all-important matter of your salvation should be attended to at once. Do not overlook the only source of your salvation and your strength. Recognize the claim of the Creator upon you allegiance. Do not put off the matter of your salvation until a more convenient season, or neglect the spiritual side of your nature after you are saved.

The uncertainty of life, the certainty of death and the inevitableness of the judgment make it imperative that you attend to the matter of your salvation. Youth might be the only time that will be allotted to you. The young and the healthy are frequently removed from the scene of action speedily. You may die while you are young. So many die in youth. In view of the possibility that you may die young, the only wise thing to do is to trust Christ as your Saviour and become a Christian in the days of your youth. If you don't, the time will come when you will wish that you had done so. Whether you like to think about it or not, the day of death will come, and that will be followed by judgment. "And the times of this ignorance God winked at; but now commandeth all men every where 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 it is appointed unto men once to die, but after this the judgment" (Hebrews 9:27).  
But, remember that you can be saved and be ready for the judgment. God loves you. Christ offers to save you if you will believe on Him as your Saviour. Won't you believe on Him now and be saved?