LIFE'S NOONTIDE.

Rev. T. DeWitt Talmage Preaches Upon This Subject to an Enormous Congregation at His Own Church.

He Gives a Graphic Description of Three Most Important Stages in the Journey of Life.

How God Fitted Up This Ship of a World Before He Launched it From the Dockyards of Eternity.

BROOKLYN, N. Y., Jan. 25.—Dr. Talmage preached this morning in the Brooklyn tabernacle on the subject, "Noontide of Life." At the opening of the service he read the names of a large number of people recently connected with the church. Passages of scripture appropriate to the subject presented were expounded. The opening hymn was:

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

The text was from Solomon's Song, 1:7: "Tell me, O Thou whom my soul loveth, where Thou makest my flocks to rest at noon."

Reference is here made, said Dr. Talmage, to the habit of shepherds, who, at about 12 o'clock in the day, lead their sheep under the shadows of trees and of rocks and by cool streams and let them repose. It is a noonday scene and typical of human life at the meridian. About a hundred letters of birthday congratulation from all professions and occupations, and from all lands in Christendom remind me that I am 53 years of age. It is with me the warmth, the light, the vigor of July noonday. My sermon shall be about life at meridian, how it seems to me now and how it seems as I look backward and forward. Albert Barnes, after he had reached the seventies, preached a memorable sermon about the evening of life. You have heard scores of sermons about the morning of life; to-day we discuss the noontide.

If you want to know how life seems to me now, I answer it is very bright. I have had dark days, sad days, tumultous days, but there is now not one cloud in my sky. I would rather be here than anywhere else. My surroundings suit me exactly. Except yours, I have the best family in all the world. My friends are kind and sympathetic. The world to me is a most desirable abode. I have nothing against the weather, for if it be cold I have fuel and stout apparel, and if it be hot I flee to the mountains. I have no indictment to present against anything or anybody. After all the contests in which I have engaged there is not a being with whom I would not willingly, yes gladly, shake hands. The top of the hill of life is in some respects the best part of the road. Climbing up the steep is tough work. We slip and stumble and fall back. In all occupations and professions there are drudgeries and fierce rivalries at the start. We worry and fret at small antagonisms. We fear we shall never come to proper appreciation. Climbing the long hill we pant and get out of breath and feel faint, and are tempted to lie down in the bower of lazy indulgence.

Our fears at such times are augumented by evil prophecies of people who seem to think they are doing good service by setting back the young. "DeWitt," said a comrade to me as I was walking with him one day during our theological studies, "DeWitt, unless you change your style of thought and expression you will never get a call to any church in Christendom." And I suppose you have all been met on the first side of the hill of life by people who said, "Don't! Don't!" "You can't! You can't!" "Quit! Quit!" Every young man finds ten disheartments to one round word of good cheer.

FROM CRADLE TO GRAVE.

But after a while we get to the top of the hill and in comparative tranquillity and repose we look both ways. It is just three miles from cradle to grave—youth the first mile; manhood the second mile; old age the third mile. Standing on the hill top of the second mile my profoundest emotion is that of gratitude to God for that in His undeserved mercy I have escaped all physical ills, having missed but one service since I entered my profession, through all health, and that twenty-four years ago. I would be the worst ingrate on earth did I not bear testimony to the divine goodness, while many a man a hundred fold more consecrated than I have been has gone staggering under burdens of pain that often incapacitated him for duties for which he was otherwise grandly equipped. Standing here on the top of the hill of life, having come up one side and before I go down the other side I wish to declare that life to me is a happiness, a rapture, an ecstacy. If the desperate theory of the atheists should be true and that annihilation comes after this life and that the sepulchre, instead of being as we believe the roadside inn where we cease for the night to resume in the morning our journey, fully rested and among grander prospects, is really the abolition body and soul and body and soul, nevertheless, I say to God I love and that I love Thee and that I love Thee now.

There is a great deal of world-slander out of the world. I have been searching around [illegible] moon and [illegible] on the sea and [illegible] people say it is a [illegible] mean, disgusting world. [illegible] And if the maltreated world should bring a libel suit against all who have slandered it there would not be gold enough in the mount Ophir to pay the damages or prison enough in Sing Sing to hold the offenders. Not content with denouncing the world its stellar and solar neighbors are maligned and the sun is belabored at one time because it is too ardent and another time because it is too distant. But I have found out that when things go wrong the fault is not with the sun or moon or stars or the meteorological conditions but with myself. From the reports that come to us from the astronomical observatories there is not another world in the universe, except heaven, which compares with this as a comfortable and convenient stopping place. Some of them are all water, and some of them all rock, and some of them all fire, and some are swept of electric tempests and upheaved of volcanoes that throw continents into the air with one jerk. And if Dr. Chalmers' theory that other worlds are inhabited is true, I am sorry for them and I wish that their agonized climate may become Elysian and that their unfortunate inhabitants may, after a while, have as genial skies as those that upholster us, and as blushing sunsets and a morning like ours in which the archangle of sublimity and power spreads his pinions across cloud and mountain and sea, incubating a new day. Before God launched this ship of a world from the dockyards of eternity He so splendidly fitted it up, the cabins, the masts and the wheelhouses and the docks, though it now lies beating upon the breakers through man's poor pilotage, it is magnificent still, and good angels and good men are at work trying to get the old ship off the rocks. And it will not be long before the wreckers with their pulleys and tugs will have done their work and heaven and earth will hear the cry: "She floats! She floats!" I am glad that in such a pleasant world the heavenly shepherd makes His flocks to rest at noon.

But having told you how life seems to me as I stand on the hilltop of my journey, you want to know how it seems to me when I look back and when I look forword. The first thing a traveler does after getting to a hilltop, and having recovered his breath, is to look all around about him, and he says: "There is the winding road by which I came up, and yonder is the winding road by which I shall go down." So I put my outspread hand to my forehead to shade my eyes from the noonday sun and to concenter my vision, and look towards the road I have already traveled and I see way down in the dim distance at the start of the journey, something quite small, and it trembles, and vibrates, and rocks. Ah, yes! I guess what it is. I know what it is. A cradle! Then I turn and look at the road descending the hill, and still keep my outstretched hand to my forehead so as to shade my eyes from the noonday sun and concenter my vision, and I see something at the foot of the road I am yet to travel. That something [illegible] trembles not vibrates not rocks. It is perfectly still. It is white, and the ground about it is a little raised. Ah yes! I guess what it is. I know what it is. A grave! What have I learned by the journey up hill?

HARD WORK NECESSARY.

First, that nothing is accomplished without hard work. My life has been prosperous to the last degree, but I have not had any good luck. I never in my life had one streak of good luck. But I have had a good God watching me and helping and guiding me, and correcting my mistakes, and when I worked hard He blessed me, and when I was lazy He did not bless me. Whether my work has amounted to anything or not I must leave others to judge, but in the last thirty years I have worked up to my full capacity of endurance and if I have gone away for rest, it was merely to get ready to work. [illegible] work all [illegible] the full protest of my nature I am naturally the laziest man that ever was born. But I am afraid of indolence as any reformed inebriate was ever afraid of the wine cup. He knows that one glass would fling him back into inebriacy and if I should take one good long, full at nothing to do, I fear I would sleep forever. Young men just starting in life, I give you my solemn testimony that nothing was ever accomplished without hard work, continuous work, everlasting work.

I have also learned in my journey up the hill that all the events of one life are linked together. The chain of life is made up of a great variety of links; long links and small links, iron links and gold links, beautiful links, ugly links, solemn links and mirthful links, but they are all part of one chain of destiny. The minute made up of sixty links. The day made up of twenty-four links. The year of 365 links. And all these are fastened in an endless chain which works and slips through the hand of an all-governing God. No one event set apart from other events. People say: "It is my day off." You never have a day off. Nothing is off. In the last century a shoemaker's son puts down a bundle of shoes by the roadside to study a flower of the field and put it in his hat for preservation a moth that he wants more deliberately to study. You say: "Who cares for anything as unimportant as that?" You will care for it when I tell you that that was the dawn of a life which was afterward to translate the Bible into versions and become the greatest of oriental linguists, the government of the earth compelled to reverence the name of William Carey. A straight line of events from the shoemaker's boy examining a weed by the roadside to the world-renowned Christian scholar.

OLD VIRGIL DUG UP.

An American clergyman had a son, Adoniram, of wonderful brightness. The father used to pat him on the head and say: "Adoniram, you will be a great man yet," and the boy was spurred on in his ambition and studied Latin until he was called "Old Virgil dug up." The brightest worldly prospects opened before him but one day the boy came across a book entitled "Embassy to Aba," and it revolutionized all his thoughts and he resolved to become a missionary to Burmah. After awhile the family were discussing the worldly prospects of this son in his presence. The father said: "Adoniram, Dr. Griffin has been here to-day wanting you to become his colleague in Boston," and the mother and sisters were congratulating themselves that they would have Adoniram so near home. Then he told them of the book he had read and of the fact that he was go-

(continued on next page.)

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