

ECCLESIASTES 12

REMEMBER YOUR CREATOR!

The royal Preacher now proceeds to counsel the young to cultivate a genuine piety, in the prospect of old age. "Remember now thy Creator in the days of thy youth," says he, "while the evil days come not, nor the years draw nigh, when thou shalt say, I have no pleasure in them." There is a touching pathos in these words! The writer himself was now probably advanced in years; and the infirmities of age were likely coming upon him with even greater heaviness than usual, because he himself – in his earlier years – had not followed the counsels which he is now giving to others.

Surely we ourselves know elderly men and women who love the Lord Jesus dearly, and they would not say they "have no pleasure" in their life. In other places, the Bible speaks of the grey head as being a "crown of glory," when "it is found in the way of righteousness." And it describes those who are "planted in the house of the Lord" as still "bringing forth fruit in old age," and "flourishing in the courts of our God." So in the picture which the Preacher draws here in this chapter, he is illustrating the cheerless old age of the worldling – the man who has *not* remembered his Creator in the days of his childhood. Youth without piety has its excitements and pleasures (although they are fleeting pleasures), but old age without piety is a dismal thing! To a Christless elderly person, the sunshine seems evanescent, and calamity appears to be life's pervading element.

The characteristic features of old age are here presented under the emblem of a fine mansion or castle that is going to ruin. The castle used to be a strong one. But now, "the keepers of the house tremble"; the arms and hands are shaking with feebleness. "The strong men bow themselves" – that is, the legs are becoming weak and bent. "The grinders cease because they are few," meaning that the failing teeth are no longer doing the work which they did before. "Those that look out of the windows are darkened," for the eyes that used to watch from the castle-turrets can no longer see afar off. "The doors are shut in the street," as the ears have become deaf to what is going on outside. The man of pleasure, who used to be always going out in quest of some new enjoyment, is now shut in. "And all the daughters of music are brought low," for the aged person can no longer hear or sing sweet music as he formerly did. The "almond-tree" blossoming is probably an allusion to the grey head of age, and the "grasshopper" becoming "a burden" shows that the least weight is now heavy and troublesome. Death is now near at hand, when man shall go to his "long home," and "the mourners" shall attend his funeral. Then, at last, "the silver cord is loosed," and the "golden

Outline of the chapter:

- ❖ *An exhortation to the young to remember their Creator, in order to prevent the troubles of old age without Christ, which is pictured under the allegory of an old house – verses 1-7*
- ❖ *The Preacher's conclusion to his sermon – verses 8-14*

“The pitcher is broken at the fountain, and the wheel broken at the cistern.” The drawing of the last breath has come, and the processes of life have all ceased. “Then shall the dust return to the earth as it was, and the spirit shall return to God who gave it,” and Who shall pass righteous judgment upon it.

It is by such considerations as these that the wise Preacher enforces his solemn and pathetic appeal to the young to “remember now their Creator in the days of their youth.” He is showing them that old age without piety is a cheerless thing, and that it is a Godly childhood which leads to a Godly, patient, and even cheerful old age. Solomon knew that young people – in the midst of their pleasures – are often inclined to make light of piety, and to think that they can be happy enough without the Lord. So he bids them to look ahead to old age, when the sources of their present pleasures will be dried up; and he asks them to think how it will fare with them then. He desires to teach them how they may escape – not from the natural infirmity of age – but from the dark gloom of such infirmity, when it is unrelieved by the spirit of Godliness. The physical weaknesses which are so graphically described in this passage will very likely be experienced; but along with all of these, a saving relationship with the Lord will be a hidden spring of calmness, kindness, endurance, and even cheerfulness. O that all boys and girls would think of this! The best and most enduring of all treasures must be that which can thus give comfort, peace, and hope – even when the eye is growing blind, and the ear deaf, and the limbs weak. And must it not be the best for youth, as well as the best for old age? Let the young, therefore, “remember their Creator in the days of their youth!” This is their best way to enjoy the present, as well as to prepare for their future.



And now we come to the epilogue of the Preacher’s sermon. This conclusion begins by repeating the same words with which his introduction opened in the first chapter: “All is vanity!” Solomon wished his fellow human beings to see that the difficulty of extracting fulfillment in life out of worldly conditions is simply an exasperation of the chronic difficulty of the ages. In the writing of this Book, he had a practical objective in view. He had laid before his readers certain maxims for the guidance of their conduct, thereby endeavoring to put them in the way of securing the chiefest good of life by making the best of this present existence – even with all of its unsatisfying elements and unsolvable problems. And the grand conclusion at which he had arrived is that there is no better or deeper satisfaction to be found on earth, than that which springs from a saving relationship with the Lord, which will lead us to reverence Him, love Him, and keep His commandments!

Lord, help us to remember our Creator now, for it is foolish to wait until tomorrow. Let Christ’s grace be at work within our hearts, deepening our love for You! Amen.