

**LIFE AT THREE-SCORE: A
SERMON DELIVERED IN THE FIRST
PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH
PHILADELPHIA, NOVEMBER 28,
1858**

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Life at Three-score: A Sermon Delivered in the First Presbyterian Church Philadelphia,
November 28, 1858 by Albert Barnes

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ALBERT BARNES

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Life at Three-Score:

A SERMON

DELIVERED IN THE FIRST PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH, PHILADELPHIA,

NOVEMBER 28, 1858.

BY

ALBERT BARNES.

THIRD EDITION.

PHILADELPHIA:

PARRY & M^oMILLAN.

1859.

AN apology seems to be necessary for publishing a sermon having so much reference to my own life and opinions as this has. It is easy to conceive that circumstances may exist which would make it proper for a pastor thus to allude to himself in preaching, though they might not justify a more extended publication than that which is necessarily made in the pulpit.

The following discourse was preached, without having been written, on a rainy day, when comparatively few persons were present. Some who were present have expressed a desire to possess it, and some who were absent have expressed a wish to know what was said on the occasion. It has accordingly been written out, as nearly as could be recollected, in the language in which it was delivered, though somewhat enlarged in the process of committing it to paper. It contains sentiments which I regard as important, and which I would wish to commend to those who are entering on life; and, if it has nothing else worthy of attention, it has one feature at least which I would hope may be useful. It will show that a man who has reached an age at which he can hope

for little from the world, may take a cheerful and hopeful view of life—a view which may do something to stimulate those who are about to engage in the struggles, to meet the temptations, and to bear the burdens of life; that a man who has reached the last stage of his journey may see much to live for on earth—much to encourage those who are just entering on their way. At the risk, therefore, of a charge of vanity which could not, I confess, be very easily replied to, but with, as I would hope, so prevalent a desire to do good as to justify what I am doing even with this risk, the sermon is committed to the press.

ALBERT BARNES.

PHILADELPHIA, Dec. 31, 1858.

Advertisement to the Second Edition.

I HAD no expectation that a second edition of this sermon would be demanded. It was not stereotyped, and I anticipated only a very limited sale, and supposed that that would be confined mostly to my own congregation. It is equally surprising and gratifying to me to learn from the publishers that it has received such favour as to justify them in issuing a new edition. The discourse was designed to show that a cheerful view of life may be taken by a man who has come near to its last stage, and who can expect little more from earth; that such a man may feel that there is much that is worth living for, even when he has a prospect and a hope of a better life than this; that it is not necessary that one who is growing old should feel that the world is becoming worse, or that all plans for its improvement have failed; and especially that *temperance, industry, and religion* will do much to make life prosperous, and old age, when it comes, genial and

bright,—will lead to grateful reflections on the past, and to a happy anticipation of the closing scene.

From the demand for a new edition of the discourse, I infer that men are willing to take these views of life, and to welcome such words from one who has arrived at a period at which he *ought* to be qualified to say something as to what life *is*. I send forth this new edition, therefore, essentially unaltered, grateful for the manner in which the former edition has been received, and as furnishing another illustration of one of the main points in the sermon itself,—that the world will welcome any efforts which are made to promote the cause of truth and virtue.

ALBERT BARNES.

PHILADELPHIA, Feb. 23, 1859.

LIFE AT THREE-SCORE.

O GOD, THOU HAST TAUGHT ME FROM MY YOUTH: AND HITHERTO
HAVE I DECLARED THY WONDROUS WORKS. NOW ALSO,
O GOD, FORSAKE ME NOT; UNTIL I HAVE SHOWED THY STRENGTH
UNTO THIS GENERATION, AND THY POWER TO EVERY ONE THAT IS
TO COME.—*Psalms lxxi. 17, 18.*

THE occasions are rare on which it is proper for a minister of the gospel to obtrude himself, or his private concerns, on the attention of his people. He has, indeed, like other men, his own private history—the history of his feelings and opinions; his struggles and conflicts; his successes and reverses; his trials and comforts; his hopes and fears. All these are of great interest to him, but in themselves they are of no more importance than the same things as they occur in other men. He may also have arduous labours to perform in his profession, but so have other men in theirs; and I have not learned that the work of the ministry is any more ar-

duous, or more beset with cares and trials, than the path of men engaged in other callings of life. Merchants, farmers, lawyers, physicians, teachers, have their own history, and their own struggles, and I know not why such private matters have any more claim to public attention, or to public sympathy, when they occur in the lives of ministers of the gospel, than when they occur in the lives of men occupied in other professions.

Influenced by considerations such as these, I have never, in the thirty-four years of my ministry,—twenty-eight of which have been spent in your service,—regarded my own work as of sufficient public interest to lead me to preach a sermon on the anniversary of my ordination or installation, nor have I been accustomed to allude to myself, or to my private feelings, any further than occasionally to illustrate some point connected with the work of religion in the soul. This I have supposed was to some extent allowable, for it sometimes occurs that there is no way of illustrating the nature of religion, or of describing the Chris-