

I think there's an underlying truth in all of this for us - that nothing can take from us the beautiful experiences we have had in life. They are ours for ever if we choose to keep them. Our thoughts should be along this line -

'Lord.....keep our memories green. Teach our hearts to forget the things we ought not to remember, and to remember the things we ought not to forget. Make us to know that those who love God never meet for the last time. We are thankful for memory - the mother of faith, hope and love....."

I remember as a boy hearing my father preach a sermon the text of which I still carry with me today. His text was taken from the words that Jesus spoke when Lazarus was brought back to life. These were the words: "Loose him and let him go".

We must think of our friends, and our loved ones not as being dead, but as alive - living and growing personalities. Death has not robbed any of us. We should not let a happy yesterday spoil today, nor should we let an unhappy today darken tomorrow.

As we come to the Lord's table on this Sunday - All Saints Day - let us come remembering -

that life is far longer than it looks.....

that life is much deeper than any of us have ever fathomed.....

that there is in all of us something that death, life, and time can never touch.....

LET US PRAY:

Our Heavenly Father, may the assurance of this high moment always be ours. Help us to keep our memories green. Help us to realize that those who love Thee never meet for the last time. In Thy name we pray. Amen.

## "KEEPING OUR MEMORIES GREEN"

An elderly woman recently mentioned to me that she was not looking forward to the holiday season. She went to tell me that since her husband had passed away, and since she was now all alone here in the city, the holiday season only tended to emphasize her deep feelings of loneliness. I would suspect that similar feelings are shared by many people. The holiday season always bring to mind memories of happier days with those who are no longer living with us. Many people, unable to share in the joyous occasion with others, are left alone with their memories. Life has taken from them those who in recent years, had been the very joy of life. And so with dull aching hearts, they feel very keenly their longing, and their love for a lost one.

I've often wondered which hurts more - happy memories, or painful memories. I think that our minds often throw out the unhappy memories, or at least we try to cushion them, but lovely, happy memories often haunt us and hurt us. Such blessed memories often go to the very center of our souls, and desparately we try to bring in the mind's eye, those who cannot be brought back.

It was Charles Dickens, who in one of his stories, told about a man who was tormented by very unhappy, painful memories. One evening as this man sat by the fire, a spirit appeared and told him that he would gladly take away his distressing memories if he would allow him to take away his entire power of memory. The unhappy man accepted the bargain, and soon became a man who could remember nothing - either good or bad. But all of this only led to greater unhappiness on the part of the man. His misery increased to the extent that the man called for the spirit, and pleaded with the spirit to give him back his power of memory. And the story closes with this simple prayer on the part of the man, "Lord, keep my memories green".

The story simple leads to a problem that many of us face. How do we handle our memories? How do we keep our memories from managing us? How do we keep our memories green? Sometimes we see people who are allowing their memories to manage them with the result that the effectiveness of their own living is destroyed. It's not easy to manage our memories, but it can be done if we approach the task in the proper attitude. Let me share with you a true story which will give you glimpse of what I am driving at.

Lord Haldane, in his autobiography, tells how as a young man he became engaged to a lovely young woman for a period of six weeks. During that period of six weeks, he tells us, his happiness was absolutely perfect. He looked forward to years of happiness with the young lady. But then something happened. Without any warning, the young lady broke off the engagement. She gave no explanation, and Lord Haldane infers that he never saw her again, nor did he ever discover why the engagement was broken. fifty years later, the only comment he made concerning the engagement was this:

"I was not then, nor have I ever been anything but profoundly grateful to her for that perfect six weeks."

No blame. No bitterness. Only deep gratitude. Evidently the glory of that wonderful and radiant experience lived in his heart through all the years.