

**Special Note:** The following material is taken from a tract, "Life Can Become Richer With Age." The material was compiled by Paul Hunton, Vardaman Forrister and Joe Sanders and published in tract form by the Gospel Advocate Company in 1961. The handwritten note from N. B. Hardeman referred to in the brief Introduction below, and dated February 17, 1961, read as follows

"Dear Bro. Paul:

I know of no one whose request I would grant more readily than yours—All matters being equal. If you think it will do any good, you have my permission to use my photo as you suggest.

I am too young to write on the subject.

I wish for you every success in every right way.

Gratefully,  
N. B. Hardeman

These brief articles are presented here in hope that they may bring encouragement and comfort to our aged brothers and sisters in Christ.

—Walton Weaver

## INTRODUCTION

We thought brief articles written by some of our most loved and experienced preachers on this theme would make an interesting and helpful tract. Those appearing in this booklet responded to our request. Quite characteristically stated is Brother N. B. Hardeman's quotation on the front. We chose his picture to grace the cover because there is no one dead or living who more perfectly illustrates in attitude and life the subject of our tract.

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One out of twelve persons will spend time in a mental institution. More hospital beds are occupied by people with mental disorders than all other diseases combined. Add to this the several million who are handicapped in their search for happy living by being enslaved to negative thinking and you have the reason for these tracts.

We cannot answer all the questions, remove all doubts and fears, nor alleviate all the suffering, but if we can brighten the way and ease the load for a few, our efforts will be amply rewarded.

—THE AUTHORS

# ***Life Can Become Richer With Age***

PAUL HUNTON

## **"Perfect Love Casteth Out Fear"**

"I have been young, and now am old; yet have I not seen the righteous forsaken, nor his seed begging bread." (Psa. 57:25.) A careful reading of the Psalms of David will show that his life became richer with age. God made us to be the happiest creatures in his sight. We have the potentials for "joy unspeakable and full of glory." (1 Pet. 1:8.) The life which God has planned for us is to be like a river ever deepening and widening to the enrichment of life indeed. Youth is only the foundation. Age is the super structure. Youth is the young growing crops, while age is the golden ripening fruit of a bountiful harvest. To the faithful Christian, life grows sweeter as the years go by. As the burdens and problems increase, there comes a corresponding increase in faith and hope and trust which enables us to think and to talk about our light afflictions which are but for a moment. (2 Cor. 4:16-18.)

The happiest days of life to the trusting soul is the end thereof. God keeps his trusting ones in perfect peace. (Isa. 26:3.) He cares for them. (1 Pet. 5:7.) They are not afraid of sudden fear. (Prov. 3:25.) They are not afraid of men who could only kill the body. (Matt. 10:28; Heb. 13:5, 6.) They are not afraid of sickness, old age, nor death. (Psa. 3.) They are not afraid to risk their everlasting all upon the promises of God in life and in death. The secret of such a life one's burden to the Lord and leave it there, and to remember that God is at the steering wheel of his universe upholding all things by the word of his power.

—Gus NICHOLS

*Gospel preacher 44 years. 29 years in Jasper, Alabama.*

## **"Later Years Can Be Useful"**

In writing his great poem, Rabbi Ben Ezra, Robert Browning began with these words,

"Grow old along with me!  
The best is yet to be,  
The last of life, for which the first was made:  
Our times are in his hand  
Who saith, 'A whole I planned,  
Youth shows but half; trust God: see all, nor be afraid!'"

The sentiment expressed in these words is a fine example of an appreciation of the providence of God; and any one who makes that the philosophy of his life will understand that "the best is yet to be."

Those who are getting along in life should never forget that their later years are as much apart of God's plan as was their youth. There are too many people who look upon age as a period of ever decreasing usefulness. There does, of course, come a time when our physical powers and mental energies must decline, but that does not necessarily mean that our days of active service are over. In the words of Paul, as translated by Phillips, "This is the reason that we never collapse. The outward man does indeed suffer wear and tear, but every day the inward man receives fresh strength." (2 Corinthians 4:16.) Jesus wanted Peter to follow him in old age, as well as when he was younger. See John 21:22. And what was true of Peter is also true of us.

Therefore, if we feel that we have passed over the crest of the hill, and that our pathway must slowly descend its western side; if we feel that we can never reach greater heights in outward service than those which lie behind us, we should remember that Jesus is still before us and continues to say, "Follow me." And again with Paul, "I can do all things in him that strengtheneth me." (Philippians 4:18.) Life then, even in old age, can be richer, if we are willing to make it so.

—LESLIE G. THOMAS

*Gospel preacher 48 years.*

### "Problems Are Challenges"

It was Richard Crashaw who wrote:

"The world is a theater, the earth is a stage which God and nature do with actors fill." Life can truly become richer, happier and overflowing with gladness to that person who while traveling from the cradle to the grave has done his best to act his part well.

There is certainly no one of whom it may be said; "A happy soul, that all the way to heaven hash a summer day."

Every soul, rich or poor, has to cope with the problems of life. A truly happy life is a married life. "It is not good that man should be alone." There is nothing sweeter than the coming of children to bless that home and with their coming there are social, economic and religious problems to be met. To cope with all these things brings wrinkles upon our brows and our hair turns like the frost of winter.

But that soul who has met and solved all these problems cannot but rejoice and give thanks to his Maker that he bravely accepted and met this challenge; and now as he goes down the long trail toward the setting of life's sun with his race soon to terminate at "the beautiful gate that stands ajar" to welcome him to his eternal home, can lie not shout with joy unspeakable.

— J. W, BRENTS

*Gospel preacher 55 years.*

## "There Is No Substitute For Experience"

Age means experience, and experience is a knowledge that sticketh closer than a brother. That which we learn by experience is realistic. There is no doubt about it.

Real knowledge cannot be counterfeited. We know that we knave-no guessing, no speculation, no doubting. Therefore, we stand on certainties-not an doubt or speculation. So, by experience we come to grapple with realities. We arrive at truth by this experience that brings security and inspires a hope that enters into that which is within the veil. So, life grows richer as the days come and go.

This experience stimulates faith. As we grow older our faith grows stronger and stranger. This experience makes both sure and steadfast. Our affections are centered on things above and not on things on the earth. Our thoughts fly to heavenly heights. This brings confidence and security and drives away doubt and insecurity. There is no substitute for experience. Life becomes richer as the days come and go. Our eyes are fixed on heavenly goals. Our faith becomes the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen.

—G. R.. BETHURUM, SR.

*Gospel preacher 77 years.*

## "True Riches Are Eternal"

Carved in stone over the entrance of the Union Station in Washington, D. C. are these words: "He that would bring home the wealth of the Indies must carry the wealth of the Indies with him. So it is in traveling—a man must carry knowledge with him if he would bring home knowledge." How true! In traveling along life's road, the man who comes to the end of the way with the true riches must carry it with him.

**RICH IN FAITH.** (James 2:5) Beginning the Christian life as a babe (1 Pet. 2:1, 2) by a humble and diligent study and practice of God's truth, one grows in grace and knowledge. (2 Pet. 3:15.) As the years pass this richer and fuller knowledge of the truth causes faith to grow stronger and deeper. (Rom. 10:17.) The elder Christian becomes rooted and steadfast like a giant oak. We have a Bible example of the Thessalonian Christians whose faith grew exceedingly. (2 Thess. 1-3.)

**RICH IN LOVE.** This living, active faith works through love. (Gal. 5:6.) The mature Christian loves God supremely. He also loves his brethren and all men, thus his life is enriched. Again we remember the Thessalonians, whose love abounded more and more one toward another and all men. (1 Thess. 3: 12; 2 Thess. 1-3.)

**RICH IN GOOD WORKS.** Good works are the manifestations of faith and love. Paul instructed Timothy to charge the people with wealth to "do good" and be "rich in good works," (1

Tim. 6: 17, 18.) Like the Good Samaritan, a Christian will pour on the oil and wine of tender compassion and loving service to all men, without respect of persons. {Luke 10:30-37; Gal. 6:10.} The well developed Christian lives to do good; sharing what God gives him to relieve suffering; helping those in need—always seeking to save souls. He will not wrap himself in a cloak of selfishness, hoarding temporal things for selfish ends; nor spend earnings on luxuries.

**RICH THROUGH PRAYER,** As the elder Christian lets the word of Christ dwell in his heart richly, he imbibes more of the Spirit of God and His Son. He becomes a "partaker of the divine nature." (2 Pet. 1:3, 4.) He communes with his Heavenly Father constantly. (1 Thess. 5:17.) When the trials and burdens of life are heavy, he asks God for wisdom (James 1:5). This wisdom from above is pure, peaceable, gentle . . . full of mercy and good fruits . . ." (James 3:17.) Therefore, the mature Christian is bearing clusters of the fruit of the Spirit. (Gal. 5:22, 23.)

**RICH IN CONTENTMENT.** "But godliness with contentment is great gain." (1 Tim. 6:6.) Paul also said, "I have learned in whatsoever state I am, therein to be content." (Phil. 4:11.) We as senior citizens of God's kingdom must prepare ourselves for the time when we shall become feeble—"sans teeth, sans eyes, sans taste, sans everything." Shakespeare. We can learn to be patient and murmur not. Mellowed and tendered by the responsibilities and experiences of the years, one becomes richer in understanding and sympathy. Contentment comes with meditating on the exceeding great and precious promises of our Lord. (Heb. 10:5, 6; Rom. 8:28.)

—A. R. HILL, SR.

*Gospel preacher 44 years.*

### "How One Man Learned to Be Happy"

My wife had a relative who had two great faults which caused him much unhappiness. *First*, He carried daily three sets of troubles, those of *yesterday*, those of *today* and the anticipated trouble of *tomorrow*.

*Second*, He thought only of self and self-interests, giving no thought or consideration to the welfare of others.

At the age of thirty-three he heard the gospel for the first time, and shortly thereafter obeyed his Lord's command. He soon began to look upon life altogether differently, and he found that he could better cope with his troubles one day at a time, allowing yesterday's troubles to remain history only. And never borrowing trouble from tomorrow, as tomorrow might not come.

His greatest joy came when he learned that it is "*more blessed to give than to receive.*" He learned that real living and making life worthwhile are the little things we can do to ease the burdens of those round about us, and to make life a little more cheerful for those with whom we come in contact from day to day.

"Try this plan out in your own life, and you will see how truthful and simple it is."

IF YOU WOULD LIKE TO KNOW WHO THE RELATIVE OF MY WIFE WAS, I WILL  
TELL YOU: HER HUSBAND

—T. EDWARD BACIGALUPO, SR.

*Gospel preacher 39 years.*

### "The Hoary Head Is a Beauty"

"They [The Righteous] shall still bring forth fruit IN OLD AGE." (Ps. 92:19.) A happy spiritual family relationship is a vital factor in making life richer with age. "Children's children are the crown of old men: And the glory of children are their fathers." (Prov. 17:6.) Building Bible principles into character is essential to a successful and useful old age.

"That the aged men be temperate, grave, sober-minded, sound in faith, in love, in patience: that aged women likewise be reverent in demeanor, . . . teachers of that which is good: that they may train the young women to love their husbands, to love their children to be sober-minded, chaste, workers at home." (Titus 2:2-5.)

"The glory of young men is their strength: And the beauty of old men is the hoary head." (Prov. 20:29.)

"Wherefore we faint not; but though our outward man is decaying, yet our inward man is renewed day by day." (2 Cor. 1:16,)

Thus as we do justly, love kindness and walk humbly with God down the western slopes toward the setting of the sun, we can confidently look forward to the crown of righteousness, which has been promised to those who love his appearing.

—J. E. ACUFF

*Gospel preacher 61 years.*

### "Life Is Whole"

As an incentive to "remember" the Creator in the days of youth Solomon paints to "evil days" ahead in which there is "no pleasure." Is Solomon here picturing old age for all men, good and bad alike I once thought so, but no longer do I believe that is true. Those who do not "remember" will find bleak, empty years, devoid of pleasure. But those who do "remember" come to know the truth of Solomon's "conclusion of the whole matter: fear God and keep his commandments: for this is the whole of man." ("Duty" may be omitted.) Life to them is not a broken stairway, it is whole. True, advancing years deprive us of physical powers, but there are

abundant compensations in the realm of the spirit. Enfeebled feet may falter, but the "inward man" marches on in a glorious journey that will terminate in a "triumphal entry" into the Eternal City.

Age is enriched by sweet memories, peace derived from noble endeavor, and abiding hope of better things to be. Hardships endured in the warfare for truth bring great rewards. No man who has borne trials and suffering in a worthy cause would for a moment change those experiences. The memory of them is a part of his reward. Then, as he nears the sunset the calm of peaceful evening abides in his heart, and the sunset becomes as radiant as was the glow of dawn. And a "sweetly solemn thought" assures him that each passing day brings him nearer life's completeness—"nearer the Father's house." Memory and hope are precious jewels in the crown of the hoary head.

—CHARLES R. BREWER

*Gospel preacher 53 years.*

### "Be Ready to Exchange Worlds"

The fruit tree first blooms, then this bloom develops into the fruit, unripe and unsuited for eating. But in the fresh air, gentle showers, and heaven's ripening sunshine, the fruit becomes mellow and luscious. So ought man to grow richer in the Christian virtues and graces as he grows older. Moses at 40 was strong and rather severe; past 80 he was earth's meekest man; and at 120 his eyesight was undimmed and his natural strength unabated. He had become a richer man in things divine. So we as babes in Christ are able to become richer and wiser as we "grow in grace and in knowledge."

We grow kinder, more patient, more gentle and sympathetic with age. As Moses' eyes were not dimmed, and his physical force not abated, so our foresight and hope inclines us to grow richer in faith and love and to look with desire to that world beyond the tomb to one "fairer than day." Thus we become richer and prepared to exchange worlds as was Paul who so earnestly desired to leave this world of sorrow, pain and death for the "home of the soul just over there." Yes, indeed, life can become richer with age. Let us all endeavor thus to so order our lives.

—R. C. WHITE

*Gospel preacher 69 years.*

### "Christianity Wears Well"

When his risen Lord probed Peter's love for him the third time, the fact that Peter was grieved, rather than angered, and meekly replied, "Lord, thou knowest all things; thou knowest that I love thee" (John 21), showed that his old self-importance and self-sufficiency were gone, and that he trusted Christ's omniscience supremely.

Peter was ready to hear his Master continue: "When thou wast young, thou girdest thyself, and walkedst whither thou wouldest: but when thou shalt be old, thou shalt stretch forth thy hands, and another shall gird thee, and carry thee whither thou wouldest not." The author explained: "Now this he spake, signifying by what manner of death he should glorify God."

What Peter learned through Christ's prophecy, namely, that all who truly love Christ, and "would live godly in Christ Jesus shall suffer persecution," other Christians learned by experience. And so long as Christians live in a world wherein ""whosoever therefore would be a friend to the world maketh himself an enemy of God," they cannot avoid persecution without reasonable compromise.

There is abundant evidence in Peter's epistles, written some third of a century after Pentecost, that he serenely approached the end, which Christ had predicted, a well adjusted, self-fulfilled, ,gracious, hopeful, happy man. He comforted fellow sufferers on their pilgrimage through "this present evil world" by reminding them that the God of all grace, after they had suffered a little while, would himself perfect, establish, and settle them (1 Peter 5-10).

Indeed, the only life that involves no risk at all is the Christian life. Only a Christian at death may "lie down to pleasant dreams" in satisfaction and triumph, "with joy unspeakable and full of glory" in view of dawning eternity (1 Peter 1:8, 9).

—R. C, BELL.

*Gospel Preacher 64 years.*