

The Blessedness Of Old Age

This age is the age of the child. Youth stands in the limelight of discussion, and many articles in various papers deal with the "problem" of youth. Cultural activities are directed to reach youth and millions are being spent on education.

Pronouncement is on youth in all areas of life. For a man over 45 years of age, it is often difficult to find employment. He is not wanted anymore. This is acutely a strange situation.

During the last 25 years, the life expectancy has increased by 20 years. Thus, there are not only more younger people in this world, but more older ones as well! In ancient times, it was recognized that old age also had wisdom. The elders in the community were listened to with respect. Elderly people had a place of honor in society. The elders had authority because they had experience in life and knew the traditions of the fathers.

The ancients knew that a nation which does not honor the elderly works towards its own downfall. This should be taken to heart. Our society cannot afford to reject those of more mature years. The voices of experience need to be heard. Youth has much to contribute but it has also much to learn.

Our society cannot afford to set aside the aged. It cannot label the aged as "useless." They should be drawn into the activities of our society. It is time that our aged take a fresh look at themselves and their purpose in life. It is not dishonorable to be old and there is no need to fear old age.

We all love life, even though it may have its griefs, its sorrows and disappointments. We want to cling to life but death will come to each of us. The fear of growing old invites misery and unhappiness. This is not necessary and not Christian. In Jesus Christ, there is no need to fear death. He has made death occupied territory. The Christian is in possession of eternal life right here and now. He can look with confidence to the future. The fear for vital issues of life-death has been abolished for the Christian at Easter.

The real test of character is to anticipate the years ahead in which life's experiences will deepen. Man makes the mistake of measuring age by the years of life. It is not of such importance how old one is or how old one will become. It is not so important how long you live, but how you live. Age cannot be measured by time. It must be measured in qualities of character and looked at in the light of one's relationship to the kingdom of God.

The character of a person ought to develop until the last second of his life. The Christian should develop his character under the guidance of Jesus Christ.

Therefore, I ask the question "How is your relationship to Christ in your, old age? Has it become poorer or richer?" Some folks have led a full and purposeful life until the age of

retirement and after" that, they withdrew into a shell and are now constantly busy with themselves.

This is wrong, A person who is occupied with himself freezes spiritually. In order to keep mentally and spiritually healthy the powers of thought and daily activity should be directed to others. Older people can be such a blessing to others. They have time to perform various tasks in life for which the younger generation is too busy. The sick need to be visited. The church of Jesus Christ needs prayer for her missionary and ministerial task. Various avenues of church work are open for people who have experienced life and have the gift of counseling. The church and our society is in need of older Christians, who are firmly established in the infallible Word of God, and, who are willing to make their last years count for Jesus Christ and His Kingdom.

In the Holy Scriptures, there is that wonderful story of Caleb. (Joshuah 14: 6ff.) At an age when most people like to withdraw from society, he asked Joshuah for permission to go out and to drive out the Anakim who lived on the mountain. After he conquered Hebron, it became an inheritance to Caleb "because he wholly followed the Lord God of Israel." At a very old age, Caleb, in the strength of God, went out to conquer. May his example be an encouragement to all those who feel that old age is a life of uselessness.

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