No. 107

The pleasures of the duties of old age...
Prov. xvi. 31. "The heavy head is a crown of glory, if it be found in the way of righteousness."

The different ages of life have their different duties, hopes, fears, and trials. At the same time, that there is much common to all, there is not a little peculiar to each. Youth is wont to be in its passionate, heady, uncalculating, in its plans, hasty upon immediate gratifications, impatient of slow gradual efforts. It spends the morning in flying pleasant plans to another in the garden of life, gathering some sweet from each, but soon growing tired of each, when life is busy, full of toils, entangled in the complex concerns of business, struggling on the field, where honour or wealth is to be won. Experience is seated on its brow,
The present is the sole concern of old age. Old age is
contentious, restless, irritable, with what has been
more than with what is; griefs like the marine: buffeting
back from the safe shore on the waves against him
whom he has escaped. Such are the general features of
the different ages of life; they are modificatory, in a
thousand obvious ways, sometimes entirely changed.
Among these classes, the aged, those who stand at the fur-
thest distance on the path of life, are peculiarly
objects of interest. There is something in their situa-
tion, detaching, that draws the attention of one who
loves to speculate on the world. They seem to be placed
as a sort of connecting links between the busy, noisy
world behind them, of the solemn tranquil, and be-
fore them, between time and eternity, between earth
and heaven. Old age lives less upon excitement, than youth
or manhood. It depends more on its own resources
seems to draw nearer to God. Most of the objects
pursued, once engaged at the interest, have
suffered a loss, or ceased. Most of the friends with whom
it had been accustomed to associate, have gone to the
land of darkness. Of the thousands, thousands, lend
it to earth, many are severed, others are daily brows-
ing. Nature herself endures with all the rest, giving
the signal, that the work of decay has begun. The
senses do not fail from their office as vigorously as the
one tool. The kinds grow faint, of feeling, through
the weight. The steps even of the sturdy man are
less firm than they were wont to be, if deceptively
ish every day encroaching ever more. Nowwhile
old age is thus settling amidst its own, has it any
consolation, no support? Is there no way of finding
for it a store of relief, of happiness? Surely there is.

"The heavy head," says Solomon in our text, "is a corn of
grain, if it be found in the way of righteousness."
This describes the old age of the good man. That
it is not a state of disorder, of unhappiness, of
pain. It is a sanctified, glorified old age, that
is found in the way of righteousness. Though apparently weak, it remains in its internal strength, through some of the intoxicating joys of earth, it has sources of happiness which the soul cannot give it away. Of these, to whom they come thus attended, it may be truly said in the language of the Apostle, "Though the outward man perish, the inward man is renewed by the same." Such mean sure that the whole happiness of man does not consist in health or strength, but that there are pleasures wherethrough disease or decay cannot reach. When after the eye fails, the hand trembles, and the knee is unsteady, the soul may be more elevated, a race more wealthy, than ever before.

Such is the holy head, that can move of grace because it is found in the way of righteousness. Understanding we are able to imagine, that all the pains of life are crept into our youth, as if its later scenes are filled with pain and gloom, though we are in the habit of thinking that he grows old still; foremost in the catalogue of human miseries, ill health there is none of us who would wish to have the dread in such an old age, as I have described. Like I know not a more wondrous object in creation, than an aged saint. He is placed, we will suppose, in the midst of a family, who love and revere him. He is surrounded by children, grandchildren, who look up to him with something of that profound regard with which they would pray to a saint, from the outside; with all the mild affection they could feel for a beloved companion. In his old age the taste of years is green and pleasant. He looks back on life with the consciousness of having spent it on doing his duty, of serving his God; his days of his generous have not been passed in vain; he has not slept in the best of duty where God has placed him, yet he0s known manyNS in the vineyard of his Master, and as most sins he cast aside so far as a being as man, the memory of life brings to his mind but too many instants of wasted time of opportunities, if here and there dark footsteps...
his age as it wanders over the past, he humbly trusts that God will forgive the errors of follies of a heart, so penitent his penetrations are softened. While the twilights of life have been gathering around them, the passions which had been quelled during the heat of youth's manhood, are cooled, he begins to feel himself once immediately in the presence of God, as both with a closed, closed grasp the shapes of the subjects of the gods. The principles of archetypal nature are the staff of his declining years. Glimmers, treasures of small edifice of purses. Feeling he has stood up in preceding days, now reeling in his beam tenfold gods. He was learned to estimate happiness again, he once obeyed impulses as infectious as ours. He was the slave of anger, of jealousy, of pleasure, as we are at this day; but he has conquered the passions which he once served, he begins to be convinced that it is more pleasant to serve shall God in old age, than to sin in all the fevered freshness of youth. The friends of his neighbors look to the wisdom of his experience for advice, they the most of fortunate obedience to his opinions. He retains not much hold on life, but whatever he does retain is all the more, of due. The stones have passed over them, if he is now in a quiet haven, when his light is dimming, tending in the sound of cooing, if he sink his gentle form on the bed of death, below. By all, lamented by all, he can sing in the triumphant language of an age, the "I have fought a good fight, I have finished my course; therefore there is a crown laid up for one who, as La 2, the righteous judge, shall give me at that day."

Such an old age as this, who would call unworthy? Male you see me, thus going down to the grave, supported by prudence, the remembrance of a small street pipe, served by the honour of all around them, when you see the angel of death, following him upon the gates of the world. Stealing before him, the gates of paradise. Do you ever think of his infirmities, his pains? Drop pity him because he has met all the gay pleasures of youth or the strength of manhood? Rather account
your feelings of an altogether different kind? Do you not regard them with reverence, as one who has escaped from the feverish passions and thirsted after calmness of soul life, with all its temptations, the enervating cares of mature years? Are you not ready to exclaim, let me enjoy the old age of the righteous, that my latter days may be like his? 

Oh, woe to the decline of life! How all that of a young man that infatuates us in our youth so oft to our old age, to us imaginary. It is no longer considered merely as a season of deprivation, decay, a time of resentment, uneasiness, of infirmity, a bad sleeping addresst to all that deserves the name of pleasure, yet melancholy, waiting for the arm of death. All these glorious associations, which we so often connect with youth, are scattered, when we see that crown of glory, the heavy head found in the way of righteousness. We look upon the vicissitudes of good old age with how different feelings; we contrast a sort of blissful affection for them, wish we ourselves were as old, if we might be as much respected as happy, if we might look back on life, as he does that beholds its life.

But it is not always that old age is looked upon with such delight by such bodies of delightful associations. The old age of vice is truly an object of commiseration of pity. While the body is weakening, the passions are still remaining, and the spirit is still strong, it is not a man's duty to think of himself, maturing strength, resigning up the old, he still things to it with all the affections of his heart, if life has passed away. If life, the taste for sensual pleasure as strong as ever, at the same time that it has taken away the capacity for enjoying it, then indeed old age is a mournful, melancholy, then it has nothing to replace it from the feelings of cheerfulness, of sweetness, of joy, of which daily pleasure of encouraging upon it, it has nothing to compensate for the loss of strength, of the departure of from all engagements. It has left this world behind, and
giving it grasp on the world to come; yet stands between them in a state of moral solitude and darkness. Such is not the old age, so forms the crown of glory, because it is not found in the vows of righteousness. If amidst the decay of nature, minds feeling he still felt, what must be the sensations of an old man, who has become a veteran in the army of sin, after the decline of life still finds nothing in them; who reflect that the soul of his youth in the merit of guilty indulgence, of human frailties, in empty vanities, a man, who is conscious that now, while the evening of his days is fast gathering its shades around him, he cannot lay held of the objects of religious virtue, to the so much need, that he has not a heart, that can turn to doing divine things, if that instead of being observed guided down the steep of age by the celestial song of the god, his breast is warmed only by old grudges and woe. It is occasionally, that age desert their glorious light across the darkness of his mind. For can be, who has forgotten if turned away from his God, after that feeling of beautiful prayer of the Psalmist, "nor also when I am old and grey, Oh, make me not." Would not thought of what he desiring, of what he is, make him tremble from breathing forth such a petition? And with what feelings would he stretch forth his hands to heaven, while he threw up the grave, to ask for the first time, that as he had never been humble enough to pray for before?

Thus, at first appears the birth of the declaration of man in the tent: in order to make the house head a crown of glory, it must be found in the having righteousness, of this one earth, place a beauty for his dwelling, among the wise men; human age is not that which is measured by number of years; but when one is the gray hair unto men, an unvisited life is older. If we would make the decline of life beautiful, we must fill it with the virtues and the contemplation of religion. My aged friends will listen, I hope to a few
brief hints even from the lips of one so much beloved, when in life respecting these duties, by the discharge of which they may be found in the way of righteousness.

4. It is peculiarly the duty of the aged to exhibit in their lives a good example. This indeed is duty incumbent on all of every condition. But in those who are standing in the decline of life, its efficacy is greater than in others. Old age is regarded with sentiments of veneration by all, who have not lost the proper feelings of humanity. The tribute of respect and reverence is needless to it, - even those who would withhold this tribute are generally ashamed to refuse it to those whose society by a sort of law it consent to accept, as he other accidents of life.

We turn to the age, as those who have seen the same race, or who have entered, as those who have bounded the limits of life, who have tried its joys and sorrows, its pleasures and pains, have arrived at the end of their course. We place the same confidence in them, that we should in a traveller of intelligence, whose curiosity who has explored countries where we never saw, of those returned to report the fruits of his experience. Such being the commanding station on which the aged are placed, it is manifest how important and how great is the influence of their example, of how well it behooves them to be continuants or but lessons the teach- ers' lives. If those who have experienced the world approve their conduct shows that after all their experience they have good principles of virtue, of justice, and they will always be the object of esteem, honor, and respect, if they are not the example to those, who are still test about to commit of being seduced, some still test about to commit of being seduced, some
can stand without mourning. Goodness never appears so remissible and venerable, as when it appears in the life of the times. It seems to stand alone, unimpaired by enmity, and every other influence of the seas has fallen. It is dying, the offspring of weakness, the science of lovers, that we cannot, but it shall feel its value, yes, in the turning of the seasons earth and heaven.

On the other hand, what a mere influence does the example of many ages old one about me. It speaks, in my heart, in the heavy head that has grown old in the service of time.

It is the duty of the aged to make a good use of the power, not to abuse the young. The power is perhaps greater than they are able to appreciate. Others of advice come with double force from the highest. When experience may be supposed to have made wise, if the old man, who is believed, speak the young has an almost invariable influence on the character. Conduct to set his will in shape he all gives to the young guide. Let it be employed to shape the youthful thoughts to direct the youthful steps right. The age should always remember, that they once young them.

I should then give both with an indulgent age in all enjoyment of youth. Those who are advanced far on the journey of life, I have left behind the many of the pleasures of earlier days, frequently return the for inquiring these feelings, with and with our minds are once again. They give us the capacity to understand the influence they might otherwise have over the young mind. This error should be carefully avoided. If there were another reason, because it cuts off the means of doing good.

Let me remind you, that in every place the aged are experienced part of the inhabitants may be much by their reputation, or standing in the general multitude, especially when the power of the younger generation, all the laws within the generality they are under a religious obligation to do. How delightful it is for those who are standing at the further end of life to point out the good paths to such as have just begun the journey.

to act the agent by good advice, to cherish the other.

do kindly assistance, to support the young heart in its struggle against temptation, to devise upon all its feelings of reverence, obedience, respect, our than to
the account of virtue... And on the other hand, I knew not where you can look for a more shocking sight than an old man, reaching forth a trembling hand to fill a young child with the wages of vice, given to fell the innocent to the path of destruction.

5. It is a most important duty of the aged to dwell much on the instruction of consolations of the Gospel. At times it is a time when the spirit of religion is most oppressed, it is in obloquy. It is the time when the word of God is not heard, and it is therefore with the utmost care, according to the word of God, that it needs the comfort of the religion of Jesus, when it needs the companionship of a devout frame of mind. He who is daily losing his hold on earth should be able to fire from this world on heaven. Other acres have long since ceased to attract the attention of the aged man; the deep and solemn joy shall be found there in the daily satisfaction of the desire to go to heaven.

There is no better abode in which the soul can dress itself while it stands on the verge of the grave, than the ark of true righteousness. The more we contemplate the ark, when we consider how the book fills the heart of the man who looks in his many mœmions of duty, the nearer, he is of his last resting place. Will we not then consider it as one of his duties to go to the water of life to refresh and strengthen the spirit, while the body is wasting away by insidious disease? To study the instructions of the book, to imbibe the spirit of Jesus himself on the promises of the God, that this while alive on the earth's pilgrimage, the Ark is gradually steering this organism, if the light of life is dimming and flying, another, a better, more shining flame from heaven to guide him through the valley of the shadow of death?

These, engaged in, are a few of the ways by which man be found in the ways of righteousness, if this...
the heavy head a crown of glory. God grant that our in the decline of life may have all the affections, the affection of children, the kindness of friends, the hopes of religion, can impart. May the evening of years be brightened by the memory of God, the consolation of the hope of eternal life, on your heads, yea, the sum of death shall arrive, may you be found with those who wait for their Lord. This may be applied to you, the description of Daniel gives of the aged saint: "those that be planted in the house of the Lord shall flourish in the courts of God, they shall bring forth fruit in old age." And let the young remember that it is their duty to pay the most affectionate reverence to the aged, to listen to their advice, as the lessons of wise experience, to do every thing that may be done to make happy their last days. Especial care should have aged ministers, and others, to be examined and tried, and then, strive to repay something of that affectionate3zh to those who have helped them in the helpless days.
O God, we bless thee, that thou hast been the
dwelling place of the children of men in all genera-
tions. We thank thee for the various relations of life,
of that their lot never leave us nor forsake us. We
pray for thy blessing on the aged, on those who have reached
the extremity of their pilgrimage on earth, in the
weakness, infirmities of old age, and the time be that
tyg of staff. May their heart be filled with the
consolations of the yea of x, may the light of heaven
by truth shine upon them, may they be supported
by the strength of thy spirit. Enable them to set an
example of piety and purity to others, may they lend
all their influence to the cause of religion. Virtue
is to be good to the rising generation, of may
they cherish the hope of the spirit of thee, that
they may enter into that most on rone for the
future.