

Nearer to Thee.

Nearer, Oh nearer,
Christ, keep me to Thee;
Thou in holy living,
I may honor Thee.

Nearer, Oh nearer
To Christ let me be;
Unto in my heart,
His image he'll see.

Nearer, Oh nearer,
Like Christ may I grow;
More of my Saviour,
Each day may I know.

Until I abide
In Christ whom I love,
And live with my Saviour
In mansions above.

—Free Baptist.

TALKS TO YOUNG MEN.

The Young Old Man

One of the saddest sights in society is an old young man, who, though in the prime of life so far as years are concerned, has lost the vigor and energy of his manhood, and though but forty appears like past three score years and ten. On the other hand, one of the grandest sights in social life is that of a young old man, who having arrived at seventy, has an elastic face, a bright eye and a sunny smile. The late Rev. David Thurston of Maine was a fine example, who, at eighty-four, was as particular in his dress, as fair in his face and as cheerful in his manner as a young man. So also is "Father Curtis," known so well all over New England. And so also, in a very peculiar sense, is Gen. Neal Dow, who, with the white locks of eighty winters, has the fresh face of a man of forty and he sparkling eyes of a lad.

How can young men hope to attain this young old age?

1. By taking good care of their bodies. The worst results of intemperance and impure habits are not seen at once. Indeed, for years there may seem to be no evil fruits. Growing manhood may for a while cover up the results of reckless living, as a young tree's vital force may for a season overreach the eating of the worm at its roots, but all abuse of our physical natures in young manhood will report itself in a premature old age. "They who sow to the wind must reap the whirlwind." Nature retorts in awful judgment upon her violators and writes her rebuke upon the features even before she shatters the limbs. The results of dissipation come also in the impaired force which it brings to the body in throwing off disease. The doctors are constantly saying, "This man or the other could have been cured, or would have pulled through the fever, but for the effect of past dissipation." "Sowing wild oats" now may seem to be full of pleasure, but it takes just so much from the pleasures of old age. Fast living is fast in a woeful sense—it uses up the forces of life.

2. He who would have a young old age must not overwork. When one is in young manhood, healthy, strong and full of ambition, with so much that needs to be done, the fearful temptation of modern life is to stretch the power of brain and muscle to their uttermost, and, with a desire to "make hay while the sun shines," try to do two years' work in one. But such work shortens life and makes one old while he is yet young. Hard work is good for every part of man's nature, but overwork is another thing. The steady, even hard-working, horse will hold out to old age, but it is the five pounds more than enough which breaks him down. Thus with men; good, steady, hard work is healthy and prolongs life, but the pull of overwork snaps the nervous system. "Make haste slowly" is a good motto.

3. He who would have a young old age must control his disposition. Cheerfulness prolongs life. There is such a subtle connection between the parts of our being, that a fretful, fault-finding habit injures the health and writes the "wrinkles of premature old age" upon the face. To lose one's temper takes the youthfulness out of the face. A cross man always looks older than a good natured one. As frost brings early autumn to the trees, so a sour disposition brings old age to young lives. Laughing is reasonable and a duty. The man who does not laugh and love to laugh, is an unbalanced man as truly as the one who does not love the beautiful. Laughing is good for the body, the heart, and the mind. It does a man good to laugh until he laughs to think how he did laugh! Fun is not wicked, but a means of grace, when one is suffering from a bad liver, or poor digestion, or a sour temper. Look on the bright side of all things—save sin; see as little of that as possible. Even give the devil his due, not only in the way of opposition, but for any good he may seem to have, as the old lady did who said he had one quality which all

should imitate, which was perseverance. How pleasant it is to see an old man who can appreciate a joke, and what good it does us all to see a fat old man laugh! Who does not feel the better for hearing good old "Camp-meeting John Allen" laugh, now in his 91st year, when the laugh shines in his face, rolls out of his eyes and shakes his sides? and who doubts that his fresh, hale, hearty, vigorous old age is due, under God, to his young heart always looking on the bright side of even his sorrows?

4. To be a young old man one must keep on growing. As long as the heart and mind keep on gaining in love and knowledge, they are growing. A man is never old till he ceases to grow. Student days should never come to an end, but life be one long school in which we are constantly gathering new facts and ideas and experiences. Educated men generally seem younger in their old age than other men, because their minds continue to gain knowledge. Fresh intelligence, like new leaves upon the spring trees, covers up old age. Middle-aged men should renew their school day studies and keep up with the times in an intelligent glance at the onward march of events. When a man's ideas and education are fifty years old, he seems older than he is.

5. To be a young old man one must be interested in, and associate with young people. He must not allow himself to grow away from them. While his steps are with the aged, his heart must be with the young. We can all think of some old ladies who are the best of companions for young women. With the wisdom and gentleness of old age they have all the sprightliness of girls, and in the home such old ladies are like the golden beams of an autumn sunset, more beautiful than the sunrise itself. We can also think of some old men whose white locks add beauty to their presence, because they take with them a heart so young that boys love their company and they are the best of society for young men. They not only remember that they were young once, but they are young still in their hearts. Indeed, the heart never grows old, and these we call old people have as young, warm, tender and strong a love as ever they had. Because a boy has on old clothes, it is no evidence he is old; and because a man has an old body it is no sign his heart is old. It is not years that make the heart old, but sin and sorrow.

6. To be a young old man one must be at peace with his Maker and the future, his sins must be forgiven, and he must have a sure hope for the eternity to come, which is like an anchor to the soul and entereth into that within the veil. Many an old man has an older face because there is no hope in his heart; but when the past is all taken care of and the future prepared for, and an old man is but waiting for the glory to come, then there is no old age to him, for he has entered into eternal youth. He has drunk of the fountain of which Christ has said that if a man drink of it he shall never thirst but shall have in him a well of water springing up into everlasting life. Such a hope brings out the sunshine under the white locks, and makes of old age but a night-dress in which a young heart falls asleep to wake up in glory.

That all the young people who shall read these articles may thus be young old people, is the sincere prayer of him who has so imperfectly addressed them.

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"Faithful"

It was a dreary day in late winter. There were wearisome gray clouds overhead, and dull brown, half-melted ridges of snow and ice under foot. In the great iron foundry at M—, the men strode to and fro before their forges, bared their swarthy arms to the work, thrust huge glowing bars of metal into the panting fires, and swung their ponderous hammers—clang! clang! clang! The noise of the blows and of the ponderous machinery was so great that talking was impossible. A hoarse direction shouted now and then by the overseer, with gestures of the hand that the workers understood, that was all.

At an anvil a little removed from the central uproar stood a solitary man, fashioning a piece of iron into a shape not unlike that of the rubber bands sold by stationers for small parcels; only it was a foot long, and almost as thick as your wrist. The iron was held tight by a pair of tongs, and was glowing red, the sparks flying in a constant shower as the skilful blows fell, swiftly and surely. The workman himself was a quiet looking man, with tightly

set lips; almost sullen, you would have said.

"Well, well," he muttered to himself, turning the hot iron, and commencing upon the other side, "it's the same old story. Pound, pound, from morning till night—no rest, no change, no hope. I'm of no importance in the world—it makes no difference whether I live or die—ah!"

He stopped suddenly, and bent closely over the article he was shaping. You and I would have noticed nothing particular, but this man was evidently puzzled. He struck the iron two or three sharp blows, listening intently to the sound it gave back. Then he frowned, and poised it a moment on the end of his tongs. The other men were accustomed to laugh at him because he was so particular about his workmanship in little things. Two or three of them glanced at him now as he stood that instant, undecided.

"Let it go, John," called one of them over his shoulder. "One out of a thousand won't make any difference."

But John had decided. "It's a flaw," he said. "I won't risk it." And, flinging away the iron loop on a heap of refuse metal, he patiently began his work over again, this time completing it, as he had hundreds of others, successfully.

Three years passed away. It was winter again, and the northeast wind, roaring through the sky from the far off forests of Labrador, rolling huge, foaming waves from mid-ocean against the rocky coast of New England, unroofing houses, uprooting trees, sweeping over lonely lakes; and, joining its cry with the howl of the wolf and the cracking of ice-floes, turned the night into a tumult of darkness and doleful uproar dreadful to hear. On the western tracks of the A. M. & S. Railroad, the late express was running at full speed. It had been delayed by the high wind, and the engineer was making up time. Twenty, thirty, thirty-five miles an hour, into the black night, with only a glow from the headlight on the steel rails, a few hundred feet in advance of the locomotive, as it plunged forward faster than ever. The fireman plied his furnace with coal, shovel after shovel. Now a few lights, dotting the darkness, from comfortable firesides in some small country village. The engine slackens its pace slightly, shrieks at the station master with his waving lantern, and dashes on at thirty-eight miles an hour. The engineer, with one hand on the polished bar before him, glances alternately at the steam-gauge and the track ahead. The wind is blowing more fiercely than ever, but he knows nothing of that; he thinks only of the hot, bounding, roaring creature on whose back he rides on into the night at forty miles an hour.

The passengers in the train are most of them asleep. There is a baggage and mail car, in which a few men are at work; but in the Pullman cars behind are over a hundred souls, trustfully awaiting the end of their journey. There are fathers hurrying home to their children; boys and girls with heads upon the rocking pillow, dreaming of fir-trees and lights and bright gifts, for it is just after Christmas. One of the passengers has a little girl nestling close beside him; her mother left them for Christ's country last week, and now she alone is left to him. As the rails rattle beneath the flying wheels of the train, the man becomes uneasy, and holds the little girl more tightly. Then he takes out his watch and calculates the speed.

"I wonder"—he says slowly, "I wonder." Crash—h—h! Darkness, wild cries, the car dashing furiously over timbers and wreck of rail and platform like a ship upon the rocks; screams, prayers, groans; a terrible sideways lurch and a prolonged creaking of strained iron and wood, above the shrill cries of men, women, and children. Then dead, awful stillness.

One by one, the terrified, half-dressed, trembling passengers make their way over the slanting floor of the car, and out through broken doors and windows into the cold night air.

As the lights began to flash up on the scene, the bravest hid their faces and turned pale. In the valley, far below, as if they were looking down from a lofty church belfry, lay the monster of steam and iron which a few moments before was bounding homeward with them in apparent safety and with sure speed. Beside it were heaped the ruins of the mail car. And on the verge of the embankment, leaning dizzily over those awful depths, rested the forward Pullman. What held it back?

The locomotive left the rails and plunged over the embankment, seventy-five feet down to the bottom, turning completely over in its course and dragging the mail car after it. Only one man was killed, though the train was crowded; the forward Pullman would have gone over,

after the mail car, had it not been held back by the link which coupled it to the next car.

So the report flew over the wires the next morning, and so you can read it in the newspapers, if you like.

And what of the obscure iron-worker who would not let that iron link pass his hands until it was perfect—a true and honest piece of work! No one knows his name. He never will know in this world how that faithful half-hour saved six score of human lives. But there is One who knows, and who does not forget the humblest, everyday duty-doing of His children. He who said, "Thou hast been faithful over a few things, I will make thee ruler over many things: enter thou into the joy of thy Lord!"—Congregationalist.

A Distinction With A Difference.

Some years ago I met a friend on Boston Common. We were both coming that night to New York—I by the Fall River boat, he by the Shore Line railroad. We presently fell into an earnest conversation on religious matters. He was one of those men who professed greatly to admire the life and character of Jesus Christ and the system of ethics he taught in the Sermon on the Mount, but he utterly rejected the statement that we were saved by the blood of Christ. I was urging this truth upon him with all the earnestness I could command. Finally he broke out with a protest against what he called my narrowness and bigotry.

"Why," said he, "it is absurd to say that unless I believe in Jesus Christ as an 'atoning Saviour' that I cannot be saved. Why, what difference does it make by what road we go to heaven, so that we all get there? I have no objection to your going by that 'bloody road' of atonement, if you want to; but you ought not to insist on my going that way if I prefer another one. You might as well insist that unless I went by the Fall River line to New York I could not go at all. There are seven or eight different lines running daily to New York. Now," said he, "you are going to New York by the Fall River line, and I by the Shore Line. We will both be in New York in the morning, and then what difference will it make how we got there?"

This was supposed to be a triumphant and unanswerable argument. I said to him then, as I say to all his class now, and there are not a few of them about: "Your argument is very good, so far as getting from Boston to New York is concerned. It is entirely a question of taste and convenience which one of the routes you go by; but in the case of a sinner getting to heaven, it is of no account whatever, for the reason that there is but one way.

"Listen! Jesus did not say, 'I am one way, or a way,' but he said, 'I am the way.' 'No man cometh to the Father but by me.' 'No man knoweth the Father save the Son, and he to whom the Son shall reveal him.' And the apostle says, 'Neither is there salvation in any other. For there is none other name under heaven given among men whereby we must be saved. 'For there is one God and one mediator between God and man, the man Christ Jesus.'—Words and Weapons.

RANDOM READINGS.

—Holiness is not the way to Christ, but Christ is the way to holiness.

—Take you heed. To be near the life-boat is different from being in it.—J. H. Evans.

—If you desire to be crowned, strive manfully, bear patiently.—Thomas a Kempis.

—That is a beautiful saying of St. Francis de Sales, that "to obtain perfection it is not necessary to do singular things, but to do common things singularly well."

—Duty does what it ought. Love, without stint, does all it can. To be impelled by love is to drown the thunders of "I ought" in the music of "I delight to."—Dr. Dollinger.

—There is no such detective as prayer; for no one can hide away from it. Its puts its hand on the shoulder of a man ten thousand miles off; it alights on a ship in mid-Atlantic.—Talmage.

—Patience strengthens the spirit, sweetens the temper, stifles anger, extinguishes envy, subdues pride; she bridles the tongue, refrains the hand, and tramples upon temptations.—Horne.

There is no fighting on a quagmire. Faith furnishes the only solid, the only safe ground on which we can contend. Faith clothes us with the whole armor of God. Faith connects us with the Captain of our salvation, without whom we can do nothing, but through whose strength we can do all things.—Jay.

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