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Austin: Making the Latter Years Count

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Book Reviews

A BLESSED OLD AGE

MAKING THE LATER YEARS COUNT: For a healthy, well-provided, blessed old age. By Austin J. App. Milwaukee: The Bruce Publishing Company, 1960. 177 pp.

The purpose of this book is to advise old people how to make the best of their advanced years, physically, mentally, morally and spiritually. The first chapter and the last two deal with the question of how to pass old age as a preparation for death, so as to have a happy blessed death. All chapters contain interesting and profitable information but certain chapters stand out, such as those on "Reaching the Full Life Expectancy Ourselves," "Meeting the Ills of the Body," "Keeping the Mind Fit," "Considering the Problem of Senility," and "Keeping Financially Fit." In this last chapter the author deals with the problem of the proper age of retirement. He seems to think that the ages set in the United States are too early and are depriving the country and business of many people when they are still capable of making a contribution for the advantage of all. Countries which are thinking of this problem and which as yet have not developed legislation about old age pensions as well as corporations and business firms which are confronted with this question could have some of their personnel study this chapter with profit. Chapter XIII, "Being an Elder Citizen," describes efforts of associations of the aged to put to work old people who are retired but still capable of help to many others, even on a nationwide scale.

Dr. App goes into all phases of the study of old age and brings out much that is interesting and profitable. The obese, who are notable trenchermen, dig their graves with their teeth and have no problem of old age. They never reach that happy period. Neither do the immoderate, who cannot control their passions or appetites, or who persist in violent exercise, or none at all, but who tend to work

around the clock with no provision for proper rest, food and recreation. The saints, who are noteworthy for their apparent excessive fasts, compiled records for old age. Even today the number is astounding of old aged members of religious orders whose program is penitential, wherein fasting, and watchings prevail. Moderation is the watchword especially for the youthful and the middle-aged, if they expect a fruitful old age.

Dr. App also takes up the problem of the aging married couples, of those whose partners have preceded them into Eternity or who never married. Old people feel bad when they sense that they are not wanted. It is good for them to have a certain amount of privacy, but also judicious companions, at times of their own age groups, and again younger people. If they live with their married children, the old people must not feel that their children spend their time exclusively with them, their aged parents, and the old people themselves should at times enjoy the company of their own contemporaries. Here in the Philippines, where as a rule old people are a privileged group and pass their last years with their children or relatives, they find plenty to do to help those with whom they live. If no other activities can be thought of, they make good baby sitters and help the youngsters in many ways. Today, however, it is not strange to find business firms where the grandfather still controls the business and does it well, when he is over seventy; or it may be the Lola, and she a few years older than seventy.

In the last chapters the author shows that experience tells us that the old people who were not religious or church-goers in their youth or middle age do not tend to become that way in their old age. The exception is when they live with people who are religious with well-developed habits of prayer, attending Mass or other religious services. Then it has been observed that old people become religious and pious, even when they were not so before. Death is inevitable and if old people are not preparing for it as they should, spiritually, then their companions must judiciously and wisely help these old people so that their death will be a blessed event.

It is amazing how many old people have wielded supreme power in their countries, the number of old successful doctors, clergymen, lawyers, professors, not to mention legislators. It will do the young good to recall that the senate in history was always the assembly of the Old Men, whose wisdom was supposed to be the directive and controlling force in the affairs of their countries, who were supposed to moderate the more radical, violent measures of the younger assemblies. That idea is still prevalent in democratic countries today, as we can find by consulting the age required for the upper house of the legislature. Youth can learn the wisdom exemplified in Scripture: that as the twig is bent, so grows the tree. If one wants to be successful in

every way, above all spiritually, one can find that the lessons of moderation, control, balance and wisdom come from beginning them early and keeping the lessons learned in youth in constant practice all one's life. Let us remember that as we live, so shall we die.

All in all, this book will repay the reader. That reader need not be old, although the book is intended for those who are old. It will repay the middle-aged, because it has advice that will enable the middle-aged to reach old age and make it a blessed period of life. It will even repay the youthful because there are so many instances recorded of old people who have done and are doing such remarkable things. It will make the young realize that, although youth will be served, the rules for the serving are laid down by older people, some of them very old.

AUSTIN V. DOWD

THE CELL FOR THE MILLIONS

INSIDE THE LIVING CELL. By J. A. V. Butler. London: Allen & Unwin, 1959. 174 pp.

Science is no longer the exclusive bread-and-butter of a society of long-hairs. One merely has to glance at newspapers and magazines to realize that science, albeit in a simplified version, is a staple diet with which the general reader is fed. Exactly when science acquired this popular stature is matter for discussion. The fact remains, however, that the popularization of science is a marked feature of the present. Reflecting such a trend, *INSIDE THE LIVING CELL* was written purposely for the general reader.

The entire work consists of twenty short chapters, two appendices and an index. In the first few chapters (I-V), the author discusses the chemical constituents of the living cell and their roles in the life of the cell, especially with respect to reproductive and chemical activities. Thus, proteins, enzymes, vitamins and nucleic acids are discussed interestingly and clearly. In the following chapters (VI-VIII), changes in the cell are explained in terms of mutation, radiation effects and the action of viruses. Chapters IX-XII contain a treatment of cells in communities, the controlling effects of hormones on such groups, the interplay of anti-bodies and immunity for the protection of the community of cells, and the results of the abnormal growth of cells. The rest of the book deals with the more important cell aggregates, i.e., the brain, nerve and muscle and their