

# Character With Age

by Charles E. Cowman

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*A person's character is developed and refined through the experiences and challenges of life, leaving a lasting legacy that continues to impact others.*

**Scripture:** Job 5:26, Psalm 92:14, Proverbs 20:29, 2 Corinthians 4:16, Philippians 1:21

**Topics:** "Character Development", "Spiritual Maturity"

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## Description

Charles E. Cowman preaches about the refining process of old ships and how it parallels the quality of character in old age, emphasizing that the straining and wrenching of life, along with the cargoes carried, deeply impact one's character. He contrasts the difference between those who have lived self-indulgent lives versus those who have served God and helped others, highlighting the lasting impact of a great and good person even after they are gone.

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## Transcript

"Like a shock of corn fully ripe" (Job 5:26).

A gentleman, writing about the breaking up of old ships, recently said that it is not the age alone which improves the quality of the fiber in the wood of an old vessel, but the straining and wrenching of the vessel by the sea, the chemical action of the bilge water, and of many kinds of cargoes.

Some planks and veneers made from an oak beam which had been part of a ship eighty years old were exhibited a few years ago at a fashionable furniture store on Broadway, New York, and attracted general notice for the exquisite coloring and beautiful grain.

Equally striking were some beams of mahogany taken from a bark which sailed the seas sixty years ago. The years and the traffic had contracted the pores and deepened the color, until it looked as superb in its chromatic intensity as an antique Chinese vase. It was made into a cabinet, and has today a place of honor in the drawing-room of a wealthy New York family.

So there is a vast difference between the quality of old people who have lived flabby, self-indulgent, useless lives, and the fiber of those who have sailed all seas and carried all cargoes as the servants of God and the helpers of their fellow men.

Not only the wrenching and straining of life, but also something of the sweetness of the cargoes carried get into the very pores and fiber of character. --Louis Albert Banks

When the sun goes below the horizon he is not set; the heavens glow for a full hour after his departure. And when a great and good man sets, the sky of this world is luminous long after he is out of sight. Such a man cannot die out of this world. When he goes he leaves behind him much of himself. Being dead, he speaks. --Beecher

When Victor Hugo was past eighty years of age he gave expression to his religious faith in these sublime sentences: "I feel in myself the future life. I am like a forest which has been more than once cut down. The new shoots are livelier than ever. I am rising toward the sky. The sunshine is on my head. The earth gives me its generous sap, but Heaven lights me with its unknown worlds.

"You say the soul is nothing but the resultant of the bodily powers. Why, then, is my soul more luminous when my bodily powers begin to fail? Winter is on my head, but eternal spring is in my heart. I breathe at this hour the fragrance of the lilacs, the violets, and the roses as at twenty years. The nearer I approach the end the plainer I hear around me the immortal symphonies of the worlds which invite me. It is marvelous, yet simple."

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