

**TWO SERMONS ON THE
DEATH OF DEACON
NATHANIEL LIVERMORE AND
MRS. ELIZABETH LIVERMORE**

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Two sermons on the death of Deacon Nathaniel Livermore and Mrs. Elizabeth Livermore by
John F. W. Ware

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JOHN F. W. WARE

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TWO SERMONS

ON THE DEATH OF

DEACON NATHANIEL LIVERMORE

AND

MRS. ELIZABETH LIVERMORE.



THE PREPARATION FOR OLD AGE:

A SERMON

On the Death of

DEACON NATHANIEL LIVERMORE,

PREACHED IN THE

CHURCH OF THE CAMBRIDGEPORT PARISH,

AUGUST 17, 1862.

Woburn, Mass.

BY JOHN F. W. WARE,

PASTOR OF THE CHURCH.

CAMBRIDGE:

PRINTED FOR THE FAMILY.

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1862. Oct. 30

Gift of

George Livermore, Esq.
of Cambridge

Deacon Nathaniel Livermore,

DIED IN CAMBRIDGEPORT, AUGUST 7, 1862, IN THE NINETEENTH YEAR
OF HIS AGE.

S E R M O N .

Job v. 26. "THOU SHALT COME TO THY GRAVE IN A FULL AGE, LIKE AS
A SHOCK OF CORN COMETH IN IN HIS SEASON."

THERE are probably few who have lived happily, and without grave experiences, who do not consider old age as a thing especially to be desired. We cleave to the bare idea of life. That is our instinct. It is felt to be our highest good. We only ask to live. The thing sad about others is their going away so soon; the thing sad about ourselves is that we may have to go early. Our books, our poetry, our sermons, our conversation, are full of very pretty, but very pernicious, very false and fatal talk about untimely death, the cutting off in one's promise or prime, so that we grow up to think it the great misfortune that some die early, — our own great desire to live on through many years into age.

And yet old age, as we find it, is not, even to those thus longing to reach it, a thing we are specially drawn to. It does not have largely our respect, our reverence, our sympathy. I believe the feeling we have about age, about the old, is rather a sentiment than a principle; a feeling we allow the abstract quality rather than bestow upon the individual. There is a something about age which appeals even to the thoughtless, and calls out a momentary respect, possibly enthusiasm. I shall always remember with what enthusiasm two frivolous young men near me, at a place of amusement, broke away from their foolish talk, as a noble looking specimen of the old man took his place near them; but I doubt if that mere impulse would not sum up all their feeling about it. I doubt if they would have lived with that old age in that same spirit, yielding it day by day, year by year, the tribute of reverent respect. The fact is, that the picture we conjure to ourselves of old age, is one in which fancy has large share. There are many and much repeated phrases descriptive of it, and each of these has

its ideal with us, and we unconsciously blend them into a whole, out of which rises a sort of more than earthly thing, called old age. But the old age we live with,—weak, wrinkled, decrepid, demanding care, perhaps unreasonable,—the old age that calls us from our liberties, our enjoyments, makes demand upon our selfishness, our purse, is another thing. It is not lovely or desirable, and we are apt to be every way unjust toward it,—to judge the individual harshly because our ideal has been false.

And yet I do not know that one ought to throw the blame upon our ideal. The actual of old age might be much what that ideal is. I think God meant old age to be very lovely,—with a different loveliness from the loveliness of childhood indeed,—the loveliness of fulfilment, as that is of promise. Age is maturity, ripeness, finish. When the year comes to that, when the fruit is ripe, the sheaf yellow, the shock full, the husbandman's task done, and the harvest garnered, there is general rejoicing. The year is crowned. The heart is touched. We make glad carnival. There is no joy like that