

Sweeter As the Years Go By

~Other Speakers G-L: Hymn Stories:

"The righteous will flourish like a palm tree, they will grow like a cedar of Lebanon; planted in the house of the LORD, they will flourish in the courts of our God. They will still bear fruit in old age, they will stay fresh and green, proclaiming, 'The LORD is upright--he is my Rock, and there is no wickedness in him'" -Psalm 92:12-15

For the believer, growing older should mean a greater awareness of God's love and fellowship as well as an increased desire for usefulness in Christian service. The golden years should be the most fruitful time of life. A lifetime of companionship with God ought to produce a more mellow and gracious Christlike spirit. Because there are fewer demands and pressures in life, the older Christian can enjoy opportunities for effective ministry that he or she has never attempted. A "do-nothing retirement" must never become the goal of any believer's life.

There is nothing more tragic, however, than a professing Christian who has grown disgruntled and self-centered in later years. It is true that as we age we simply bring into full bloom the traits that were begun in our early years. If, then, we wish to have positive and productive attitudes as seniors, we must begin to develop these traits while we are still young.

This song's author and composer, Mrs. Lelia Naylor Morris, was an active worker in the Methodist church. She continued to write gospel songs during the last fifteen years of her life, even after becoming blind in her early fifties. "Sweeter As the Years Go By" was written during the early years of her blindness. It is said that during this difficult time in her life, Mrs. Morris used a twenty-eight-foot-long blackboard with music lines to help her in writing hymns. She wrote more than one thousand hymn texts, as well as many of the tunes. She never stopped writing until the time of her home going.

Several of Lelia's other gospel hymns still in use include: "What If It Were Today?," "Let Jesus Come into Your Heart," and "Nearer, Still Nearer."

Mrs. Lelia N. Morris's handicap and age never deterred her from being productive for God. Despite the difficulties of life, she continued to "bear fruit" and to enjoy a relationship with her Lord that became sweeter with each passing year. What a worthy example for each of us to emulate!

"With saints redeemed in glory, let us our voices raise," letting it be known with joy and conviction that our relationship with the Lord becomes "sweeter as the years go by."