



The Reformation **Messenger**

VOLUME 23, NUMBER 2, FEBRUARY 2016

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WE BELIEVE: The all-wise loving God created all things in the universe by His Son, Jesus Christ. He is the Owner and Sustainer. He met the challenge to His loving leadership and authority by reconciling the world to Himself through the life, death, and resurrection of His Son, the Word made flesh. The Holy Spirit, Jesus' representative on earth convicts of sin, guides into truth, and gives strength to overcome all unrighteousness. The Bible is the record of God's dealings with mankind and the standard of all doctrine, the Ten Commandments are the transcript of His character and the foundation of all enduring reform. His people, in harmony with God's word and under the direction of the Holy Spirit call all men everywhere to be reconciled to God through faith in Jesus. Bible prophecy reveals that earth's history will soon close with the visible return of Jesus Christ as King to claim all who have accepted Him as the world's only Redeemer and their Lord.

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The Reformation Messenger is published monthly. It is an Official Publication of the International Missionary Society the Seventh-Day Adventist Church Reform Movement, Canadian Field. Subscriptions can be paid online on the website or by mail.

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PHOTO CREDITS

Front Cover Photo:
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Inside Front Cover:
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COST:

Black & White x \$25.00 per year.

Colour x \$45.00 per year.

(Add \$10.00 North America and \$20.00 overseas shipping & handling)

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The Two Covenants and the Condition of Man

In the Bible there are two covenants, the old and the new. These covenants are agreements between God and His people. In these covenants the people agree to obey God's law.

The story of the establishment of the old covenant is found in Exodus. At Mount Sinai the people agreed to obey God (Exodus 24:7). When making this promise they had no realization of the sinfulness of their hearts. Neither did they understand their own hopelessness, nor their own inability to obey. They thought they were strong enough in themselves to obey God.

"They readily entered into covenant with God. Feeling that they were able to establish their own righteousness, they declared, 'All that the Lord hath said will we do, and be obedient.'" —*Patriarchs and Prophets*, p. 372–373. The people entered into this covenant with an attitude of self-righteousness, not understanding their own inability. It was inevitable that they would fail. Soon enough they fell into idolatry. "They have turned aside quickly out of the way which I commanded them: they have made them a molten calf, and have worshipped it, and have sacrificed thereunto, and said, These [be] thy gods, O Israel, which have brought thee up out of the land of Egypt." Exodus 32:8. This was the sin that came most natural to them, having a short time before departed a country full of idolatry.

The old covenant was far from perfect since it depended on faulty people to fulfil their part. "For if that first [covenant] had been faultless, then should no place have been sought for the second. For finding fault with them, he saith, Behold, the days come, saith the Lord, when I will make a new covenant with the house of

Israel and with the house of Judah." Hebrews 8:7–8. The fault was not with the covenant or with God, but with faulty people. The people at Mt. Sinai disobeyed God. They failed to keep their part of the covenant. It had always been God's purpose to lead His people, through the keeping of the Old covenant to an understanding of the new. The old covenant was based on works.

In the new covenant God promises, "I will be merciful to their unrighteousness, and their sins and their iniquities will I remember no more." Hebrews 8:12. He also promises, "I will put my laws into their mind, and write them in their hearts." Hebrews 8:10. The new covenant provides for the forgiveness of sin and the writing of the law in the heart and mind by the Holy Spirit. This writing of the law in the heart produces obedience. In this covenant man can obtain the help he needs in order to obey God.

With the old covenant man relies on his own strength. With the new covenant man reaches out to God for help realizing his own hopeless condition and inability.

An example of the two covenants can be seen in the difference between the prayers of the Pharisee and the publican in Luke 18:10–14: "Two men went up into the temple to pray; the one a Pharisee, and the other a publican. The Pharisee stood and prayed thus with himself, God, I thank thee, that I am not as other men are, extortioners, unjust, adulterers, or even as this publican. I fast twice in the week, I give tithes of all that I possess. And the publican, standing afar off, would not lift up so much as his eyes unto heaven, but smote upon his breast, saying, God be merciful to me a

sinner. I tell you, this man went down to his house justified rather than the other.”

The Pharisee approaches God in his own self-righteousness, having no realization of the sinfulness of his own condition. This is the old covenant experience. On the other hand, the publican approaches God with a true realization of his hopeless, sinful condition. Pleading for God’s mercy and receiving a pardon from God he is justified or made righteous. This is the new covenant experience.

In the monastery of St. Augustine’s Martin Luther followed the way he had been taught. He attempted to obtain righteousness, or holiness, in his own strength. But realizing the inadequacy of his own human strength he discovered a better way. He recalled the Scripture “the just (or the righteous) shall live by faith.” From then on he began to seek God for help.

In our own experience, we ought to approach God every day, realizing the inadequacy of the human condition, seeking the righteousness with which God can provide us. This is what it means to live by faith.

In Galatians 4:24 it says that the old covenant gives birth to bondage. “For these are the two covenants; the one from the mount Sinai, which gendereth to bondage.” What sort of bondage does this mean?

In the book of Galatians we read about certain Jewish teachers that had come in among the Galatians. Whether inadvertently or deliberately, these teachers diverted the people from a reliance on Christ. They told them to keep the law—the Ten Commandments—but they must do it themselves without Christ. They must do it in their own strength, the self-righteous way of approaching God. Apostle Paul wrote to the Galatians warning them against this.

“O foolish Galatians, who hath bewitched you, that ye should not obey the truth, before whose eyes Jesus Christ hath been evidently set forth, crucified among you? This only would I learn of you, Received ye the Spirit by the works of the law, or by the hearing of faith? Are ye so foolish? having begun in the Spirit, are ye now made perfect by the flesh? Have ye suffered so many things in vain? if it be yet in vain. He therefore that ministereth to you the Spirit, and worketh miracles among you, doeth he it by the works of the law, or by the hearing of faith?” Galatians 3:1–5

When the Apostle Paul wrote concerning “the works of the law” he was not attacking the law since elsewhere he says the law is holy, just, and good. He was attacking the self-righteous way of approaching the law. Also,

since the Galatians now believed they could be “made perfect by the flesh” they had ceased to understand their own inability. They may well have promised obedience to God but instead they began to drift back to idolatry as Israel had done at Mt. Sinai.

When we approach the law of God in a self-righteous way, not realizing the inability of our sinful condition, it is inevitable we too will drift back to sin. We will drift back to the sin that comes most natural to us.

“Howbeit then, when ye knew not God, ye did service unto them which by nature are no gods. But now, after that ye have known God, or rather are known of God, how turn ye again to the weak and beggarly elements, whereunto ye desire again to be in bondage?” Galatians 4:8–9

The Apostle Paul describes the idolatry to which the Galatians were drifting as bondage. The bondage that the old covenant gives birth to is sin. In John chapter 8 sin is likened to bondage. If we approach God with a self-righteousness attitude we too will fall into sin.

The disastrous result of self-righteousness can be seen in Matthew 12:43–45: “When the unclean spirit is gone out of a man, he walketh through dry places, seeking rest, and findeth none. Then he saith, I will return into my house from whence I came out; and when he is come, he findeth it empty, swept, and garnished. Then goeth he, and taketh with himself seven other spirits more wicked than himself, and they enter in and dwell there: and the last state of that man is worse than the first.”

The garnish or decoration represents the human display of one’s own righteousness. The garnished house represents the self-righteous soul. When self-righteous people enter a church it is a complete disaster. Although they profess to be righteous they become exceedingly wicked. We see the example in the so-called “holy men of Israel” who perpetrated their murderous designs upon Jesus, who was guiltless.

Those who approach God in a self-righteous way inevitably fall into sin. Some people give up and let sin have its way. Others will up the ante and begin making human laws. “For, seeing that they fail to keep the law, they will devise rules and regulations of their own to force themselves to obey. . . . A system of human invention, with its multitudinous exactions, will lead its advocates to judge all who come short of the prescribed human standard.” —*Thoughts from the Mount of Blessing*, p. 123

The Pharisees, realizing their own failures, began to make human laws. They made their own human Sabbath laws. These human laws, although based on the law of

God, were actually contrary to the spirit and practice of it, as can be seen in the following two examples.

“At that time Jesus went on the Sabbath day through the corn; and His disciples were an hungred, and began to pluck the ears of corn, and to eat. But when the Pharisees saw it, they said unto Him, Behold, Thy disciples do that which is not lawful to do upon the Sabbath day.” Matthew 12:1–2

We know that Jesus never sinned. He kept God’s law, including the Sabbath day. When the Pharisees accused Jesus’ disciples of breaking the law Jesus declared them guiltless (Matthew 12:7).

“And, behold, there was a man which had his hand withered. And they asked Him, saying, Is it lawful to heal on the sabbath days? that they might accuse Him. And He said unto them, What man shall there be among you, that shall have one sheep, and if it fall into a pit on the sabbath day, will he not lay hold on it, and lift it out? How much then is a man better than a sheep? Wherefore it is lawful to do well on the sabbath days. Then saith He to the man, Stretch forth thine hand. And he stretched it forth; and it was restored whole, like as the other. Then the Pharisees went out, and held a council against Him, how they might destroy Him.” Matthew 12:10–14

The Pharisees said that it was not lawful to heal on the Sabbath day but Jesus plainly contradicted them saying it was lawful to do well on the Sabbath day.

The conflict between the human laws, advocated by the Pharisees, and the law of God which Jesus represented, caused the Pharisees to become extremely bitter toward

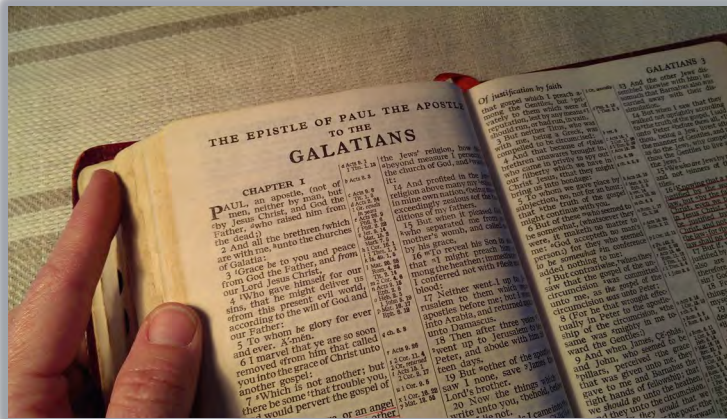
Jesus. They were so angered they sought to destroy Him. Here we see the final end of self-righteousness. These were men filled with evil spirits, seeking to murder Jesus (John 8:40, 44). Jesus declares them to be in bondage (John 8:33–34). From this we see that the old covenant established in an attitude of self-righteousness does give birth to bondage.

Another excellent author writes: “The apostle when speaking of Hagar and Sarah says: ‘These women are two covenants.’ These two covenants exist today. The two covenants are not matters of time, but of condition. Let no one flatter himself that he cannot be bound under the old covenant, thinking that its time has passed.” –*Glad Tidings*, E. J. Waggoner, p. 100–101

The Apostle Paul wrote to the Galatians some years after the death and resurrection of Christ. To them he declares “For these are the two covenants; the one from the mount Sinai, which gendereth to bondage. . . . Jerusalem which now is, and is in bondage with her children” Galatians 4:24–25. Israel was still in the same condition as those who entered into the old covenant agreement with God at Mt. Sinai.

Christians are not immune. There are some that become self-righteous, not realizing their own inability to obey God. True Christians need to have a continual on-going realization of their own sinfulness. With this realization they will continually reach out to God for the forgiveness of sin and for the Holy Spirit to write the law in their hearts and minds. This will enable them to obey and make them fit for heaven. Amen.

G. Higgins



LOOKING FOR YOU. . .

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Who is Your Leader?



Who is your leader, the one who determines your destination? We are all like sheep, we need a shepherd; and there are two leaders we can choose from. One leads us to heaven, and the other to hell fire. We must decide which one of them will lead us. Both of these leaders are inviting us to follow them.

Out of the over seven billion people in our world only a very few of them make the right choice for their leader. Most of the people choose the wrong leader and end up in hell fire. The reason for this is that the way to heaven is narrow, and requires self-denial, while the way to hell is easy and requires no sacrifice. Of all the professed Christians, only few will find their way to heaven. If it is God who leads us, then we will make it to heaven, because He knows the way.

“Thus saith the LORD, thy Redeemer, the Holy One of Israel; I am the LORD thy God which teacheth thee to profit, which leadeth thee by the way that thou shouldst go.” Isaiah 48:17

God introduces Himself to us as the Lord, God of heaven, who personally leads us by the good way, the perfect way that we should go to find happiness, salvation, and eternal life.

In this life, people are often confused, not knowing what to do, or where to go. They mess up their lives and bring untold misery upon themselves by refusing to follow the way of God and His leading, choosing rather to go their own way. So much suffering and trouble is created by selfishness, and by man’s greed; also by pride, envy, jealousy, and hatred, which causes people to do foolish things and make foolish decisions. Even physical sickness and early death are the results of man’s foolish way of living, eating, and drinking. God

only knows the right way; He who created man knows what is good for our well-being and happiness.

Yet people think that they themselves have to decide which way to go, and how to live. “There is a way which seemeth right unto a man, but the end thereof are the ways of death.” Proverbs 14:12

Millions are choosing the way of death, which seems right to them. God knows that we cannot find the right way by ourselves, nor discern what to do in our lives. “O LORD, I know that the way of man is not in himself: it is not in man that walketh to direct his steps.” Jeremiah 10:23

Not even the angels have the ability to direct their own steps. When they decided to go their own way, make their own plans, and not follow the leading of God any more, they destroyed themselves, and became evil demons.

If we would start to decide for our lives, how many fiery trials would we choose, which are very precious to our character development? “That the trial of your faith, being much more precious than of gold that perisheth, though it be tried with fire, might be found unto praise and honour and glory at the appearing of Jesus Christ.” 1 Peter 1:7

If Abraham would have been left to make his own decisions, would he have decided to sacrifice Isaac, his son? Yet what a beautiful lesson he learned by it, how God gave His own Son to die. Would Paul have chosen the painful thorn to afflict his flesh, which kept him humble? Would Joseph have decided to go to Egypt, and to prison? Yet, how many lives did he save by it? Would the many martyrs have decided on a martyr’s death for themselves?

In the world people choose thousands of ways in which to live, and that includes luxuries, fame, idleness, and pleasure. All this Satan offers to his followers, which will not bring them happiness. The way of God is narrow and difficult; you have to deny yourself, carry a cross and suffer affliction.

Yet, God's people do not complain about the way that God leads them. "The steps of a good man are ordered by the LORD: and he delighteth in His way." Psalm 37:23

Paul writes, "Therefore I take pleasure in infirmities, in reproaches, in necessities, in persecutions, in distresses for Christ's sake: for when I am weak, then am I strong." 2 Corinthians 12:10

Jesus said, "These things have I spoken unto you, that My joy might remain in you, and that your joy might be full." John 15:11

God has promised to lead us throughout our lives, from birth to death. For every minute of our lives, God has made a plan, how to develop our characters to perfection.

It is not guaranteed that God is leading us, even if we are members of His church. Jesus said to His disciples, "Ye know not what manner of spirit ye are of." Luke 9:55. They were in the company of Jesus, yet an evil spirit entered into them.

How do we know that an evil spirit may be controlling us? In Psalm 10:4 we read, "God is not in all his thoughts." If the Holy Spirit is with us, then our thoughts are constantly on God and in His leading.

"He deviseth mischief upon his bed; he setteth himself in a way that is not good; he abhorreth not evil." Psalm 36:4. If we would abhor evil and hate sin, we would not want to watch television programmes for entertainment, for Bible reading would be more enjoyable to us.

"The transgression of the wicked saith within my heart, that there is no fear of God before his eyes." Psalm 36:1. When no one is watching, he can do sin. He is afraid of men, especially other church members, but if God sees his wrong doing, he does not care.

Isaiah writes, "The way of peace they know not; and there is no judgment in their goings: they have made them crooked paths: whosoever goeth therein shall not know peace." Isaiah 59:8. They are easily upset, even from little offenses.

Again, how do we know that God is leading us? "To give light to them that sit in darkness and in the shad-

ow of death, to guide our feet into the way of peace." Luke 1:79. When people would normally be upset and annoyed, and even angry, we have perfect peace in our hearts, during the worst offenses.

Also, He will guide us into all truth by His Holy Spirit. "Howbeit when He, the Spirit of truth, is come, He will guide you into all truth: for He shall not speak of Himself; but whatsoever He shall hear, that shall He speak: and He will shew you things to come." John 16:13. Then we are not confused; then we have no doubts. The deep mysteries of God will be clear to us.

"He maketh me to lie down in green pastures: He leadeth me beside the still waters." Psalm 23:2. There may be a storm outside, even wars and battles may be going on, but we will be calm, as walking beside the still waters.

If God is leading us, there is one more thing He will do for us. "For whom the Lord loveth He chasteneth, and scourgeth every son whom He receiveth. If ye endure chastening, God dealeth with you as with sons; for what son is he whom the father chasteneth not? But if ye be without chastisement, whereof all are partakers, then are ye bastards, and not sons." Hebrews 12:6-8

If someone can commit sin with impunity, without chastisement, then it may be that God is not leading him.

If we let God lead us, it may be in a way that we would never have chosen for ourselves. "And I will bring the blind by a way that they knew not; I will lead them in paths that they have not known: I will make darkness light before them, and crooked things straight. These things will I do unto them, and not forsake them." Isaiah 42:16

"God never leads his children otherwise than they would choose to be led, if they could see the end from the beginning, and discern the glory of the purpose which they are fulfilling as co-workers with Him." —*The Desire of Ages*, p. 224-225

God loves you and cares for you. He wants to give you happiness. He gave His life for you—will He not give you all other things also? When he calls you, answer quickly, "Here am I Lord, take my heart, take my life, take all that I have, and lead me all the way to the end." Amen.

Timo Martin



The gods of Modern Idolatry

directed toward the earth's first couple. Through his success in deceiving them he became their god and they became idol worshipers. Instead of serving the true Creator they served the Devil.

Things have not changed since the expulsion of Lucifer from

“My children, be on the watch against false gods.” 1 John 5:21 (N.E.B.)

Idolatry is alive and flourishing. In our enlightened and highly sophisticated twentieth century, there are still heathen people who are worshipping idols made of stone, metal, wood, and other materials. Wherever one travels in pagan Asian countries, he will notice temples and shrines where the worshippers bow down and give homage to inanimate objects. Others, overlooking the Creator, attach special sacredness to the creatures that He has made.

It is an undisputed reality of life that man has an inner need which he tries to fulfill, and that is the need to worship. Unfortunately, millions of people are venerating deities that are not able to give them salvation.

Idolatry is not something new. It has been around for a very long time, even before the creation of man. The first idolater was the angel Lucifer. His aspirations and ruthless ambitions to be like God Himself caused his downfall. The gods that he worshipped were power, praise, position and self-love. Do you remember reading this in the Bible: “I will ascend into heaven, I will exalt my throne above the stars of God: I will sit also upon the mount of the congregation, in the sides of the north: I will ascend above the heights of the clouds; I will be like the most High.” Isaiah 14:13–14

Lucifer became the first “I” specialist. These gods of his own making were cast down to this earth after the terrible war that ensued in heaven. His animosity was now

heaven. Man is still serving deities but they have perhaps taken on a different form or come under a new name. Satan has ingeniously clothed his gods in new and attractive garments to make them more appealing to his subjects. Basically, he has hidden their god-like identity in order to deceive the people.

Before we continue in our article we need to know what the word idolatry means. Here are some good definitions: “Whatever divides the affections, and takes away from the soul supreme love to God, assumes the form of an idol.” – *Testimonies for the Church*, vol. 1, p. 289. “Anything that men love and trust in instead of loving the Lord and trusting wholly in Him becomes an idol.” – *Testimonies for the Church*, vol. 5, p. 250. “Anything which tends to abate our love for God, or to interfere with the service due Him, becomes thereby an idol.” – *Seventh-day Adventist Bible Commentary*, vol. 2, p. 1011–1012

Since we now have some good definitions of the word idolatry, I would like to bring out some outstanding idols of our modern times.

THE GOD OF PLEASURE

“Lovers of pleasure more than lovers of God.” 2 Timothy 3:4. It is one of the prevailing sins of the last days that man will worship pleasure above God. The sin of selfish pleasure is a particular idol for whom nominal Christians in affluent nations spend more time and money than for giving to God what is due to Him. The American people contribute about \$8.5 billion to

churches, but \$150 billion to their gods of selfish pleasure. What a significant difference that is! \$14.5 billion is spent on alcohol and \$5 billion on radio and television. It is where the neon lights flash, the music blares, the nightclubs and amusement centers operate, that the masses congregate and selfishly squander their money. When the offering plate is passed around in the church, however, a meager sum is put in. How tragic that America has more interest in the god of pleasure than in worshipping the true God!

Americans are becoming hypnotized and desensitized with all the brutality that is found at the sport stadiums. People are eagerly seeking for new thrills that do not ultimately satisfy the human heart.

The theatres are frequently jam-packed by fans who want to see the latest action or science-fiction films. Could it be that the outer-space movies are slowly conditioning the people for the great deception to come—the impersonation of Christ by the Devil himself?

Besides the cinema-god, there is also the TV goddess. She has captured the audience of both young and old. She has interfered with the allegiance due God. This goddess can rob someone of sleep, prayer, or missionary work. But it is not only the time factor that is significant, but also the content of what is being watched. Is this message addressed to you—a person addicted to watching violent, immoral, foolish or silly programs that numb the senses to the voice of God? Is it not high time to consider soberly what this goddess is doing to your life and family?

Many years ago, Ellen White wrote the following: “The true Christian will not desire to enter any place of amusement or engage in any diversion upon which he cannot ask the blessing of God.” —*Messages to Young People*, p. 398

THE GOD OF MATERIALISM

“No man can serve two masters: for either he will hate the one, and love the other; or else he will hold to the one, and despise the other. Ye cannot serve God and mammon.” Matthew 6:24

Wealth or riches are not evil of themselves. Material wealth may be used for good or evil purposes. The worshippers of material possessions have a grasping spirit, show indifference to human misery, and have a false sense of values and mixed-up priorities.

God sees selfishness and greed as basic to man’s nature and the root cause of his troubles. “For the love of money is the root of all evil: which while some coveted after, they have erred from the faith, and pierced themselves through with many sorrows.” 1 Timothy 6:10

Instead of serving materialism, we should use our means to serve the best interest of humanity. Let us never forget that the talent of riches is given in order to glorify God and help our fellow man.

THE GOD OF APPETITE

“For many walk, of whom I have told you often, and now tell you even weeping, that they are the enemies of the cross of Christ: whose end is destruction, whose God is their belly, and whose glory is in their shame, who mind earthly things.” Philippians 3:18–19

This god may be found at many social functions, banquets, in the home and even in the church kitchen. Millions of people are foolishly living to eat rather than eating to live. There is a vast difference between these two principles. To eat and drink as a means of health and strength is sensible and wise. But over-

eating and drinking is dangerous and is considered as the sin of gluttony and idolatry. Having an uncontrolled appetite for even good foods weakens the body and shortens the life.

The god of Appetite does not embrace excessive eating only; it also includes the use of tobacco and liquor. These two little gods have controlled the world. Man is not free from these enslaving and degrading gods. It has cost him a fortune to serve them, and the results of worshipping at their poisonous shrines are ruin and devastation. Incidentally, there are also sugar gods, salt and pepper gods, artificial flavour, and, of course, the common junk-food god. The Bible gives us good counsel in 1 Corinthians 10:31: “Whether therefore ye eat,



or drink, or whatsoever ye do, do all to the glory of God.”

THE GOD OF SELF WORSHIP

“The Pharisee stood and prayed thus with himself, God, I thank thee, that I am not as other men are, extortioners, unjust, adulterers, or even as this publican. I fast twice in the week, I give tithes of all that I possess.” Luke 18:11–12

The Pharisee worshipped himself and did not see that he was a sinner in need of repentance. He said, in effect, “I’m so good, I’m so righteous and holy, and so much better than my neighbour!” He thought he was a follower of the Lord, but he was deceiving himself, for he was actually idolizing himself. There was a lack of true godliness and its void was filled by self-righteousness. The fact that he was fasting and paying tithes testified that he was acquainted with the scriptures, and outward acts were meant to convey his personal piety to others. He was doing his “good deeds” for others to see and praise him. The motive of love, the only one that counts, was missing.

Today, the modern-day Pharisee is still craving popularity and attention and comparing himself with others.

The god of self-worship may also include pride in one’s talents, education, title, and possibly even taking credit for having won souls to the truth.

PEOPLE AS GODS (IDOLS)

“Who opposeth and exalteth himself above all that is called God, or that is worshipped; so that he as God sitteth in the temple of God, shewing himself that he is God.” 2 Thessalonians 2:4

“Satan is constantly endeavoring to attract attention to man in the place of God. He leads the people to look to bishops, to pastors, to professors of theology, as their guides, instead of searching the Scriptures to learn their duty for themselves.” —*The Great Controversy*, p. 59

It is God’s desire for man to look to Him for guidance and never to make any human being a god. This is especially applicable in a religious sense. The Bible plainly cau-

tions us to beware of anyone who claims to be God on earth. The anti-Christian system appropriates the very titles of Jesus Christ to itself. In this way the attention is focused on sinful man.

There are some who attend church only when their preacher-idol occupies the pulpit. The story is told about Thomas K. Beecher who substituted for his brother Henry Ward Beecher at Plymouth Church. Many came to hear the latter out of curiosity. When Thomas appeared in the pulpit many of the visitors started for the door. At that moment, Thomas raised his hand for attention and then said, “All those who came here this morning to worship Henry Ward Beecher may now withdraw from the church. All who came to worship God may remain.”

We can learn a valuable lesson from this story. We should be careful not to idolize a person because of his talents and eloquence but truly strive to know God better.

A preacher should not be praised for the message he brings to the flock. No matter who speaks, always humbly accept the message as from the Lord, even if the messenger has problems speaking.

Besides the idolizing of religious leaders in the world, the world has an obsession for its rock entertainers, movie stars, baseball and football heroes, and other celebrities.

It is sad that people are honoured to such an extent that it makes them very arrogant and self-centred.

CHURCHES AS IDOLS

This may sound strange to the ears, that a church could become an idol. It happens when someone trusts in the church organization for salvation, rather than in Jesus. Do not misunderstand, please; organization with all its administrative functions has its place and serves the church so it can operate efficiently. It cannot be dispensed with. But merely coming to church and trusting in the law will not guarantee one’s entrance into God’s kingdom.



Mistakenly, some place more emphasis on the outward observances and rules of behaviour than upon the inward change of character. It is the blood of Jesus Christ that saves. Remember this text in John 3:5: "Except a man be born of water and of the Spirit, he cannot enter into the kingdom of God."

"There are many who seem to imagine that outside observances are sufficient for salvation, but formalism, rigorous attendance of religious exercises, will fail to bring the peace of God which passeth understanding. It is Jesus alone who can give us peace." —*The Review and Herald*, November 18, 1890

"To subscribe the name to a church creed is not of the least value to anyone if the heart is not truly changed. . . Men may be church members, and may apparently work earnestly, performing a round of duties from year to year, and yet be unconverted." —*The Review and Herald*, February 14, 1899

A reverence for the forms, ceremonies, and ordinances of religion may lead to idolatry. The man who trusts in baptism as a means of salvation rather than as an out-

ward sign of an inward cleansing has made this sacred ordinance an idol. Also, he who looks to the wine and bread of the communion service as a means of salvation, rather than its memorial is an idolater. We could go on mentioning outward acts of worship in which men trust rather than look to Jesus who is the centre of these. Think for a moment of the Jews who prided themselves on the beautiful temple. They placed such undue importance on this structure, that they excluded Jesus and His love. In all their rituals and ceremonies pertaining to the law, they lost sight of the Lamb of God. Could this happen to us?

It is time we awake and worship Jesus Christ. He is the true God among the thousands of false gods. The fact that He has given His life for the human race proves He LOVES US. Calvary was not in vain.

Will we not we serve Him, worship and praise Jesus for the wonderful gift of salvation? This mighty God is infinitely superior to all the modern gods. He is the living God who has mercy and pardon to offer. Amen.

Henry Dering

Christ Our Righteousness

The humiliation which Christ voluntarily took upon Himself is best expressed by Paul to the Philippians: "Have this mind in you which was also in Christ Jesus, who being originally in the form of God, counted it not a thing to be grasped [that is, to be clung to] to be on an equality with God, but emptied Himself, taking the form of a bondservant, becoming in the likeness of men; and being found in fashion as a man, He humbled Himself, becoming obedient even unto death, yea, the death of the cross." Philippians 2:5–8, Revised Version, marginal reading

The above rendering makes this text much more plain than it is in the common version. The idea is that, although Christ was in the form of God, being "the brightness of His glory and the express image of His Person" (Hebrews 1:3), having all the attributes of God, being the Ruler of the universe, and the One whom all Heaven delighted to honour, He did not think that any of these things were to be desired, so long as men were lost and without strength. He could not enjoy His glory while man was an outcast, without hope. So, He emptied Himself, divested Himself of all His riches and His glory, and took upon Himself the nature of man, in order that He might redeem him. And so we may reconcile Christ's unity with the Father with the statement, "My Father is greater than I." John 14:28

It is impossible for us to understand how Christ could, as God, humble Himself to the death of the cross, and it is worse than useless for us to speculate about it. All we can do is to accept the facts as they are presented in the Bible. If the reader finds it difficult to harmonize some of the statements in the Bible concerning the nature of Christ, let him remember that it would be impossible to express it in terms that would enable finite minds to grasp it fully. Just as the grafting of the Gentiles into the stock of Israel is contrary to nature, so much of the Divine economy is a paradox to human understanding.

Taken from the book, *Christ and His Righteousness*, by E.J. Waggoner, under the chapter, "God Manifested in the Flesh"



Talents, Gifts and Fruits

Being inspired by the recent Week of Prayer Readings (December 2015), I decided to study a little more into the Gifts of the Spirit. In the New Testament there are listed different gifts given to individuals here on earth. We are told that the Lord bestows talents to individuals and the Holy Spirit gives gifts. And then when these are used faithfully, the fruit of the Spirit will be seen. The fruit is not possible without the working of the Holy Spirit and the proper usage of the gifts and talents.

TALENTS

A talent is given to be used and it improves with usage and practice. By neglect it declines.

In Matthew 25:14–30 we read the parable in which Jesus spoke about the talents. A man decided to travel to a far country, entrusting his material goods (talents) to his servants to care for, trade, and increase. In the Hebrew a talent was a means of measuring monetary values, for example, something having the equivalent of a talent weight of gold, silver, or other metal.

The most common usage of the word talent in English today is an innate ability, aptitude, or faculty which is above average, for example: a talent for cooking, music, or drawing, etc. God gives people talents for use and improvement. It is well for a person who has musical ability to spend a portion of their day in practice.

How can we reconcile these two meanings in a spiritual sense? Is there any connection between a talent (material wealth) and a talent (special natural ability)?

Can talents of ability have monetary worth? They can in the sense that people make money using their talents. These talents (natural abilities) can, however, be of more

value than the talent of money. They can bring more happiness to a person than can money. The healthy and strong poor man may be happier than the sick and feeble rich man. Ask a man dying of cancer what he wants more of—the talent of gold or the talent of health? Ask the 95-year old man who is reaching the end of his life what he would like more of—the talent of money or the talent of more time.

I am sure Jesus had a deeper meaning than just material wealth, such as gold and silver, when He spoke this parable.

So then, what is the difference between the talents and the gifts of the Spirit? Firstly, God gives talents to people to be used for His service, not necessarily in a leadership role such as preaching. “I have called by name Bezaleel the son of Uri, the son of Hur, of the tribe of Judah: And I have filled him with the spirit of God, in wisdom, and in understanding, and in knowledge, and in all manner of workmanship.” Exodus 31:2–3

In Matthew 25 there is no specific mention of what these talents are. However, we read that there is actually a direct relationship between the talents and the gifts. “The talents that Christ entrusts to His church represent especially the gifts and blessings imparted by the Holy Spirit.” – *Christ’s Object Lessons*, p. 327–328

Following this paragraph in *Christ’s Object Lessons* we find a subheading called, “Other Talents.” In addition to these gifts (talents), that are called the Gifts of the Spirit are listed the following talents, some of which all of us have (time and influence). Most people also have speech and mental faculties. Most have money—some more, some less. If we adhere to the health reform message, we may have a talent of health, and it would be hoped that all can develop the talent of kindly affections. These talents do not have a specific outline of duties as the Gifts of the Spirit mentioned by the Apostle Paul would have, but they bear weighty responsibilities. Although I have read this chapter many times, it is always a blessing for me so I want to share the blessing by briefly summarizing the “Other Talents.”

“God will accept only those who are determined to aim high. He places every human agent under obligation to do his best.” – *Christ’s Object Lessons*, p. 330

Mental Faculties: “God requires the training of the mental faculties. He designs that His servants shall possess more intelligence and clearer discernment than the worldling, and He is displeased with those who are too careless or too indolent to become efficient, well-informed workers. The Lord bids us love Him with all the heart, and with all the soul, and with all the strength, and with all the mind. This lays upon us the obligation of developing the

intellect to its fullest capacity, that with all the mind we may know and love our Creator.” —*Christ’s Object Lessons*, p. 333

Speech: “The power of speech is a talent that should be diligently cultivated. Of all the gifts we have received from God, none is capable of being a greater blessing than this. With the voice we convince and persuade, with it we offer prayer and praise to God, and with it we tell others of the Redeemer’s love. How important, then, that it be so trained as to be most effective for good.” —*Christ’s Object Lessons*, p. 335

Influence: “Every soul is surrounded by an atmosphere of its own—an atmosphere, it may be, charged with the life-giving power of faith, courage, and hope, and sweet with the fragrance of love. Or it may be heavy and chill with the gloom of discontent and selfishness, or poisonous with the deadly taint of cherished sin. By the atmosphere surrounding us, every person with whom we come in contact is consciously or unconsciously affected. . . . This is a responsibility from which we cannot free ourselves. Our words, our acts, our dress, our deportment, even the expression of the countenance, has an influence.” —*Christ’s Object Lessons*, p. 339

Time: “Our time belongs to God. Every moment is His, and we are under the most solemn obligation to improve it to His glory. Of no talent He has given will He require a more strict account than of our time.

“The value of time is beyond computation. Christ regarded every moment as precious, and it is thus that we should regard it. Life is too short to be trifled away. We have but a few days of probation in which to prepare for eternity. We have no time to waste, no time to devote to selfish pleasure, no time for the indulgence of sin. It is now that we are to form characters for the future, immortal life. It is now that we are to prepare for the searching judgment.” —*Christ’s Object Lessons*, p. 342

Health: “Health is a blessing of which few appreciate the value; yet upon it the efficiency of our mental and physical powers largely depends. Our impulses and passions have their seat in the body, and it must be kept in the best condition physically and under the most spiritual influences in order that our talents may be put to the highest use. . . .

“The misuse of our physical powers shortens the period of time in which our lives can be used for the glory of God. And it unfits us to accomplish the work God has given us to do.” —*Christ’s Object Lessons*, p. 346. A violation of any of the laws of health is sin.

Strength: “There is need of businessmen who will weave the grand principles of truth into all their transactions. And their talents should be perfected by most thorough

study and training. If men in any line of work need to improve their opportunities to become wise and efficient, it is those who are using their ability in building up the kingdom of God in our world. Of Daniel we learn that in all his business transactions, when subjected to the closest scrutiny, not one fault or error could be found. He was a sample of what every businessman may be.” —*Christ’s Object Lessons*, p. 350–351

Money: “God also entrusts men with means. He gives them power to get wealth. . . . Our money has not been given us that we might honor and glorify ourselves. As faithful stewards we are to use it for the honor and glory of God. Some think that only a portion of their means is the Lord’s. When they have set apart a portion for religious and charitable purposes, they regard the remainder as their own, to be used as they see fit. But in this they mistake. All we possess is the Lord’s, and we are accountable to Him for the use we make of it. In the use of every penny, it will be seen whether we love God supremely and our neighbor as ours.” —*Christ’s Object Lessons*, p. 351–352

Kindly Impulses and affections: “Kindly affections, generous impulses, and a quick apprehension of spiritual things are precious talents, and lay their possessor under a weighty responsibility. . . . Social advantages are talents, and are to be used for the benefit of all within reach of our influence. The love that gives kindness to only a few is not love, but selfishness. It will not in any way work for the good of souls or the glory of God.” —*Christ’s Object Lessons*, p. 352–353

I have no doubt that you can find that you have some of these “Other Talents”.

GIFTS

A gift is given, not because of any favour the person has shown towards you, but because you love them and you expect nothing in return. You do not do anything to deserve your gift. A gift is *not a duty* and is given unconditionally.

Although it seems that God expects returns from His gifts, the reason they are called “gifts” is because those who receive them did nothing to be able to acquire these abilities. These are special qualities and powers imparted to believers by the Holy Spirit for the service of the church. Although it may appear so, they are not natural talents; they are, in reality, a gift from the Spirit which increases in power with use.

The gifts of the Spirit are mentioned in three places in the New Testament. There are administrative gifts, missionary gifts, and gifts to take care of the poor and needy (the work of a deacon). All are necessary for the church of

God to work in harmony. "Through the diversity of the gifts and governments that He has placed in the church, they will all come to the unity of the faith." —*Testimonies to Ministers*, p. 29

Many of these are leadership gifts. "Solemn are the responsibilities resting upon those who are called to act as leaders in the church of God on earth." —*The Acts of the Apostles*, p. 92

The three references to the gifts of the spirit are: "Having then gifts differing according to the grace that is given to us, whether prophecy, let us *prophesy* according to the proportion of faith; Or *ministry*, let us wait on our ministering: or he that teacheth, on *teaching*; Or he that exhorteth, on *exhortation*: he that *giveth*, let him do it with simplicity; he that *ruleth*, with diligence; he that *showeth mercy*, with cheerfulness." Romans 12:6–8. "And God hath set some in the church, first *apostles*, secondarily *prophets*, thirdly *teachers*, after that *miracles*, then gifts of *healings*, *helps*, *governments*, diversities of *tongues*." 1 Corinthians 12:28. "And He gave some, *apostles*; and some, *prophets*; and some, *evangelists*; and some, *pastors* and *teachers*." Ephesians 4:11 (emphasis mine)

Not everyone has every gift. A minister may not be a good teacher, but may be an excellent minister. A pastor may be an excellent pastor, but may be lacking in administrative ability. We err when we expect all workers in the church to eventually become ministers or administrators, or administrators to become ministers.

"The members of the church of God on this earth are as the different parts of a machine, all closely related to one another, and all closely related to and dependent on one great center. There is to be unity in diversity. No member of the Lord's firm can work successfully in independence, detached from the others. . . . All are to use their entrusted capabilities in His service, that each may minister to the perfection of the whole. Each is to work under the supervision of God." —*Our High Calling*, p. 182

Administrative:

Administrative duties are very important in the church. God is a God of order and has set up the standard of order in His church and this must be followed carefully. The administrative duties are: **Governments** which take care of the administration of the church who, **Ruleth. . . with diligence**. The leader who is placed in a position of authority and influence is to be zealous and rule with diligence, with earnest care. A person's "eternal interest depends upon his accepting and respecting the helps and governments which God has been pleased to place in the church." —*Testimonies for the Church*, vol. 3, p. 437

Spiritual Help:

There are some gifts given specifically to offer spiritual help

to the members.

Apostles have general jurisdiction over an area of several churches, while **Pastors** are to shepherd the flock in one particular church or area. **Prophets** are those chosen by God to establish communication between Himself and man. They have been given power to speak authoritatively for God, or on God's behalf either by foretelling the future or by declaring God's will for the present. "From the beginning the church of God has had the gift of prophecy in her midst as a living voice to counsel, admonish, and instruct." —*Selected Messages*, bk. 3, p. 83

The Teacher has an enlightened understanding and special ability to explain the scriptures, to both members and non-members, to help them understand. After being taught, the one with the gift of **Exhortation; or encouragement** has the duty to awaken the heart of the individual to put the truths of God's Word that they have learned into practice; stimulating them into action. This gift can also be shown in the ability to comfort those who are afflicted.

The **Evangelist's** main duty is to do missionary work to those outside of the church, while Apostles and Prophets minister to the members, evangelists go to different areas to do their preaching.

Help with Physical Needs:

The **Minister** is differentiated from prophecy and teaching in that he ministers to the needs of the poor, sick, and strangers. It is a service provided for the temporal and external needs of the members.

The gift of **Helps** is the office of a deacon. It is given to the lay member to help the minister to care for the needs of the poor and needy. "Educate them for usefulness, to be helps, to minister to others rather than to be waited upon and be ministered unto." —*Testimonies for the Church*, vol. 2, p. 459–460. This help must be given by the gift of **Showing mercy, with cheerfulness**. "To visit the fatherless in their affliction." James 1:27. Deeds of kindness, however, are not exclusive to church members.

The Lord asks for financial support and this is the gift of **Giving**. "God loveth a cheerful giver." 2 Corinthians 9:6. The Lord blesses some with more money so that they can give to support His cause. And those who are entrusted with money are to use it to God's honour and glory. All have the ability to give something. The widow gave her two mites in the time of Jesus. Giving comes from the heart. Where your treasure is, there will your heart be also. Think of a child whose father comes home from work and tells the child, "I have a gift for you." The child gets all excited, expecting something material or some special food as a gift. But then the father says, "For your gift we are going to visit the sick elderly lady down the street and give her some food." The child may be very disappointed; but, after

the visit, seeing the joy and happiness seen in the face of that poor old woman, the child seems very happy now—much happier than if the father had given the child a trinket or a cookie. This child is learning that the gift of giving brings more happiness than receiving. God has given all of heaven for mankind. He gave it all. The gift of giving is a blessing, not only to the receiver, but also for the giver.

Health is very important for the children of God, so He gave gifts of **Healing**. Although all may pray for the sick and expect answers, this gift is a miraculous gift of healing, with an excellent knowledge of natural remedies. And then **Miracles** are seen, both in regards to health and in other areas.

And finally, the gift of **Tongues**, which is the ability to speak and translate between different languages. This gift is quite diverse and can be used in any setting where there are two people who speak different languages and need to communicate.

“Each worker in every branch of work in the Lord’s vineyard must have a head and a heart sanctified through the truth to enable him to see not merely the part of the work which is under his supervision, but its relation to the great whole.” —*That I May Know Him*, p. 323

“The Lord God of heaven, who made our world, and who created man, guards the interests of every soul. . . . No one should treat these entrusted talents with indifference. No one is accountable for the talents he has never had; none should complain of the smallness of their gifts. Everyone is to trade on that which God has entrusted to him, working where he can, doing the best possible service for the Master. . . .

“No man is to weigh in the balances of human judgment the talents God has given to other men. Let every man appreciate God’s gifts to himself, and faithfully trade upon them. No man is to merge his individuality into that of any other man. No man should be urged to make another man his steward. . . . Let us never forget that we are here to be fashioned by the hand of God, fitted to do the work He has given us to do. That work is our own, the accountability is our own; it cannot be transferred to another. Let not human agents interpose to take another’s work out of the hands of God into their own finite hands.” —*Pastoral Ministry*, p. 138–139

FRUIT

With the proper use of the gifts and talents, the fruits will result. “But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, long-suffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, Meekness, temperance: against such there is no law.” Galatians 5:22–23. With talents and gifts, not every member has them all; however, every soul that is saved will possess *all* the fruit of the spirit. The fruit is not how many souls you have

brought to church, not how much money you have given to the church, or not how many hours you have spent canvassing. It is not how many hours you have spent studying your Bible and Spirit of prophecy, not how many sermons you have preached. All those can be done and a person may still be lost. “Many will say to me in that day, Lord, Lord, have we not prophesied in Thy name? and in Thy name have cast out devils? and in Thy name done many wonderful works? And then will I profess unto them, I never knew you: depart from Me, ye that work iniquity.”

Matthew 7:22–23. (Read also 1 Corinthians chapter 13). If I do all these wonderful works but have no love I am nothing. The fruit of the spirit recorded in Galatians say nothing about souls, donations, Bible Studies, and sermons. Paul talks of a transformed character. Then the obvious lifestyle choice by those who have the fruit of the Spirit will be missionary work, Bible Study, and prayer. Jesus Christ, first and last in everything.



“And those who would be workers together with God

must strive for perfection of every organ of the body and quality of the mind. . . . But Christ has given us no assurance that to attain perfection of character is an easy matter. A noble, all-round character is not inherited. It does not come to us by accident. A noble character is earned by individual effort through the merits and grace of Christ. God gives the talents, the powers of the mind; we form the character. It is formed by hard, stern battles with self. Conflict after conflict must be waged against hereditary tendencies. We shall have to criticize ourselves closely, and allow not one unfavorable trait to remain uncorrected.” —*Christ’s Object Lessons*, p. 330–331

“Many whom God has qualified to do excellent work accomplish very little, because they attempt little. Thousands pass through life as if they had no definite object for which to live, no standard to reach. Such will obtain a reward proportionate to their works.” —*Christ’s Object Lessons*, p. 331

“Remember that you will never reach a higher standard than you yourself set. Then set your mark high, and step by step, even though it be by painful effort, by self-denial and sacrifice, ascend the whole length of the ladder of progress. Let nothing hinder you.” —*Christ’s Object Lessons*, p. 331–332

May God help us to appreciate and use the gifts that He has given to us. “Neglect not the gift that is in thee.” 1 Timothy 4:14. Amen. **Wendy Eaton**



The Talent of Money

spiritual failing and moral corruption. I've even heard Christians misquote Paul and say, 'Money is the root of all evils.' Of course, Paul actually warned against the 'love of money.'"

We all have talents, some have more than others; sometimes we even have to work for our talents. There is one talent that almost everyone wants, and that is the talent of property or money.

I want to begin with a parable that Jesus told about a rich man. "There was a certain rich man, which was clothed in purple and fine linen, and fared sumptuously every day: And there was a certain beggar named Lazarus, which was laid at his gate, full of sores, And desiring to be fed with the crumbs which fell from the rich man's table: moreover the dogs came and licked his sores. And it came to pass, that the beggar died, and was carried by the angels into Abraham's bosom: the rich man also died, and was buried; And in hell he lift up his eyes, being in torments, and seeth Abraham afar off, and Lazarus in his bosom. And he cried and said, Father Abraham, have mercy on me, and send Lazarus, that he may dip the tip of his finger in water, and cool my tongue; for I am tormented in this flame." Luke 16: 19–24

Here in these few verses we have two characters—the first is the rich man and the second is known as Lazarus, the beggar. But in these few verses there seems to be some constant misunderstanding. People will feel more pity for the rich man rather than the beggar; they will say that God put the rich man in hell for being rich and the beggar in heaven for being poor. God is not biased; He would not punish the rich man for being rich, but to explain in more depth, here is a paragraph from a Christian blog, which says the following: "I know Christians who believe that people should be able to be as wealthy as they can possibly be, as long as they acquire their wealth fairly and squarely. And I know Christians who believe that any evidence of wealth—a nice car, a big home, or expensive vacations—is clear evidence of

God sees nothing wrong with having money as long as we use it wisely. The rich man did not know how to use the talent that God had given him. "But Abraham said, Son, remember that thou in thy lifetime received thy good things, and likewise Lazarus evil things: but now he is comforted, and thou art tormented." Luke 16:25

The rich man did not know how to give his good things to others or use them to benefit others. Quoting from another Christian blog, "Money is explicitly identified as a spiritual power in Jesus' teaching in the Sermon on the Mount when He asserts, 'No one can serve two masters; for either he will hate the one and love the other, or he will hold to one and despise the other. You cannot serve God and mammon' (Matthew 6:24; Luke 6:13). 'Mammon' was the Aramaic term for money, wealth, or material possessions. In contrasting 'mammon' to God, Jesus represents money as an active and personified spiritual power antithetical to God. Money becomes a deified spiritual power, a false-god, when it is employed in the context of the foremost false-god, Satan. Satan, the 'god of this world' (2 Corinthians 4:4) reigning over the world-order of fallen mankind, invests money with his diabolic self-orientation which was evidenced in his aspiration to 'be like the Most High God' (Isaiah 14:14) and in his temptation of men that 'they, too, could be like God' (Genesis 3:5). Such self-orientation that sets oneself up as their own center of reference and claims to be independent, autonomous, self-determining and self-producing is the evil spiritual character of the diabolical employment of money as a spiritual power."

May God help us not to make the same mistake as the rich man but rather to use our money for God's purposes is my wish and prayer. Amen.

Mathew Romero

The Talent of Strength



When we consider strength, why would the talent of strength be important?

Picture this: You have given one of your friends a rare and costly plant as a gift. With it, you have provided instructions on how best to take care of the plant. Your friend assures you that this gift means a lot; and yet, when you see him, he neglects the plant, does not water it and keeps it in the dark. Eventually the plant mostly withers away. Startled, your friend comes to you, begging you to help him fix the plant, maybe give him a new one. He wonders how this could have happened to the plant.

Does that story not sound ridiculous? And yet a lot of us are doing exactly the same thing with our gift, our health.

“What? know ye not that your body is the temple of the Holy Ghost which is in you, which ye have of God, and ye are not your own?” 1 Corinthians 6:19

This verse, which we all know very well, reminds us that our bodies are a temple. And not only that, but also that our bodies do not belong to us. Our health and our bodies are ours only as long as the Lord sees fit. And if we choose to disregard our health, are we really making the best use of the gift God has given us? If we choose to ignore a proper diet and exercise are we not completely disregarding the gift God has given us? Do you know that a lot of the Bible characters actually exercised a lot? I will name a few:

Abraham: All the walking he had to do when God asked him to move.

David: Fleeing from Saul. Living in the mountains.

Paul: All the walking he had to do during his mission trips.

I will focus now on the life of the Apostle Paul. Stanford University developed a site that allows you to calculate

the time and cost required to travel by road or ship around the Roman world in A.D. 200. It takes into account a lot of factors like ancient sea routes, based on historical sources and wave height.

The apostle Paul went on three missionary journeys from A.D. 46 to 57, travelling around much of Asia Minor and Greece. In A.D. 60 he was also taken to Rome. This site allows you to calculate how long these journeys would have taken in pure travel time (excluding time spent at each destination).

First Journey: 1,581 miles. 53 travel days.

Second Journey: 3,050 miles. 100 travel days.

Third Journey: 3,307 miles. 92 travel days.

Rome: 2,344 miles. 36 travel days.

Now, these are just the travels he did by boat. We know from the scriptures that he did a lot of walking as well. Do you think that Paul would have been able to complete all these trips and do all that walking had he not been in good health? And the same goes for us, how can we be expected to glorify God and do the work He has given us if we are not healthy?

“Strength is a talent and to be used to glorify God. Our bodies belong to Him. He has paid the price of redemption for the body as well as for the soul. . . . We can serve God better in the vigour of health than in the palsy of disease; therefore we should cooperate with God in the care of our bodies. Love for God is essential for life and health. Faith in God is essential for health. In order to have perfect health, our hearts must be filled with love and hope and joy in the Lord.” —*Christian Service*, p. 115

It is my wish and prayer that we realize how great a gift our health is and that we do our best to take care of it. Amen.

Nidia Romero

The Talent of Speech



When we consider speech, the talent of speech is something I am sure some of us take for granted. For most of us, to be able to speak without any impediment is totally normal. But there are some who do not have this talent; some are born mute or deaf and they cannot communicate in the same way that we can. People with speech impediments find it very difficult to communicate with others because speech does not come easily to them. So, when you think about it, we really are blessed, that we can speak; but, sometimes I think a lot of us are like Moses, “And Moses said unto the LORD, O my Lord, I am not eloquent, neither heretofore, nor since Thou hast spoken unto Thy servant; but I am slow of speech, and of a slow tongue.” Exodus 4:10. It may be true that we are shy and are not so at ease with speaking, but prior to Moses saying this, God had given him many signs that He would be with him on his mission to Pharaoh. God gives us the same promises in His book; He gives us the power and talent of speech.

The Lord gives us the same message that he gave to Moses, “And the LORD said unto him, Who hath made man’s mouth? or who maketh the dumb, or deaf, or the seeing, or the blind? have not I the LORD? Now therefore go, and I will be with thy mouth and teach thee what thou shalt say.” Exodus 4:11–12

The Lord promised Moses that He would help him and be with him and even tell him what to say. Can you imagine how wonderful that must have been? In *Patriarchs and Prophets* we read that Moses “complaining of his unfitness showed distrust of God.” The Spirit of Prophecy also explains to us more in depth what Moses’s speech problem was. “He had been so long away from the Egyptians that he had not so clear knowledge and ready use of their language as when he was among them.” —*Patriarchs and Prophets*, p. 254

Perhaps this is also something that we think might impede our speech—language barriers. But just like God

provided for Moses so He will do for us, for God has not given us a spirit of fear, but of power and of love and of a sound mind (2 Timothy 1:7). It should be this love that motivates us to speak to others about Jesus even though we may be shy or have a language barrier; God will be with us and can work miracles.

A good example of this is found in Acts 2:4, 6. “And they were all filled with the Holy Ghost, and began to speak with other tongues, as the Spirit gave them utterance. Now when this was noised abroad, the multitude came together, and were confounded, because that every man heard them speak in his own language.”

God worked a miracle for His people in that time and He can do it again; but, instead of waiting for God to do something as miraculous as this, we can step out in faith, trusting in the promises of God, saying, “I can do all things through Christ which strengtheneth me.” Philippians 4:13

Ellen White tells us in many of her writings that “The tongue is an unruly member, but it should not be so. It should be converted; for the talent of speech is a very precious talent.” —*Testimonies for the Church*, vol. 6, p. 173–174

“The power of speech is a talent that should be diligently cultivated. Of all the gifts we have received from God, none is capable of being a greater blessing than this. With the voice we convince and persuade, with it we offer prayer and praise to God, and with it we tell others of the Redeemer’s love. How important, then, that it be so trained as to be most effective for good.” —*Christ’s Object Lessons*, p. 335

“The voice is an entrusted talent, and it should be used to help and encourage and strengthen our fellowmen. . . . The right culture and use of the power of speech has to do with every line of Christian work. . . . We should accustom ourselves to speak in pleasant tones, to use pure and correct language, . . . and ‘know how to speak

a word in season to him that is weary.’ And the Lord bids us, ‘Let your speech be always with grace,’ ‘that it may minister grace unto the hearers’. . . . If we follow Christ’s example in doing good, hearts will open to us as they did to Him.

“Not abruptly, but with tact born of divine love, we can tell them of Him who is the ‘Chiefest among ten thousand,’ and the One ‘altogether lovely.’ This is the very highest work in which we can employ the talent of speech.

“Righteous words and deeds have a more powerful influence for good than all the sermons that can be preached.” —*My Life Today*, p. 114

“Speech is a talent, and can be used to honour or dishonour God. We are accountable for our use of the talent of words. . . . The talent of speech, of memory, of property, all are to accumulate for the glory of God, to advance His kingdom.” —*Lt 44*, 1900

Even though we have most likely heard similar messages like this before I hope this was another reminder and encouragement to go tell other people about the way to salvation. No matter what impediments we may have, God has given the power of speech to everyone here, so we all need to do our part; we can all improve our manners of speech. And, remember to always speak for the furthering of God’s work. Amen.

Elaine Romero



The Talent of Knowledge and Wisdom

In 1 Corinthians 3:9 we read that, “For we are labourers together with God: ye are God’s hus-

bandry, ye are God’s building.” A talent of knowledge, sanctified and put into use in the Master’s service is never lost.

A self-sacrificing effort to do good will is crowned with success. We are labourers together with God.

“The Lord desires us to obtain all the education possible, with the object in view, of imparting our knowledge to others. . . . Let the youth who need an education set to work with a determination to obtain it. . . . Procure every advantage within your reach for

strengthening the intellect. Let the study of books be combined with useful manual labour, and by faithful endeavor, watchfulness, and prayer secure the wisdom that is from above. . . . True education means more than the colleges can give. While the study of the sciences is not to be neglected, there is a higher learning to be obtained through a vital connection with God.” —*Christ’s Object Lessons*, p. 333–334

All true wisdom and knowledge comes from God. Martin Luther said, “well prayed is half studied.”

Dr. David Livingston, the missionary to Africa, was still very young (at about 12 years old), when he had to work in a factory to help support his family. He was using a type of weaving machine to do his work. He had a great desire to learn and to go to school, but it cost money, which the family could not afford. Livingston got a book and put it near his work station, so that once in a while he could glance at it. This was the way he learned the language of Latin, which was needed at that time in the schools. He also learned other subjects. Then he went to do his exams and passed with high marks. Later he could afford school and studied medicine. He was hungering for knowledge and he got it. Yet he did not keep it to himself, but went to Africa to teach and share it with the natives there.

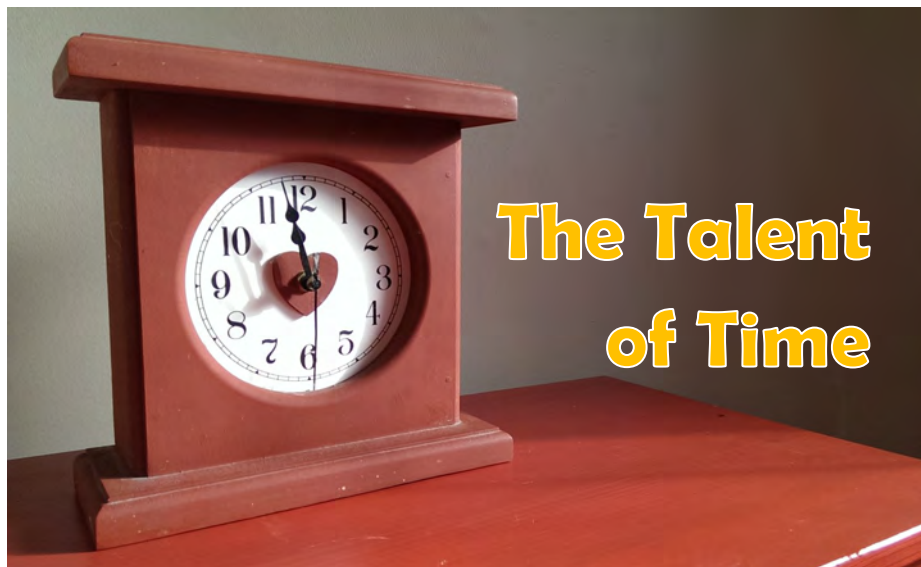
Knowledge is a gift, a talent, not to be kept to ourselves, but to be shared in helping others as much as we can. I am happy that I can help a little. A lot of people in church help children in Africa who need to get an education in order to have a future, which is really important. I pay the school fees of a little orphan whose father was a worker in our church, but he died.

Earlier this summer, my grandmother and I sent some of my old books to people who would benefit from them. The books were about different topics such as Nature, Animals, and Science; there were some children’s Bibles also. The recipients were happy to have them. A teacher from a nearby school came to see the books, and wished he would have books like that in his school also.

God has given us many blessings. It is our duty to share them with others. We must not be like the one man who received one talent and buried it not using it. It was later taken away and he lost everything.

Let us learn to study to receive knowledge so we can share with others what we have learned. This is the will of God and my wish and prayer for all. Amen.

Tiffany Bessec



The Talent of Time

“Redeeming the time.” Colossians 4:5

Redeeming means “buying it back.” Or, another translation says, “Make most of every opportunity,” and another says, “Make good use of it.”

The Bible says “we must make good use of our time.” This means that it is not just up to us, to use our time as we want. We must not waste it away.

Time is a talent. A talent is a gift from God to use and improve and use to His glory.

In the story of the talents in Matthew 25:14–30, the man gave his servants talents before going on a journey. One received five talents, another two talents, and the last one was given one talent.

The first two servants put their talents to use. When their master returned, he was happy with them. But the last servant buried his talent and did not use it. It was taken away from him and he was cast into outer darkness.

Sister White writes, “Our time belongs to God. Every moment is His, and we are under the most solemn obligation to improve it to His glory.” —*Christ’s Object Lessons*, p. 342

She then wrote a very important statement that we may not realize. “Of no talent He has given will require a more strict account of than of our time.” —*Ibid.*, p. 342 (emphasis mine)

We have to give a strict account to God of our time and how we have used it.

Also she wrote, “To be wasteful of time. . . is dishonesty before God.” —*Testimonies for the Church*, vol. 4, p. 451

The Ten Commandments say, “Thou shalt not steal.” If we squander our time and use it for our own pleasure, we are stealing the time which God has given us to use

to improve ourselves and to help others.

The Bible says, “Redeem the time,” but time squandered can never be recovered. We cannot call back even one moment. The only way we can redeem the time is by making the most of what time remains to us.

“The Bible gives no endorsement to idleness. It is the greatest curse that afflicts our world.” —*My Life Today*, p. 115

“The life of Christ from His earliest years was a life of earnest activity. He lived not to please Himself. He was the Son of the

Infinite God, yet He worked at the carpenter’s [shop]. . . . Into all his secular labour He brought the same perfection as into the [people’s] characters He was transforming by His divine power.” —*Christ’s Object Lessons*, p. 345

“Careless habits indulged in secular work will be brought into the religious life and will unfit one to do any efficient service for God.” —*Ibid.*, p. 345

In the Spirit of Prophecy we read of things that we should **not** spend our time on:

- Vain talking
- Light reading, storybooks, fables (I am sure TV would be included here also)
- Idleness
- Trifling amusements
- Selfish pleasure. . .

and there are many more!

So then, how should we use our time?

We need to improve ourselves, our minds, our bodies, and improve our spiritual lives. We need to realize that time is running out. Soon there will be no more time.

There is a story in the *Youth’s Instructor* about the devil’s plan on how to keep people from salvation. Different things were suggested as to how to keep people away from church. Then one little devil said, “Let them go to church and do their thing, but tell them that there is still lots of time.” That was the best advice.

People think there is lots of time to prepare for the end, and time to give up their favourite pleasures, but we have to realize that time is running out. Jesus is coming soon. Amen.

James Bessec

Sleep Disturbances, Disorders and Ways to Improve Your Sleep



"The sleep of a labouring man is sweet." Ecclesiastes 5:12. "They may be weary, but how sweet is rest after a proper amount of labor. Sleep, nature's sweet restorer, invigorates the tired body and prepares it for the next day's duties." –*Child Guidance*, p. 341. We are also counselled, "Love not sleep, lest thou come to poverty." Proverbs 20:13. Sleep, after a hard day of labour is a blessing from God, however we are not to spend our days in sleep, as indolence is a sin.

As we learned last month, sleep is necessary to our survival. Not only humans, but all animals sleep. Horses are able to sleep standing up and only need 2 1/2 hours sleep a day. Giraffes take five minute naps throughout the day, totaling about 2 hours in a 24 hour period. Those of us who own cats will notice that they spend a lot of their time in sleep. They can sleep from 12–16 hours a day. Other animals, like dolphins, appear to sleep with one half of their brain at a time, with the other half of the brain remaining active which allows them to still emerge out of the water to breathe while sleeping. Regardless of the pattern and amount of sleep required, all animals sleep.

Sleep is restorative and necessary to maintain health, it rejuvenates us for the following day allowing our bodies to rest and recover from our labours. But, what happens if we do not get the amount of sleep that is necessary for us to function at our best? We all know that after a few days of poor sleep, we are exhausted during the day, and even the simplest tasks seem difficult. And, what about those people who suffer poor sleep for weeks, months, and even years? What causes poor sleep and what are the effects of poor sleep?

Poor sleep can take on many forms. Let us look at the different ways that sleep can be affected. Specific sleep disorders can affect both the quality and the quantity of sleep that we receive.

INSOMNIA

The most common sleep disorder is called insomnia, and is described as a condition where people have difficulty

falling and/or staying asleep. Everyone is different in terms of how insomnia manifests itself. Some people have no problem falling asleep, but they are wide awake again after a few hours, and cannot fall back asleep. Some people wake up frequently during the night, affecting their sleep cycle, which decreases the quality of sleep. Some people wake up too early in the morning, and others just feel tired upon waking. Whatever the pattern is for each individual person, insomnia disrupts the overall quality and quantity of sleep. Because of this, most people with insomnia do not feel that they have received adequate sleep the night before, and they feel physically and mentally fatigued during the day. Symptoms of insomnia can include sleepiness during the day, general tiredness, irritability, and problems with concentration or memory.

There are two types of insomnia. Primary insomnia means that a person is having sleep problems that are not directly associated with any medical, psychiatric, or environmental cause. Primary insomnia is uncommon and is caused by very specific sleep disorders. Secondary insomnia means that a person is having sleep problems as a symptom or side effect of something else, such as a health condition (asthma, depression, arthritis, cancer, heartburn); chronic pain; medication; drug use, such as alcohol; or environmental conditions such as noise, or bright lights during the night. Secondary insomnia is common and affects almost half the population at one time or another.

Insomnia also varies in how long it lasts and how often it occurs. Many people can have short-term (acute) insomnia, from one night to a few weeks of poor sleep, without long-term health effects. However, insomnia can become a chronic condition, which is defined as having problems with sleep at least three nights a week, lasting for a month or longer. Chronic insomnia has more negative implications for our health.

Often the main cause of acute insomnia is some type of significant stressful life event (job loss or change, death of a loved one, personal injury or illness, moving). Emotional

or physical discomfort can temporarily affect sleep. Conditions in our environment can disrupt our sleep, such as light, noise (a snoring partner), or extreme temperatures (hot or cold). Once these conditions are changed, sleep is restored. Some of the medications that are used to treat illnesses such as colds, allergies, depression, high blood pressure, and asthma, also contribute to sleep problems. We can also have short-term sleep problems when there are factors which interfere with our normal sleep schedule, for example, jet lag or exposure to bright light at night.

Chronic insomnia tends to be caused by long-term conditions that affect sleep, such as depression and/or anxiety, ongoing stress, pain or discomfort at night. People who have had disrupted sleep cycles over years because of work or travel tend to develop chronic insomnia. The body's normal 24-hour circadian rhythm, which determines when we should sleep has been permanently affected. Long-term health consequences of prolonged circadian rhythm disruption include cancer, heart disease, high blood pressure, obesity, diabetes, and mental health issues such as depression. Studies show that female nurses who are exposed to bright lights while working the night shift have a higher incidence of breast and colon cancer. Men who do shift work have a higher incidence of prostate cancer.

Forty-eight percent of Americans report occasional insomnia, while 22% experience insomnia every or almost every night. Thus, insomnia has a significant impact on the general health of the population.

TREATMENT OF INSOMNIA

Acute insomnia may not require treatment. Mild insomnia often can be prevented or cured by practicing good sleep



habits, also called sleep hygiene. Certain herbal remedies such as valerian root can alleviate acute insomnia. This medicinal herb has been used to treat sleep problems since ancient times. Valerian can be sedating and may help you fall asleep. If you try valerian as a sleep remedy, be patient. It can take a few weeks for it to take effect. Melatonin is produced by the

brain to allow us to feel sleepy and puts our body into sleep mode. Melatonin production is increased with the daily onset of darkness. Natural melatonin production decreases with age. Melatonin supplements may help with insomnia, and controlling sleep patterns in people who travel regularly and are affected by jet lag, and for shift workers. Melatonin can be used to allow people to sleep outside of the typical night time sleep. Almond milk is an excellent source of calcium, which helps make melatonin.

Magnesium plays a key role in sleep. Even a small lack in magnesium can prevent the brain from settling down at night. You can get magnesium from food. Good sources include green leafy vegetables, wheat germ, pumpkin seeds, and almonds. Check with your doctor before taking magnesium supplements as magnesium can interfere with other medications. Lavender oil is calming and can help encourage sleep in some people with insomnia. Try taking a hot bath with lavender oil before bed to relax your body and mind.

Most medications provided by health practitioners for insomnia should not be used long-term because they can cause dependence. Most pharmacies, also, have several shelves of medications advertised as sleep aids. However, these over-the-counter sleeping pills should be avoided because they may have undesired side effects and tend to lose their effectiveness over time. Therefore, insomnia is much better treated with methods that do not rely on medication.

Jet lag is a traveler's sleep condition that affects the body's internal clock by causing sleep disruptions in a new time zone. The severity of jet lag depends on many factors—including age, quantity of time zones, and the direction of travel—causing the sufferer to become fatigued, nauseated, headachy, and unable to fall to sleep. To reduce the effects of jet lag, some doctors try to adjust the circadian rhythm with a technique called light therapy. They expose people to special lights, many times brighter than ordinary household light, for several hours near the time the people want to wake up. This helps them reset their biological clocks and adjust to a new time zone.

With shift workers, because their work schedules are at odds with powerful sleep-regulating cues like sunlight, they often become uncontrollably drowsy during work, and they may suffer insomnia or other problems when they try to sleep. The number and severity of workplace accidents also tend to increase during the night shift. Treatment is to try to reduce shift-related fatigue by using bright lights in the workplace, minimizing shift changes, and taking scheduled naps. Non-medical options, like following good sleep hygiene, making adjustments to your schedule and sleep environment (block light from your room if you sleep during the day), and practicing relaxation techniques. Shift workers also tend to eat at a time that is not in alignment with the circadian rhythm, which contributes to obesity and diabetes. Studies show that shift workers live on average nine years less than the average person, because of the health effects of interrupted sleep patterns.

Treatment for chronic insomnia includes first treating any underlying conditions or health problems that are causing the insomnia. If insomnia continues, your health care provider may suggest behavioural therapy. Behavioural approaches help you to change behaviours that may worsen

insomnia and to learn new behaviours to promote sleep. One successful technique is the use of relaxation exercises.

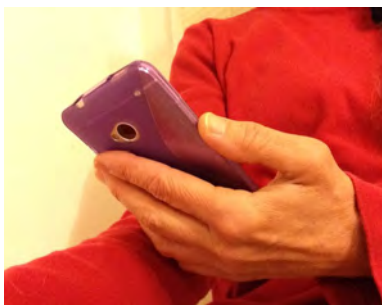
SLEEP APNEA

Many people report sleeping a full night, however they wake up feeling tired. The cause for this can be sleep apnea. This is a sleep disorder in which breathing is briefly and repeatedly interrupted during sleep, sometimes up to 30 times an hour. The "apnea" in sleep apnea refers to a breathing pause that lasts at least ten seconds. When someone's breathing pauses or becomes shallow, the person often moves out of deep sleep and into light sleep. As a result, the quality of sleep is poor, which makes people tired during the day. Sleep apnea is a leading cause of daytime sleepiness. In obstructive sleep apnea, the most common, the airway collapses or becomes blocked during sleep. When the person tries to breathe, the air must squeeze around the blockage, causing loud snoring. This type of sleep apnea is more common in overweight people, but it can be caused by many other reasons. With aging, the muscles in the throat become weaker, which cause the airway to collapse, leading to sleep apnea. Untreated sleep apnea can increase the risk of high blood pressure, heart attacks, strokes, obesity and diabetes. It can cause the heart to have irregular beats. It increases the risk of having work-related or driving accidents. Treatments for sleep apnea include lifestyle changes or devices such as CPAP's to prevent pauses in breathing.

Restless Legs Syndrome is a brain disorder that causes someone to feel like they need to move their legs or other parts of their bodies constantly. This is also considered a sleep disorder as the constant urge to move affects sleep. Circadian rhythm disorders are uncommon, and they are believed to be caused by the body being unable to reset the sleep/wake cycle in response to environmental cues, such as light and dark.

BLUE LIGHT

There is increasing awareness on the impact that blue light has on our sleep patterns. "Blue light" is part of the light



spectrum that we obtain from the sun. Getting blue light (especially from the sun) in the daytime is very important. It helps us to stay alert, while improving performance and mood; it tells our bodies that we need to be awake. However, a lot of the electronic devices that we use on a daily basis mimic the blue light from the sun. When we sit in front of our laptops, tablets, and cell phones before we go to bed, the blue light tricks our brains into thinking that it is day

time and an increase in melatonin production does not occur, thus we do not develop the normal drowsiness that promotes sleep. Our circadian rhythms are also interrupted. Many people also leave their devices on during the night, with the blue light reflecting into the sleeping area. Blue light not only causes sleep disruptions, but can also effects our eye health. Many sleep problems are caused by electronics that emit blue light, that can be easily remedied. To promote sleep, avoid using electronic devices for at least 2–3 hours before bedtime. Amber or orange sunglasses can block blue light, for those who need to use electronics closer to bedtime. Shut all electronic devices off during the night. The emission of blue light can have an impact on sleep even when one's eyes are closed.

GOOD SLEEP HYGIENE

- Try to go to sleep at the same time each night and get up at the same time each morning.
- Try not to take naps during the day, because naps may make you less sleepy at night.
- Get regular exercise. Try not to exercise close to bedtime, because it may stimulate you and make it hard to fall asleep. Try not to exercise for at least three to four hours before the time you go to sleep.
- Do not eat a heavy meal late in the day. Avoid food within 2 hours of bed.
- Make your bedroom comfortable. Be sure that it is dark, quiet, and not too warm or too cold. If light is a problem, try a sleeping mask. If noise is a problem, try earplugs, a fan, or a "white noise" machine to cover up the sounds. Do not use your bedroom for anything but sleep.
- Follow a routine to help you relax before sleep. Read a book, listen to music, or take a bath.
- Avoid using your bed for anything other than sleep.
- If you cannot fall asleep and do not feel drowsy, get up and read or do something that is not overly stimulating until you feel sleepy.
- Turn off all the lights, including electronic devices. Use blackout shades in your windows.

If you find yourself lying awake worrying about things, try making a to-do list before you go to bed. This may help you to not focus on those worries overnight.

"Make it a habit not to sit up after nine o'clock. Every light should be extinguished. This turning night into day is a wretched, health-destroying habit, and this reading much by brain workers, up to the sleeping hours, is very injurious to health. It calls the blood to the brain and then there is restlessness and wakefulness, and the precious sleep that should rest the body does not come when desired." – *Daughters of God*, p. 177 "Nature will restore their vigor and strength in their sleeping hours, if her laws are not violated." – *Healthful Living*, p. 46

Whom Shall I Send, And Who Will Go for Us?

Dear Brothers and Sisters in the Lord, I would like to greet you with the following words: “But the day of the Lord will come as a thief in the night; in the which the heavens shall pass away with a great noise, and the elements shall melt with fervent heat, the earth also and the works that are therein shall be burned up. Seeing then that all these things shall be dissolved, what manner of persons ought ye to be in all holy conversation and godliness, Looking for and hasting unto the coming of the day of God, wherein the heavens being on fire shall be dissolved, and the elements shall melt with fervent heat? Nevertheless we, according to His promise, look for new heavens and a new earth, wherein dwelleth righteousness.” 2 Peter 3:10–13

According to the verses we just read, we are required not only to just wait for the coming of the Lord in the clouds to take us home, but we are also required to hasten His second coming. Since this is our Christian duty as God’s remnant people, we do not want to use our talents unwisely. Rather we ought to put them into God’s work and win souls for Christ.

I would like share with you some of the missionary activities here in Calgary, Canada. I thank the Lord for the

opportunity He has given us to have a Health Seminar and Cooking Class conducted by my wife, Alina. I also want to thank the Canadian Field for their support both spiritually and financially.

To prepare the soil before commencing the health seminar, I made sure that everyone we know was invited. At the seminar Alina taught everyone in a very simple and practical manner how to keep their body healthy through the well-known eight remedies of which the Bible and Spirit of Prophecy both speak about.

With the participation of church members and some



visitors we learned together the benefits of a well-balanced diet.

Part of our spiritual life includes taking care of our health—we believe that God calls us to take care of our bodies, treating them with the respect a divine creation deserves. Gluttony and excess, even of something good, can be detrimental to health. The key to wellness lies in a life of balance and temperance. Nature creates a wealth of good things that lead to vibrant health. Pure water, fresh air, and sunlight—when used appropriately—promote clean, healthy lives. At the seminar



Alina talked, not only about our physical health, but also about our mental health—how to keep our mind healthy and receptive to the voice of God.

Another missionary activity here in Calgary was the conducting of a Bible Seminar. This seminar focused on the heart of the book of Revelation, namely chapters 12–14.

The Three Angel's Messages of Revelation 14 are the most important messages for the time in which we live today. This solemn appeal made by God to mankind living at the verge of Christ's second coming is to be proclaimed with a loud voice to the whole world, to prepare a people to be ready when Jesus comes.

These four presentations were held over four Sabbath afternoons at church. In these studies we saw how God portrays His remnant people in chapter 12. We also dealt with the enemy of God's people found in chapter 13 and then studied about the character and the mission of God's remnant people in Revelation 14. The great controversy between Christ and Satan shows us that we must take a stand either for Christ or against Him. There is no middle ground in this final battle. Chapter 12 of Revelation portrays the whole story of the drama from its origin in heaven, to Satan's attack on Jesus, through the persecutions of the Dark Ages, until the final conflict at the time of the end. Christ's faithful people loved not their lives unto the death. They would rather die than dishonour Him. They love

Jesus more than the trivial pleasures to be gleaned from a few decades of mortal existence. With Jesus as their Shepherd they do not fear the devil's great wrath.

The Testimony of Jesus declared through the prophet Ellen G. White. "The prophecies of Daniel and the Revelation should be carefully studied, and in connection with them the words, 'Behold the Lamb of God, which taketh away the sin of the world.'" —*Gospel Workers*, p. 148

"When the books of Daniel and Revelation are better understood, believers will have an entirely different religious experience. They will be given such glimpses of the open gates of heaven that heart and mind will be impressed with the character that all must develop in order to realize the blessedness which is to be the reward of the pure in heart." —*Testimonies to Ministers*, p. 114

With these two quotations from the Spirit of Prophecy I would like to conclude by encouraging all the Gospel Workers and those who love Jesus and His truth to use every talent and means God has given you to preach the Gospel. Start in your family, then in your neighbourhoods, your school, and your place of employment; because in so doing we fulfill Jesus' command in Matthew 28:19 (Go ye therefore, and teach all nations), and we hasten His coming.

In Christ,
Nicholas Anca



Good News from Jamaica



The Attendees of the baptismal service

The poet H.D. Carberry in the poem, *Nature*, gives us idea of what this beautiful country Jamaica is like.

“We have neither summer nor winter, Neither Autumn nor spring.

*We have instead the days when the gold sun shines on the lush green cane fields—Magnificently.
The days when the rain beats like bullets on the roofs. And there is no sound but the swish of water in the gullies. And trees struggling in the high Jamaica winds. Also there are the days when leaves fade from off guango trees. And the reaped cane fields lie bare and fallow to the sun. But best of all there are the days when the mango and the logwood blossom
When the bushes are full of the sound of bees and the scent of honey, When the tall grass sways and shivers to the slightest breath of air, When the buttercups have paved the earth with yellow stars And beauty comes suddenly and the rains have gone.”*

On Sabbath, December 19, 2015 about 100 believers came from near and far to our church beside the sea in Annotto Bay, St. Mary. We began the day with our Sabbath School. The lesson for the day was taught by Brother Bruce Ferguson. Following the Sabbath School, eight lovely souls came before the church to answer their Baptismal Vows. These souls pledged before God and man to be faithful to the end. We then traveled across the road to the seaside where they were baptized in the name of the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit.

After the baptism they were then given the right hand of fellowship and welcomed into the remnant church of God. Later in the afternoon we partook of the Communion Service as well as a testimony service which brought us to the end of the Sabbath and a day of praise and thanksgiving.

Jamaica



Candidates at the seaside

Youth Conference Tanzania



Baptism of Four Souls



Dar Es Salaam choir



I Shall Not Pass This Way Again

I shall not pass this way again!
The thought is full of sorrow;
The good I ought to do to-day
I may not do to-morrow.
If I this moment shall withhold
The help I might be giving,
Some soul may die, and I shall lose
The sweetest joy of living.

Only the present hour is mine—
I may not have another
In which to speak a kindly word,
Or help a fallen brother.
The path of life leads straight ahead;
I can retrace it never;
The daily record which I make
Will stand unchanged forever.

To cheer and comfort other souls,
And make their pathways brighter;
To lift the load from other hearts,
And make their burdens lighter,

This is the work we have to do—
It must not be neglected.
That we improve each passing hour,
Is of us all expected.

I shall not pass this way again!
O! then with high endeavour
May I my life and service give
To Him who reigns forever.
Then will the failures of the past
No longer bring me sadness,
And His approving smile will fill
My heart with joy and gladness.

—*Mission Bulletin*.
(*Advent Review and Sabbath Herald*,
August 16, 1906)