



*The Reformation*  
**Messenger**  
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**Do You Know?**  
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**Our Cross**  
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**Goodloe Harper Bell**

**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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“And I saw another mighty angel come down from heaven, clothed with a cloud: and a rainbow was upon his head, and his face was as it were the sun, and his feet as pillars of fire.” Revelation 10:1

#### THE COVENANT OF PROMISE

“The rainbow spanning the heavens with its arch of light is a token of ‘the everlasting covenant between God and every living creature.’ Genesis 9:16. And the rainbow encircling the throne on high is also a token to God’s children of His covenant of peace.” –*Education*, p. 115

“As I have sworn that the waters of Noah should no more go over the earth; so have I sworn that I would not be wroth with thee, nor rebuke thee. For the mountains shall depart, and the hills be removed; but My kindness shall not depart from thee, neither shall the covenant of My peace be removed, saith the Lord that hath mercy on thee.” Isaiah 54:9–10

#### GOD’S THRONE

“And immediately I was in the spirit; and, behold, a throne was set in heaven, and One sat on the throne. And He that sat was to look upon like a jasper and a sardine stone: and there was a rainbow round about the throne, in sight like unto an emerald.” Revelation 4:2–3

“We are to send our petitions through the darkest clouds that Satan may cast over us, and let our faith pierce to the throne of God encircled by the rainbow of promise, the assurance that God is true, that in Him is no variableness neither shadow of turning. The answer may appear to be delayed, but it is not so. The petition is accepted, and the answer given when it is essential for the best good of the

petitioner and when the fulfillment of the request will work most for our eternal interest. God scatters His blessings all along our path to brighten our heavenward journey.” –*In Heavenly Places*, p. 125

“Whenever the law is presented before the people, let the teacher of truth point to the throne arched with the rainbow of promise, the righteousness of Christ. The glory of the law is Christ; He came to magnify the law, and to make it honorable. Make it appear distinct that mercy and peace have met together in Christ, and righteousness and truth have embraced each other.” –*The Seventh-day Adventist Bible Commentary*, vol. 5, p. 1133

“The rainbow of promise encircling the throne on high is an everlasting testimony that ‘God so loved the world, that He gave His only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in Him should not perish, but have everlasting life’ (John 3:16). It testifies to the universe that God will never forsake His people in their struggle with evil. It is an assurance to us of strength and protection as long as the throne itself shall endure.

“As the bow in the cloud is formed by the union of the sunlight and the shower, so the rainbow encircling the throne represents the combined power of mercy and justice. It is not justice alone that is to be maintained; for this would eclipse the glory of the rainbow of promise above the throne; man could see only the penalty of the law. Were there no justice, no penalty, there would be no stability to the government of God.

“It is the mingling of judgment and mercy that makes salvation full and complete. It is the blending of the two that leads us, as we view the world’s Redeemer and the law of

Jehovah, to exclaim, 'Thy gentleness hath made me great' (2 Samuel 22:36). We know that the gospel is a perfect and complete system, revealing the immutability of the law of God. . . . Mercy invites us to enter through the gates into the city of God, and justice is sacrificed to accord to every obedient soul full privileges as a member of the royal family, a child of the heavenly King.

"By faith let us look upon the rainbow round about the throne, the cloud of sins confessed behind it. The rainbow of promise is an assurance to every humble, contrite, believing soul, that his life is one with Christ, and that Christ is one with God. The wrath of God will not fall upon one soul that seeks refuge in Him. God Himself has declared, "When I see the blood, I will pass over you." "The bow shall be in the cloud; and I will look upon it, that I may remember the everlasting covenant" (Exodus 12:13; Genesis 9:16)." – *God's Amazing Grace*, p. 70

"The rainbow round about the throne is an assurance that God is true, that in Him is no variableness, neither shadow of turning. We have sinned against Him, and are undeserving of His favor; yet He Himself has put into our lips that most wonderful of pleas, 'Do not abhor us, for Thy name's sake; do not disgrace the throne of Thy glory; remember, break not Thy covenant with us.' Jeremiah 14:21. When we come to Him confessing our unworthiness and sin, He has pledged Himself to give heed to our cry. The honor of His throne is staked for the fulfillment of His word unto us." – *Christ's Object Lessons*, p. 148

"A rainbow is represented in Heaven round about the throne, also above the head of Christ, as a symbol of God's mercy encompassing the earth. When man by his great wickedness provokes the wrath of God, Christ, man's intercessor, pleads for him, and points to the rainbow in the cloud, as evidence of God's great mercy and compassion for erring man." – *Ibid*, p. 159

"No distinction on account of nationality, race, or caste, is recognized by God. He is the Maker of all mankind. All men are of one family by creation, and all are one through redemption. Christ came to demolish every wall of partition, to throw open every compartment of the temple, that every soul may have free access to God. His love is so broad, so deep, so full, that it penetrates everywhere. It lifts out of Satan's circle the poor souls who have been deluded by his deceptions. It places them within reach of the throne of God, the throne encircled by the rainbow of promise." – *Christ's Object Lessons*, p. 386

#### CHRIST'S SECOND COMING

"The One who has stood as our intercessor; who hears all penitential prayers and confessions; who is represented with a rainbow, the symbol of grace and love, encircling His head, is soon to cease His work in the heavenly sanctuary. Grace and mercy will then descend from the throne, and

justice will take their place. He for whom His people have looked will assume His right—the office of Supreme Judge. – *The Seventh-day Adventist Bible Commentary*, vol. 7, p. 989

"With shouts of triumph, jeering, and imprecation, throngs of evil men are about to rush upon their prey, when, lo, a dense blackness, deeper than the darkness of the night, falls upon the earth. Then a rainbow, shining with the glory from the throne of God, spans the heavens and seems to encircle each praying company. The angry multitudes are suddenly arrested. Their mocking cries die away. The objects of their murderous rage are forgotten. With fearful forebodings they gaze upon the symbol of God's covenant and long to be shielded from its overpowering brightness." – *Darkness Before Dawn*, p. 46

"Soon there appears in the east a small black cloud, about half the size of a man's hand. It is the cloud which surrounds the Saviour and which seems in the distance to be shrouded in darkness. The people of God know this to be the sign of the Son of man. In solemn silence they gaze upon it as it draws nearer the earth, becoming lighter and more glorious, until it is a great white cloud, its base a glory like consuming fire, and above it the rainbow of the covenant. Jesus rides forth as a mighty conqueror. Not now a 'Man of Sorrows,' to drink the bitter cup of shame and woe, He comes, victor in heaven and earth, to judge the living and the dead. 'Faithful and True,' 'in righteousness He doth judge and make war.' And 'the armies which were in heaven' (Revelation 19:11, 14) follow Him. With anthems of celestial melody the holy angels, a vast, unnumbered throng, attend Him on His way. The firmament seems filled with radiant forms—'ten thousand times ten thousand, and thousands of thousands.' No human pen can portray the scene; no mortal mind is adequate to conceive its splendor. 'His glory covered the heavens, and the earth was full of His praise. And His brightness was as the light.' Habakkuk 3:3,4." – *The Great Controversy*, p. 640–641

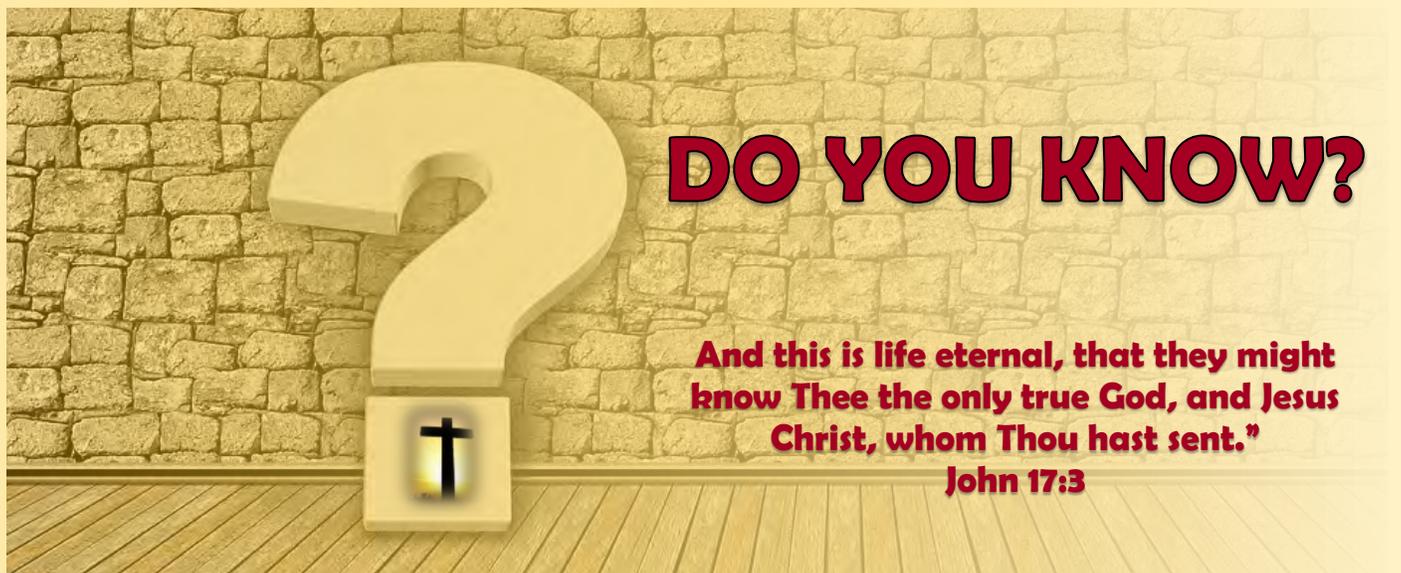
#### HEAVEN

"Then the portals of the city of God are opened wide, and the angelic throng sweep through the gates amid a burst of rapturous music.

"There is the throne, and around it the rainbow of promise. There are cherubim and seraphim. The commanders of the angel hosts, the sons of God, the representatives of the unfallen worlds, are assembled. The heavenly council before which Lucifer had accused God and His Son, the representatives of those sinless realms over which Satan had thought to establish his dominion,—all are there to welcome the Redeemer. They are eager to celebrate His triumph and to glorify their King." – *The Desire of Ages*, p. 833–834

*Ellen G. White*





# DO YOU KNOW?

**And this is life eternal, that they might know Thee the only true God, and Jesus Christ, whom Thou hast sent.”**

**John 17:3**

Do you know who Donald Trump is? But, do you know him? Do you know the political leaders in your own country? But, do you know them? Do you know the names of your neighbours? But, do you know them? It is one thing to know who people are, but it is quite another thing to really know them.

When the Israelites were living in Egypt, after the death of Joseph, “there arose up a new king over Egypt, which knew not Joseph.” Exodus 1:8. Did this Pharaoh really not know Joseph? Joseph was the most famous man in the country as he saved the country in a time of crisis. Surely the record of his great deed was recorded in Egyptian history. And it is possible that the Pharaoh was a young man when Joseph was old and nearing the end of his life. Yet we read that he did not know Joseph. He chose not to know.

Even more serious, he went as far as to say, “Who is the LORD, that I should obey His voice to let Israel go? I know not the LORD, neither will I let Israel go.” Exodus 5:2. They had heard of the true God from the Israelites. “The sin of the Egyptians was that they had refused the light which God had so graciously sent to them through Joseph.” —*The Seventh-day Adventist Bible Commentary*, vol. 1, p. 1098. The knowledge was there, but they refused it.

At one time, in the Middle Ages, the Bible was a forbidden book, so few knew what it really contained. Today, there are Bibles every where—all over the world. Bibles in many different languages. It is the most widely sold book in the world. Why is it then that still there are only a few who really know and understand what is written therein? Why are many people, Christians included, knowing *of* the Bible, but not really knowing *the* Bible? You can also ask any Christian and many non-Christians if they believe there is a God in heaven, and

yes, they do believe there is. They know He exists. But do they know Him? Very few do. Even in God’s church, there could be some who do not know Him. Nothing is new.

## LACK OF KNOWLEDGE

Sadly, we read from the prophets in the old testament that, “My people are destroyed for lack of knowledge: because thou hast rejected knowledge, I will also reject thee.” Hosea 4:6

Who is destroyed for lack of knowledge? Was it the Gentiles? No, it says “My people”. Should not the people of God have had the greatest understanding of the truths of God because “unto them were committed the oracles of God”? Romans 3:2. What knowledge did they lack? Hosea here is speaking to the people of God—the Israelites. “My people.” The nation went into captivity because they were lacking an experiential knowledge of God. It is one thing to know who the Lord is, and the fact that He is the ruler of the universe and is working as a High Priest in the heavenly sanctuary, but it is another thing to really know the Lord, experientially.

Isaiah had a similar message. “Therefore My people are gone into captivity, because they have no knowledge: and their honourable men are famished, and their multitude dried up with thirst.” Isaiah 5:13. Who had no knowledge? Again, he wrote, My people. What knowledge did they not have? “It was because they had persisted in turning aside from His law that God was compelled to let them go into captivity.” —*Prophets and Kings*, p. 297

To have a knowledge of the law without really knowing Christ personally, is lacking knowledge. By claiming to have knowledge of Christ, without knowledge of His law, is also lacking knowledge. All may have knowledge

if they put forth the effort to obtain it. A very serious thought to consider is that people are held responsible not only for what they know, but also for what they might have known had they put forth the effort to obtain essential knowledge, and therefore are destroyed due to the lack of this knowledge.

You may tell yourself that you know all the doctrines of the church. You know the prophecies very well, you know the sequence of end-time events. You have a great knowledge of the Spirit of the law of God and are keeping it. But is this enough? The Jewish leaders were very strict with the keeping of the law, and yet Jesus called them hypocrites (Matthew 23:13). "For I bear them record that they have a zeal of God, but not according to knowledge. For they being ignorant of God's righteousness, and going about to establish their own righteousness, have not submitted themselves unto the righteousness of God." Romans 10:2-3. "Shall the warnings from God be passed by unheeded? Shall the opportunities for service be unimproved? . . . Will they reject God's word as the Jewish leaders rejected Christ? The result of Israel's sin is before us. Will the church of today take warning?" —*Christ's Object Lessons*, p. 306. Are you lacking this essential knowledge?

Clearly and repeatedly God had pointed out what the results of transgression would be, but the people of Israel and Judah were revealing their complete lack of "knowledge" by persisting in evil and thereby ensuring their own destruction.

"The ox knoweth his owner, and the ass his master's crib: but Israel doth not know, My people doth not consider." Isaiah 1:3. Animals know where to find their food and often form an attachment to the one who provides it for them. So often people, even Christians, have been guilty of being most ungrateful of their heavenly Father's tender care.

### **CHILDREN OF ISRAEL DID NOT KNOW**

Going back in history, we read: "And Joshua, the son of Nun, the servant of the LORD, died, being an hundred and ten years old. And they buried him in the border of his inheritance in Timnathheres, in the mount of Ephraim, on the north side of the hill Gaash. And also all that generation were gathered unto their fathers: and there arose another generation after them, which knew not the LORD, nor yet the works which He had done for Israel." Judges 2:8-10

Why did they not know the Lord? This generation grew up in the land of Canaan and knew little of the hard-

ships of their forefathers in their wilderness wanderings. Why did their parents not instruct them in the way of the Lord? Although they did not know from experience the mighty workings of God in the past, and they were surrounded by heathen people, and so it is written that they knew not the Lord. However, it is very likely they heard of the Lord from their parents, the elders and leaders, and knew of the Lord, but when the elders all passed away, they willingly chose to not know. They did not have an experiential knowledge of God. Such an experience with the Lord would have preserved them from the evil influences around them.

"Who shall separate us from the love of Christ? shall tribulation, or distress, or persecution, or famine, or nakedness, or peril, or sword? As it is written, For Thy sake we are killed all the day long; we are accounted as sheep for the slaughter. Nay, in all these things we are more than conquerors through Him that loved us. For I am persuaded, that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor powers, nor things present, nor things to come, Nor height, nor depth, nor any other creature, shall be able to separate us from the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus our Lord." Romans 8:35-39. If they had made their own experience with the Lord, they would really have known Him personally, regardless of their surroundings.

It is absolutely important that all Christians examine the foundations of their faith to see whether their experience is a personal and direct relationship with God, or merely an outward endeavour based on the experience of others. Unless you have your own experience, you may suffer the same fate as these second-generation Israelites. Israel forgot the providential leadings of God in the past. "We have nothing to fear for the future, except as we shall forget the way the Lord has led us, and His teaching in our past history." — *Counsels for the Church*, p. 359

### **ELI'S SONS DID NOT KNOW**



Years later, there was a High Priest who had two sons, and these sons were also priests. But it is written of these priests that "the sons of Eli were sons of Belial; they knew not the LORD." 1 Samuel 2:12. How could they not have known the Lord? They were brought up in the temple and taught of God. Yet Hophni and Phinehas had no proper understanding of God. They enjoyed

no communion with Him felt no sympathy with His purposes, and had no sense of their obligation to Him. They merely employed their positions for their own selfish corrupt ends. They knew of the Lord, but they did not know the Lord.

Why did the Lord allow these corrupt priests to continue in office? It was to prove that environment does not determine a soul's destiny. Unless you know the Lord and your life is hid in Christ, and you are making daily experiences with Him, when you are buffeted by the evil one you will fall, regardless of how favourable your surroundings and upbringing may be.

"Eli had instructed his children in the law of God, and had given them a good example in his own life; but this was not his whole duty. God required him, both as a father and as a priest, to restrain them from following their own perverse will. This he had failed to do." —*The Seventh-day Adventist Bible Commentary*, vol. 2, p. 1009

As a parent he was indulgent. How many parents fear to correct their children and excuse their behaviour by stating, "they are only children and will grow out of it when they get older." Although he taught them well, he did not restrain them when they did wrong.

#### DESTRUCTION OF JERUSALEM

"Surely the Lord GOD will do nothing, but He revealeth His secret unto His servants the prophets." Amos 3:7. Before the destruction of Jerusalem, Jesus gave warning signs. If these signs were heeded, the people would have been spared.

Jerusalem was destroyed twice. The first time, the prophet Jeremiah was sent to give them warning after warning, of which they chose to ignore. It came as a seeming surprise to them when their city did fall. They had opportunity to know, but chose not to. "Yea, the stork in the heaven knoweth her appointed times; and the turtle and the crane and the swallow observe the time of their coming; but My people know not the judgment of the LORD." Jeremiah 8:7

"They are not valiant for the truth upon the earth; for they proceed from evil to evil, and they know not Me, saith the LORD." Jeremiah 9:3. They knew of the Lord, but they did not know the Lord. "Therefore I said, Surely these are poor; they are foolish: for they know not the way of the LORD, nor the judgment of their God." Jeremiah 5:4

"In his testimonies to the church, Jeremiah constantly referred to the teachings of the book of the law that had been so greatly honored and exalted during Josiah's reign. He emphasized anew the importance of maintaining a

covenant relationship with the all-merciful and compassionate Being who upon the heights of Sinai had spoken the precepts of the Decalogue. Jeremiah's words of warning and entreaty reached every part of the kingdom, and all had opportunity to know the will of God concerning the nation." —*Prophets and Kings*, p. 428–429. Yet they did not know.

The second time Jerusalem was destroyed they again received warnings, but again it was unheeded. "And shall lay thee even with the ground, and thy children within thee; and they shall not leave in thee one stone upon another; because thou knewest not the time of thy visitation." Luke 19:44. Why did they not know? Did any Christians die? They knew. They believed the words of prophecy and they fled when they saw the signs. The others who perished could have known, but they chose not to.

Prior to the end of the world, warning signs have also been given. No one needs to be taken by surprise unless they willingly choose to not heed the signs. Jesus' coming will be as a "thief in the night" (1 Thessalonians 5:2) to those who are not prepared. Those who are ready will proclaim. "Lo, this is our God; we have waited for Him, and He will save us: this is the LORD; we have waited for Him, we will be glad and rejoice in His salvation." Isaiah 25:9

#### WILLINGLY IGNORANT

"Thine habitation is in the midst of deceit; through deceit they refuse to know Me, saith the LORD." Jeremiah 9:6. The people's ignorance of God was wilful. Transgression is a choice. They were given the opportunity, but they refused to know the Lord.

"Knowing this first, that there shall come in the last days scoffers, walking after their own lusts, And saying, Where is the promise of His coming? for since the fathers fell asleep, all things continue as they were from the beginning of the creation. For this they willingly are ignorant of, that by the word of God the heavens were of old, and the earth standing out of the water and in the



water: Whereby the world that then was, being overflowed with water, perished." 2 Peter 3:3–6

In the time of Noah, they all



heard the message of salvation, but they refused to heed it. They were willingly shut out of the ark by their own choice.

In the time of Christ, many who cried “Crucify Him” did so out of ignorance, as they were following the crowd. “No Excuse for Willful Ignorance.—‘I wot that through ignorance ye did it,’ said Peter; but this ignorance did not excuse the action; for they had had great light granted unto them. The statement is made that had they known that He was the Prince of life, they would not have crucified Him. But why did they not know?—because *they chose not to know*. They had no interest to search and study, and their ignorance proved their eternal ruin. They had had the strongest evidence on which to base their faith, and they were under obligation to God to accept the evidence He had given them. Their unbelief made them guilty of the blood of the only begotten Son of the infinite God. —*The Seventh-day Adventist Bible Commentary*, vol. 6, p. 1056 (emphasis mine)

The Apostle Paul wrote about the Jewish leaders that, “they did not like to retain God in their knowledge, God gave them over to a reprobate mind, to do those things which are not convenient.” Romans 1:28

He continues by saying that those that do not know God will be, “filled with all unrighteousness, fornication, wickedness, covetousness, maliciousness; full of envy, murder, debate, deceit, malignity; whisperers, Backbiters, haters of God, despiteful, proud, boasters, inventors of evil things, disobedient to parents, Without understanding, covenantbreakers, without natural affection, implacable, unmerciful.” Romans 1:29–31

Go back and read this list again—slowly—one by one. Do any of them apply to your life? The word “debate” is also translated as “anger.” Perhaps you may not be a backbiter, or a hater of God, or an inventor of evil things, but are you proud? Are you boastful? Unmerciful? Do you have uncontrolled anger? Are you guilty of being without understanding—not knowing the Lord? The end result? “Who knowing the judgment of God, that they which commit such things are worthy of death.” Romans 1:32

### **DO YOU KNOW THE LORD?**

Let us get personal here now. There are those who think they know the Lord, but in reality, they do not (even in God’s church). “They profess that they know God; but in works they deny Him, being abominable, and disobedient, and unto every good work reprobate.” Titus 1:16

We read a testimony written to the church, “With some the knowledge of their true state seems to be hidden from them. They see the truth, but perceive not its importance or its claims. They hear the truth, but do not

fully understand it, because they do not conform their lives to it, and therefore are not sanctified through obeying it. And yet they rest as unconcerned and well satisfied as though the cloud by day and the pillar of fire by night, as token of God’s favor, went before them.” —*Testimonies for the Church*, vol. 1, p. 406

They “believe that they are on the right foundation, that they have the truth; they rejoice in its clearness and boast of the powerful arguments in proof of the correctness of our position.” But, “The love of the world with many, the deceitfulness of riches with others, have choked the word, and they have become unfruitful.” —*Testimonies for the Church*, vol. 2, p. 125–126

“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. Does not the Lord know everyone? The verse above indicates that the Lord did not know these people. “But whosoever shall deny Me before men, Him will I also deny before My Father which is in heaven.” Matthew 10:33. Just like they chose not to know the Lord, the Lord chose not to know them. The Lord wants to know everyone, but not everyone wants to know Him. And so He will not force His presence. These people are Christian people, and there may even be some from God’s remnant church. Will it be you or I? I pray not.

“The people here described, who make these pretentious claims, apparently weaving Jesus into all their doings, fitly represent those who claim modern sanctification, but who are at war with the law of God.” —*The Seventh-day Adventist Bible Commentary*, vol. 5, p. 1087. We believe and keep the Ten Commandments, so surely this cannot apply to us, we may say. But what about the spirit of the law as written in the testimonies? The finer points of the law, such as health and dress reform? Correct Sabbath observance? Our thoughts and our motives?

David counselled his son: “And thou, Solomon my son, know thou the God of thy father, and serve Him with a perfect heart and with a willing mind: for the LORD searcheth all hearts, and understandeth all the imaginations of the thoughts: if thou seek Him, He will be found of thee; but if thou forsake Him, He will cast thee off for ever.” 1 Chronicles 28:9

### **JOSIAH KNEW**

There are many though, who did know the Lord. David was a man after God’s own heart (Acts 13:22). Abraham was a friend of God (James 2:23). Moses spoke with the Lord face to face (Exodus 33:11).

King Josiah knew the Lord, and how do we know this? "For thus saith the LORD touching Shallum the son of Josiah king of Judah, which reigned instead of Josiah his father . . . did not thy father eat and drink, and do judgment and justice, and then it was well with him? He judged the cause of the poor and needy; then it was well with him: was not this to know Me? saith the LORD." Jeremiah 22:11, 15–16

Josiah's actions clearly showed that he knew the Lord. It is not greatness through secular accomplishments, or preaching great sermons only. It is greatness found in fellowship with the Lord, that is revealed in justice and mercy towards "the cause of the poor and needy". Josiah possessed this inner greatness that his son was greatly devoid of. In the eyes of the Lord, his inner greatness was more glorious than the glory of Jehoiakim's palaces.

### LEARN SOMETHING NEW EVERY DAY

So, you know it all? You know the truth—you know the doctrine. Is there nothing more to learn? The Prophecies in Daniel and Revelation are nearly all fulfilled. What else is there to learn?

Yes, you may know the doctrine. But do you know the Lord? Every day we need to be making new experiences that will bring us closer to the Lord. Every day we are to deny ourselves and overcome every temptation in our pathway. The temptations will not cease until the Lord comes. They may get more intense as time goes on, but we can overcome if we know the Lord.

"Every day you should learn something new from the Scriptures. Search them as for hid treasures, for they contain the words of eternal life. Pray for wisdom and understanding to comprehend these holy writings. If you would do this you would find new glories in the word of God; you would feel that you had received new and precious light on subjects connected with the truth, and the Scriptures would be constantly receiving a new value in your estimation." —*Testimonies for the Church*, vol. 5, p. 266

"New truth is constantly unfolding; at every step, new



and clearer light is shining upon the pathway of God's people, that they may go onward and upward." —*The Signs of the Times*, March 16, 1882

"Knowledge is power, either for good or for evil. Bible religion is the only safeguard for human beings. . . .The blessing is pronounced upon those who are familiar with the revealed will of God in His word. The Bible is the great agent in the hands of its Author to strengthen the intellect. It opens the garden of the mind to the cultivation of the heavenly Husbandman." —*Fundamentals of Christian Education*, p. 111

"Only those who have been diligent students of the Scriptures and who have received the love of the truth will be shielded from the powerful delusion that takes the world captive. By the Bible testimony these will detect the deceiver in his disguise. To all the testing time will come. By the sifting of temptation the genuine Christian will be revealed. Are the people of God now so firmly established upon His word that they would not yield to the evidence of their senses? Would they, in such a crisis, cling to the Bible and the Bible only?" —*Maranatha*, p. 160

You believe that Jesus died for the sins of the world. That is well and good. But do you believe He died for you? For me? He came for me, for my sins. He is a very personal Saviour. "So in spiritual things. To talk of religion in a casual way, to pray without soul hunger and living faith, avails nothing. A nominal faith in Christ, which accepts Him merely as the Saviour of the world, can never bring healing to the soul." —*Conflict and Courage*, p. 298

"It is not enough to believe *about* Christ; we must believe *in* Him. The only faith that will benefit us is that which embraces Him as a personal Saviour; which appropriates His merits to ourselves. Many hold faith as an opinion. Saving faith is a transaction by which those who receive Christ join themselves in covenant relation with God. Genuine faith is life. A living faith means an increase of vigor, a confiding trust, by which the soul becomes a conquering power." —*The Desire of Ages*, p. 347

It is my prayer that each reader will know the Lord. Not just know of Him, but know Him as your most trusted and intimate Friend. He is the One who you automatically turn to when life gets difficult; the One who you will walk with and talk with every day. He will never disappoint you, and will only lead you in the ways of eternal life. Will you follow Him and get to know Him? Or will you choose to not know Him? The choice is yours. Choose wisely. "And this is life eternal, that they might know Thee the only true God, and Jesus Christ, whom Thou hast sent." John 17:3

**Wendy Eaton**



# Our Cross

What is the attraction in the cross? Why do some people love the cross? Why is it that every true child of God has a cross to carry?

The answer is, the cross is where our Saviour, our Creator, gave His life for our redemption. That is where the burden of our sin will roll away, and we will be free, as if we had never done anything wrong. That is where peace and joy fill our hearts. Our minds that are troubled with cares and worries find rest. That is where the way to heaven and to eternal life has been opened to us. We are united again with our Creator, after sin had broken the connection. Jesus said, "If any man will come after Me, let him deny himself, and take his cross, and follow Me." Matthew 16:24

How often do we need to carry our cross? Jesus said, "If any man will come after Me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross daily, and follow Me." Luke 9:23. There is no crown without a cross.

What does the cross of Christ give to us? "For Christ sent me not to baptize, but to preach the gospel: not with wisdom of words, lest the cross of Christ should be made of none effect. For the preaching of the cross to them that perish foolishness; but unto us which are saved it is the power of God." 1 Corinthians 1:17–18

The strength and power of a Christian lies in the cross of Calvary. We find an example of Jesus being lifted on the cross in the time of Ancient Israel. When they murmured against God and Moses, fiery serpents were sent and bit them causing many to die.

"And the LORD sent fiery serpents among the people, and they bit the people; and much people of Israel died. Therefore the people came to Moses, and said, We have sinned, for we have spoken against the LORD, and against thee; pray unto the LORD, that He take away the serpents from us. And Moses prayed for the people. And the LORD said unto Moses, Make thee a fiery serpent, and set it upon a pole: and it shall come to pass, that every one that is bitten, when he looketh upon it, shall live. And Moses made a serpent of brass, and put it upon a pole, and it came to pass, that if a serpent had bitten any man, when he beheld the serpent of brass, he lived." Numbers 21:6–9

"And as Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, even so must the Son of man be lifted up: That whosoever believeth in Him should not perish, but have eternal life." John 3:14–15. If we look to our crucified Saviour we shall live.

"I have blotted out, as a thick cloud, thy transgressions, and, as a cloud, thy sins: return unto Me; for I have redeemed thee." Isaiah 45:22

"Subduing self and looking to Jesus is an everyday work. The Lord will never forsake the soul that trusts in Him and seeks His aid." –*Testimonies for the Church*, vol. 5, p. 70–71

Peter was able to walk on the water as long as his eyes were looking to Jesus. As soon as he turned his eyes away from Jesus, he started sinking. This same experience can happen to us; if we turn our eyes away from

Jesus, we also start sinking.

Many are deceived by a crossless religion, a religion that is easy and accommodating. It is one of the greatest inventions of Satan—religion without the cross—and millions are accepting it. In that religion you do not need to overcome your sins, nor bad habits.

What does it mean to carry the cross of Jesus? “To bear the cross of Christ is to control our sinful passions, to practice Christian courtesy even when it is inconvenient to do so, to see the wants of the needy and distressed and deny ourselves in order to relieve them, and to open our hearts and our doors to the homeless orphan, although to do this may tax our means and our patience. Such children are younger members of God’s family and are to receive love and care, and to be brought up in the nurture and admonition of the Lord. This is a cross which, if lifted and cheerfully borne for Christ, will prove a diadem of glory in the kingdom of God.” —*Testimonies for the Church*, vol. 4, p. 627

It is a sacred honour to bear the cross of Jesus. Self-denial and cross-bearing lie directly in the path to heaven, but only few are willing to bear the cross of Christ.

Jesus carried His cross toward the place of execution, (Calvary), while multitudes were mocking Him and spitting on Him. How few were willing then to join with Christ, and follow Him, and be recognized as His friends. Even the disciples were afraid to be recognized as His followers. How few today are willing to carry their cross, and follow Jesus in the way of shame, mocking, and humiliation. Jesus bade His followers to follow Him, even unto death. Jesus, the King of kings, the majesty of heaven, our Creator, humbled Himself, and carried His cross, even unto death.

Jesus still recognized them that crucified Him as His friends. “And one shall say unto Him, What are these wounds in Thine hands? Then He shall answer, Those with which I was wounded in the house of My friends.” Zechariah 13:6

Even when they nailed His hands and feet to the cross, He prayed for them, “Father, forgive them; for they know not what they do.” Luke 23:34

For centuries the Lord had patiently cared for them, giving them blessings, counsels, and prophets, and finally He Himself came to them, in order to save them. But, then what happened?

“And it was the preparation of the passover, and about the sixth hour: and he saith unto the Jews, Behold your King! But they cried out, Away with Him, away with Him,

crucify Him. Pilate saith unto them, Shall I crucify your King? The chief priests answered, We have no king but Caesar. Then delivered he Him therefore unto them to be crucified. And they took Jesus, and led Him away.” John 19:14–16

What a terrible choice they made. Once more Christ was offered to them, “Behold your King.” But they chose rather to have Caesar ruling over them. A little later the army of Caesar came to destroy Jerusalem, and killed one million and 100-thousand Jews.

How many today show in their actions—not this man, not Jesus—and follow the deceptions of Satan. What a terrible choice.

Often we may be offended and hurt by an enemy, but how much more painful it is when we are offended and hurt by our friends whom we love.

What happens when we carry the cross of Jesus? Paul writes, “I die daily.” 1 Corinthians 15:31. We must die to sin, our own “I” must die, and our selfishness and our desires must die. Paul also writes, “I am crucified with Christ: nevertheless I live; yet not I, but Christ liveth in me: and the life which I now live in the flesh I live by the faith of the Son of God, who loved me, and gave Himself for me.” Galatians 2:20

Paul died on his cross, but then he was born again and became a new creature. Paul did not complain about the cross he was carrying. It was his glory, his salvation. He loved his cross. He 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

We all must deny ourselves and bear the cross that the Lord has given us. It is the one that is the most suitable for our salvation. My friend, I earnestly beseech you to take up thy cross and follow Jesus. It will support you in adversity, privations, and sorrows; it will strengthen you and comfort you. It will be a pledge of immortality to you. Amen.

***Timo Martin***





This is a short question, but requires a long answer. . . why? Because the pronoun “*It*” can refer to many different things. In the previous issues of the *Reformation Messenger*, (November 2017, December 2017 and February 2018) this same question was asked and was answered. If you have not read them, I encourage you to visit our web site and read them in order to gain a full understanding of the series of topics covered.

#### PARABLE OF TALENTS

Jesus Christ, the greatest Teacher the world has ever known, revealed some of His greatest truths about salvation by the use of parables. In Matthew 25:14–30, using the parable of the talents, Jesus explains how God entrusts every person with a talent or gift that is instrumental in his or her salvation. “The present is our day of trust. To every person is committed some peculiar gift or talent which is to be used to advance the Redeemer’s kingdom. All God’s responsible agents, from the lowliest and most obscure to those in high positions in the church, are entrusted with the Lord’s goods.” – *Testimonies for the Church*, vol. 4, p. 618

“‘The kingdom of heaven,’ [Christ] said, ‘is as a man traveling into a far country, who called his own servants, and delivered unto them his goods. And unto one he gave five talents, to another two, and to another one; to every man according to his several ability; and straightway took his journey.’” – *Christ’s Object Lessons*, p. 325

The man traveling into a far country represents Christ, who, when speaking this parable, was soon to depart from this earth to heaven. The servants in the parable represent the followers of Christ. We are not our own. We have been “bought with a price” (1 Corinthians

6:20), not “with corruptible things, as silver and gold. . . but with the precious blood of Christ” (1 Peter 1:18–19); “that they which live should not henceforth live unto themselves, but unto Him which died for them, and rose again” (2 Corinthians 5:15).

“The parable of the talents, rightly understood, will bar out covetousness, which God calls idolatry.

“God has lent men talents—an intellect to originate, a heart to be the place of His throne, affection to flow out in blessings to others, a conscience to convict of sin. Each one has received something from the Master, and each one is to do his part in supplying the needs of God’s work. . . .

In the previous articles, some of the talents mentioned were:

**Time:** All, without exception, possess the talent of time. Everyone has it—whether rich or poor, young or old, educated or uneducated. The Spirit of Prophecy tells us: “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.” – *Christ’s Object Lessons*, p. 342



**Speech:** “Of all the gifts bestowed on the human family, none should be more appreciated than the gift of speech. It is to be used to declare God’s wisdom and wondrous love.” – *The Review and Herald*, April 9, 1901. The Lord bids us, “Let your speech be always with grace” (Colossians 4:6) “that it may minister grace unto the hearers” (Ephesians 4:29). “Not one word is to be

spoken unadvisedly. No evil speaking, no frivolous talk, no fretful repining or impure suggestions, will escape the lips of him who is following Christ. The apostle Paul, writing by the Holy Spirit, says, 'Let no corrupt communication proceed out of your mouth' (Ephesians 4:29). A corrupt communication does not mean only words that are vile. It means any expression contrary to holy principles and pure and undefiled religion. It includes impure hints and covert insinuations of evil. Unless instantly resisted, these lead to great sin." —*Ye Shall Receive Power*, p. 197. "Every idle word that men shall speak, they shall give account thereof in the day of judgment. For by thy words thou shalt be justified, and by thy words thou shalt be condemned." Matthew 12:36–37

**Influence:** Another talent which everyone has is influence. It is important to notice that, as with some of the other talents, this one can end up being either a blessing or a curse. "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. . . .

"Our words, our acts, our dress, our deportment, even the expression of the countenance, has an influence. Upon the impression thus made there hang results for good or evil which no man can measure. Every impulse thus imparted is seed sown which will produce its harvest. It is a link in the long chain of human events, extending we know not whither. If by our example we aid others in the development of good principles, we give them power to do good. In their turn they exert the same influence upon others, and they upon still others. Thus by our unconscious influence thousands may be blessed." —*Christ's Object Lessons*, p. 339

**Property:** "To His people the Lord sends the message, 'Sell that ye have, and give alms.' . . . Every Christian is to act his part as a faithful steward. . . . Large and small sums should flow into the Lord's treasury." —*Counsels on Stewardship*, p. 114

**"Strength** [health] is a talent, and is 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." —*Ibid.*, p. 115. God wants everyone to be healthy and to keep his or her body strong and in good health.

Health is one of the talents that is of great importance, which we can use to serve both our God and our neighbours. "Health is a blessing of which few appreciate the value. . . . The misuse of our physical powers shortens the period of time in which our lives can be used for the glory of God." —*Christ's Object Lessons*, p. 346

### TO EVERY MAN HIS WORK

During a field conference, after explaining the gifts of the Holy Spirit, I asked a question, "Anyone who has no gift, not even one, let him/her raise their hands." Five sisters and two brothers raised their hands. Were they right? What about you?

"We are not to wait for something great to do. We are to perform faithfully the duty lying nearest us, small though it may be. Faithfulness in the performance of small duties fits us for the bearing of larger responsibilities." —*The Gospel Herald*, January 1, 1903

Many may excuse themselves that "talents are given only to a certain favored class, to the exclusion of others who, of course, are not called upon to share in the toils or rewards. But it is not so represented in the parable. When the master of the house called his servants, he gave to every man his work. The whole family of God are included in the responsibility of using their Lord's goods. Every individual, from the lowliest and most obscure to the greatest and most exalted, is a moral agent endowed with abilities for which they are accountable to God. To a greater or less degree, all are placed in charge of the talents of their Lord. The spiritual, mental, and physical ability, the influence, station, possessions, affections, sympathies, all are precious talents to be used in the cause of the Master for the salvation of souls for whom Christ died. . . .

God requires everyone to be a worker in His vineyard. You are to take up the work that has been placed in your charge, and to do it faithfully. 'Whatsoever thy hand findeth to do, do it with thy might; for there is no work, nor device, nor knowledge, nor wisdom, in the grave, whither thou goest.' —*To Be Like Jesus*, p. 86

### ACCORDING TO THE ABILITY OF THE RECIPIENT

"In the Lord's plan there is a diversity in the distribution of talents. To one man is given one talent, to another five, to another ten. These talents are not bestowed capriciously, but according to the ability of the recipient. According to the talents bestowed will be the returns called for. The heaviest obligation rests upon him who has been made a steward of the greatest abilities. A man who has ten pounds is held responsible for all

that ten pounds would do if used aright. He who has only ten pence is accountable for only that amount." – *Counsels on Stewardship*, p. 116

God's plan in giving talents is different. To one He gives more, to the other less. None should complain about the talents received. The Lord has a place for everyone in His great plan. Talents that are not needed are not bestowed. Everyone receives according to his or her ability. The one who has received more should not exalt himself above the other who has received less, and the one who has received less should not envy and complain against the one who has more.

### "OCCUPY TILL I COME"

"God has left us in charge of His goods in His absence. Each steward has his own special work to do for the advancement of God's kingdom. No one is excused. The Lord bids us all, 'Occupy till I come.' By His own wisdom He has given us direction for the use of His gifts. The talents of speech, memory, influence, property, are to accumulate for the glory of God and the advancement of His kingdom. He will bless the right use of His gifts. We claim to be Christians, waiting for the second appearing of our Lord in the clouds of heaven. Then what shall we do with our time, our understanding, our possessions, which are not ours, but are entrusted to us to test our honesty? Let us bring them to Jesus. Let us use our treasures for the advancement of His cause. Thus we shall obey the injunction, 'Lay not up for yourselves treasures upon earth, where moth and rust doth corrupt, and where thieves break through and steal: but lay up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where neither moth nor rust doth corrupt, and where thieves do not break through nor steal: for where your treasure is, there will your heart be also.'" – *Ibid.*, p. 116

### ARE THEY YOURS?

In the past three articles in the series, I asked the question, "Is it yours?" Each time the answer was, "no". We are simply stewards of the property and gifts that God has entrusted to us. There is a diversity of gifts. We read in the Bible: "Now there are diversities of gifts, but the same Spirit. And there are differences of administrations, but the same Lord. And there are diversities of operations, but it is the same God which worketh all in all. But the manifestation of the Spirit is given to every

man to profit withal. For to one is given by the Spirit the word of wisdom; to another the word of knowledge by the same Spirit; To another faith by the same Spirit; to another the gifts of healing by the same Spirit; To another the working of miracles; to another prophecy; to another discerning of spirits; to another divers kinds of tongues; to another the interpretation of tongues: But all these worketh that one and the selfsame Spirit, dividing to every man severally as He will." 1 Corinthians 12:4–11

In His great wisdom Jesus gives the talents so that no one will lack anything, but also that one can complement the other. The church is given "diversities of gifts," all for the glory of God and the salvation of His people. Not all have the same talents or the same gifts, but all are called to labor in His vineyard in harmony and oneness. Only through the Holy Spirit abiding in

**"We should regard ourselves as stewards of the Lord's property and God as the supreme proprietor, to whom we are to render His own when He shall require it."—*Testimonies for the Church*, vol. 4, p. 480**

our heart can we make a wise use of these gifts and see them multiplied in the service for Christ. There are some gifts that only a few have, but gifts such as speech, time, influence, and health are enjoyed by nearly all.

No man can claim to have only one gift because life, speech, influence, time, etc. are all talents. You may be poor, lame, uneducated, etc. but you may have many talents. You may not realize what talents you have, but should improve those that you are aware of, until He comes. "Christ has given you talents, and these talents He expects you to improve. To one He gives ten talents, to another five, and to another one. He gives to each according to his several ability. If the man with one talent will improve that talent to the utmost of his ability, he will be given other talents. To these, as they are faithfully improved, will be added others. Thus the talents continually increase. But supposing a man has only one talent and gains only one? If his work has been in proportion to his ability, he will be just as surely rewarded as the man who gains a larger number of talents." –*Sermons and Talks*, vol.1, p. 313

"God calls us servants, which implies that we are employed by Him to do a certain work and bear certain responsibilities. He has lent us capital for investment. It is not *our* property, and we displease God if we hoard up our Lord's goods or spend them as we please. . . . The talents are in our hands. Shall we use them to God's glory, or shall we abuse them? We may trade

with them today, but tomorrow our probation may end and our account be forever fixed.” –*Testimonies for the Church*, vol. 2, p. 668 (emphasis mine)

As the servant who received the one talent, “There are many who give no decided evidence that they are true to their baptismal vows. Their zeal is chilled by formality, worldly ambition, pride, and love of self.” –*Testimonies for the Church*, vol. 9, p. 155

“To every man God has given ‘according to his several ability.’ The talents are not apportioned capriciously. He who has ability to use five talents receives five. He who can improve but two, receives two. He who can wisely use only one, receives one. None need lament that they have not received larger gifts; for He who has apportioned to every man is equally honored by the improvement of each trust, whether it be great or small.” –*Christ’s Object Lessons*, p. 328

### WHAT WILL BE YOUR REWARD?

“After a long time the lord of those servants cometh, and reckoneth with them.” Matthew 25:19. “Every talent which returns to the Master, will be scrutinized. The doings and trusts of God’s servants will not be considered an unimportant matter. Every individual will be dealt with personally, and will be required to give an account of the talents entrusted to him, whether he has improved or abused them. The reward bestowed will be proportionate to the talents improved. The punishment awarded will be according as the talents have been abused.” –*Counsels on Stewardship*, p. 119

Without exception, all of us will be called to give an account of our work and of the talents bestowed upon us. A special responsibility is placed on those who have been entrusted with greater abilities and gifts, “for unto whomsoever much is given, of him shall be much required: and to whom men have committed much, of him they will ask the more.” Luke 12:48. Even the one who has received less cannot be indifferent to the gift received, because when we are dealing with salvation, nothing is unimportant. In the work of reforming our characters, all things are essential. Even if God has entrusted us with only one talent, He will hold us accountable for the faithful use of it. In the parable, he who received one, and did not improve it, it was removed from him. Either your reward will be eternal life, or you will be cast out, and lose even the life that you had here.

### THE FAITHFUL USE OF TALENTS

“God desires His workers to look to Him as the Giver

of all they possess, to remember that all that they have and are comes from Him who is wonderful in counsel and excellent in working. The delicate touch of the physician’s hand, his power over nerve and muscle, his knowledge of the delicate organism of the body, are the wisdom of divine power, to be used in behalf of suffering humanity. The skill with which the carpenter uses the hammer, the strength with which the blacksmith makes the anvil ring, come from God. He has entrusted men with talents, and He desires them to look to Him for counsel. Thus they may use His gifts with unerring aptitude, testifying that they are workers together with God.” –*Counsels on Stewardship*, p. 114

Paul and Peter confirmed this truth (Romans 12:6–8; 1 Peter 4:10–11). “If we desire to be acknowledged as good and faithful servants, we must do thorough, consecrated work for the Master. He will reward diligent, honest service. If men will put their trust in Him, if they will recognize His compassion and benevolence, and will walk humbly before Him, He will cooperate with them. He will increase their talents.” –*Ibid.*, p. 116

Dear reader, are you ready to consecrate the rest of your life in service to the Lord? If you are not going to do this today, tomorrow might be too late. What is your choice? Are you going to hear, “Well done, good and faithful servant”; or the fearful condemnation, “Thou wicked and slothful servant”? “Now the God of peace . . . Make you perfect in every good work to do His will, working in you that which is well pleasing in His sight, through Jesus Christ; to Whom be glory for ever and ever. Amen.” Hebrews 13:20–21. “Wash you, make you clean; put away the evil of your doings from before Mine eyes; cease to do evil; Learn to do well.” Isaiah 1:16–17

Since all that we have and all that we are belongs to Jehovah, let us learn to use our talents, as if we are in the direct presence of the Master, until He comes. Amen.

**Victor Shumbusho, DR Congo**



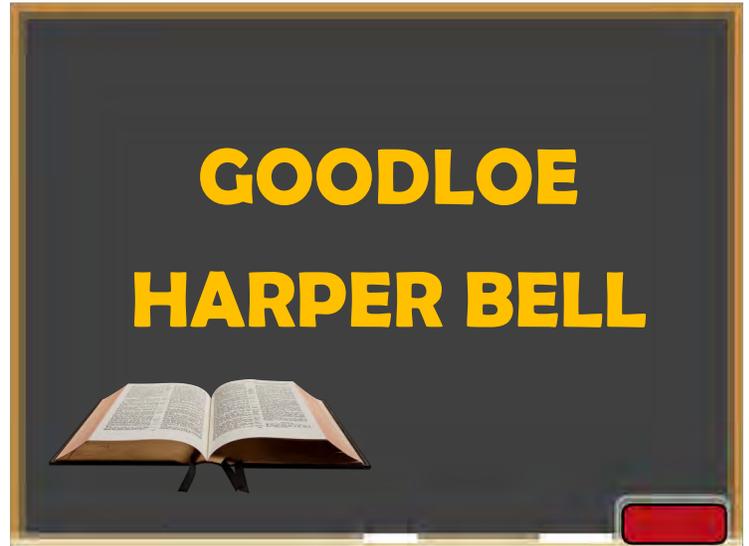


Goodloe Harper Bell was born on April 7, 1832, just 12 years prior to the Great Disappointment in 1844, although he was not associated with the Adventist believers at the time. He was the eldest of 12 children.

“At the age of nineteen he entered upon his chosen lifework,—that of teaching,—which he followed in a larger or smaller way until the day of his death. The study in which he most delighted was that of nature; and often he would go many miles to find one specimen of plant or flower that he had set his heart on critically examining.”—*The General Conference Daily Bulletin*, February 23, 1899

“His first religious affiliations were with the Baptists; but having occasion to visit the Battle Creek Sanitarium for his health, he studied the views of the Seventh-day Adventists, and true to his conceptions of duty, he openly espoused their principles, and soon came into prominence among them.”—*Ibid*

“He had not been there long before he accepted the faith of Seventh-day Adventists. For the sake of his health he worked out on the grounds and in the garden. Elder and Mrs. White lived then on the corner of Washington and Champion streets, just below the sanitarium. Their two sons, Edson and Willie, like all boys, ranged outside the family fence, and became acquainted with the patient gardener. They found him sympathetic to boy problems, and helpful when they brought



their school tasks to him. So they begged their father to have Mr. Bell be their teacher.” —*Footprints of the Pioneers*, by Arthur Spalding, p 193

“In the end Professor Bell did, with the encouragement of James White and other parents, start a private school.” —*Footprints of the Pioneers*, by Arthur Spalding, p 193

This first school for Seventh-day Adventist children was located on the first floor of the old Review and Herald building in Battle Creek, Michigan. He and his family lived on the second floor. “As a teacher Bell was regarded as somewhat of a genius. He had a concept of Christian education far in advance of his time.” —*The Prophetic Faith of our Fathers*, by LeRoy Froom, vol. 4, p. 1132

Goodloe Bell was the first teacher at the Seventh-day Adventist School and he was the co-founder of the Seventh-day Adventist School System. Ellen G. White was a great supporter of this new school system. Along with her two sons, Edson and Willie, the Kellogg brothers, William and John Harvey also were some of the first students. “Professor Bell's friendliness and his love for juniors helped in founding a Christian college later.” —*Advent Pioneers Biographical Sketches and Pictures*, from the E.G. White Estate, p. 7

While teaching he had other responsibilities also such as editing the Youth's Instructor. He had a passion for helping children and young people. In 1869 he was made the superintendent of the Battle Creek School and he also served as General Conference Treasurer for one year, from March 1870 to February 1871. He was also one of the directors of the Health Institute.

Mr. Bell was such a hard and dedicated worker with

many talents that on December 10, 1871, Ellen White was given a vision in which she saw "Bell in connection with the cause and work of God in Battle Creek." It is not surprising that Ellen White wrote that "more was expected of Bro. Bell than can reasonably be of any one man" –*Testimony to the Church at Battle Creek*, p. 8

One of a teacher's most difficult challenges from all time has been to keep the children disciplined when they do not get support from parents and students. Things were no different in the early stages of the SDA education system. Although, Professor Bell was friendly, he was also a strong disciplinarian, which brought both approval and criticism from parents and students. Ellen White wrote: "It is true his style is in marked contrast with the generality of teachers. But it is this kind of teaching that is needed, that will give stability to the character. The lack on the part of some of the parents to sustain Bro. Bell made his work doubly hard." –*Ibid*. "That was the way Professor Bell was. Strict and stern. Sometimes overly so. But he got results and somehow the students loved him. It took that kind of a person to run a school back in the 1860's. And that was the kind of a person Professor Bell was." –*Advent Pioneers Biographical Sketches and Pictures*, from the E.G. White Estate, p. 7

However, Ellen White also had counselled Brother Bell for trying too hard in his own strength: "Bro. Bell did not realize that he was depending more upon system to bring up the church of God to the right position and in working order, than to the influence of the Spirit of God upon the heart. He trusted too much to his own ability." –*Testimony to the Church at Battle Creek*, p. 8

Brother Bell became discouraged and in 1872 left Battle Creek. However, Ellen White recognized his talents and his calling in life and encouraged him to return to teach in the school that coming year. It did not take him long to respond and on June 3, 1872, the school opened on the second story of the old Review and Herald building with twelve students. This school was a success from the beginning, and in December 1874 it outgrew its facility and was moved to the newly erected Battle Creek College. Brother Sydney Brownsberger was the president and Brother Bell was the head of the English Department.

In 1881, a new president took over, Alexander McLearn. Brother Bell and Brother McLearn did not always get along as far as discipline was concerned. Brother McLearn wanted to relax the rules a little. Brother Bell ended up leaving the school in 1882.

Ellen White was a strong supporter of Bell and his desire to maintain appropriate discipline. Brother Bell then went to South Lancaster, Massachusetts, where he opened a new Seventh-day Adventist secondary school that same year.

In his later years, Bell also started the first church correspondence school for those unable to attend the church schools and did not want to attend public schools.

"He might have lived to a ripe old age had it not been that in 1899, in his 67th year, while riding in a carriage drawn by his spirited horse, he had an accident and was killed. Thousands of people mourned the passing of this beloved teacher." –*Advent Pioneers Biographical Sketches and Pictures*, from the E.G. White Estate, p. 6

"Professor Bell was perhaps the most clear-sighted educator the denomination has ever known. He believed thoroughly in the system of Christian education which Mrs. White, divinely inspired, had already presented, . . . The Bible as the foundation, agriculture as the A, B, and C, literature conformed to Christian ideals, science and revelation harmonized, the training of Christian workers the great aim-would that our educational concepts today were as clear and single-minded as his." –*Footprints of the Pioneers*, by Arthur Spalding, p. 16

Today, just like our early Adventist Pioneers, the Seventh-day Adventist Church Reform has church schools in many countries around the world. Instead of a correspondence school, however, an online school has been established, Orion Christian Academy. Through these schools, children and young people obtain a solid education based on Biblical truth to give them a firm foundation on which to establish their faith. To learn more about the work of the Education Department, Orion Christian Academy, homeschooling, or to ask any questions, contact the Education Department leader, Margie Seely ([Education@sda1844.org](mailto:Education@sda1844.org)).





# The Love of God

“God is love.” 1 John 4:16. Everyone who belongs to a Christian religion knows this Bible text. But afterwards, other questions come up, “Does true love exist, and what is love? Is love a feeling?” Paul writes in 2 Corinthians 5:14, “For the love of Christ constraineth us.” Love is revealed in actions. When we stand in line at a bus stop waiting to enter the bus, it is proper for the last one who has arrived to stand at the end of the line. It would be wrong for this last person who as arrived to stand in front of the line. It would bring public disapproval. But if someone who is sitting down sees an older person standing, and then gets up and offers his seat to the older person, this is an action of love.

We need to practice love from birth to the grave. Much has been spoken about love, and many books have been printed about it. In 1 Corinthians chapter 12, Paul is writing about the great gifts of the Spirit, and encourages us to receive them. Then in the last verse he shows us an even higher way, “But covet earnestly the best gifts: and yet shew I unto you a more excellent way.” 1 Corinthians 12:31

“Though I speak with the tongues of men and of angels, and have not charity, I am become as sounding brass, or a tinkling cymbal. And though I have the gift of prophecy, and understand all mysteries, and all knowledge; and though I have all faith, so that I could remove mountains, and have not charity, I am nothing. And though I bestow all my goods to feed the poor, and though I give my body to be burned, and have not charity, it profiteth me nothing.” 1 Corinthians 13:1–3. Paul is exalting love to the utmost. There are sacrifices which are possible to do without love, however, the Apostle Paul mentions that if we do them without love they would not benefit us.

In the same chapter, in verses 4–7, he continues to ex-

plain what true love is, and what love will not do. “Charity suffereth long, and is kind; charity envieth not; charity vaunteth not itself, is not puffed up, Doth not behave herself unseemly, seeketh not her own, is not easily provoked, thinking no evil; Rejoiceth not in iniquity, but rejoiceth in the truth; Beareth all things, believeth all things, hopeth all things, endureth all things.”

If we are traveling on this higher road, we need to examine ourselves to make sure that characteristics which do not belong to love are not revealed in us. Let us strive to climb up Peter’s ladder, which we find in 2 Peter 1:5–7. “And beside this, giving all diligence, add to your faith virtue; and to virtue knowledge; And to knowledge temperance; and to temperance patience; and to patience godliness; And to godliness brotherly kindness; and to brotherly kindness charity.” The highest step in this ladder is charity; it means perfection.

We receive love from heaven; it is given to us as a gift. It is a heavenly plant, planted in us. In a mother’s love we see a small example of God’s love; she loves and cares for her little ones, who have done nothing for her benefit. So also, God cares for us even that we may have done nothing for His benefit, and at the same time He is doing everything for us. We get a better understanding of true love when we look at Calvary and see Jesus dying for our sins. There, true love opens before our eyes like a great ocean, of which the magnitude and depth we do not know.

Paul writes, “That Christ may dwell in your hearts by faith; that ye being rooted and grounded in love, May be able to comprehend with all saints what is the breadth, and length, and depth, and height; And to know the love of Christ, which passeth knowledge, that ye might be filled with all the fulness of God.” Ephesians 3:17–19

In this life we do not fully understand the love of God. Solomon says, "Love is strong as death." Song of Solomon 8:6. It was love that brought the Son of God to the cross. It was love that made Him pray for His murderers; His endless love even defended them, and led Him to say "Father, forgive them; for they know not what they do." Luke 23:34

When Jesus was arrested, His disciples left Him and ran away. They came to Calvary and were standing among the people, but at the cross were standing three defenseless women—His mother, His mother's sister, and Mary Magdalene. They were not afraid to be seen at the cross publicly. They were travelers of the higher road, and it was love stronger than death that kept them there. They did not care about the mocking people; they had no fear of prison or death. After this, millions suffered torture and death, because nothing can separate us from the love of God.

"Who shall separate us from the love of Christ? shall tribulation, or distress, or persecution, or famine, or nakedness, or peril, or sword? As it is written, For Thy sake we are killed all the day long; we are accounted as sheep for the slaughter. Nay, in all these things we are more than conquerors through Him that loved us. For I am persuaded, that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor things to come, Nor height, nor depth, nor any other creature, shall be able to separate us from the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus our Lord." Romans 8:35–39

The love of God has been poured into our hearts, and this love can grow in our hearts by the Holy Spirit. The last words in *The Great Controversy*, p. 678, we read, "The great controversy is ended. Sin and sinners are no

more. The entire universe is clean. One pulse of harmony and gladness beats through the vast creation. From Him who created all, flow life and light and gladness, throughout the realms of illimitable space. From the minutest atom to the greatest world, all things, animate and inanimate, in their unshadowed beauty and perfect joy, declare that God is love."

**Enni Marttinen**

*Translated from Finnish by her son, Timo Martin*



**Enni Marttinen on left with her son  
Timo and daughter Leila in 1947**

**"The rainbow round about the throne is an assurance that God is true, that in Him is no variableness, neither shadow of turning. We have sinned against Him, and are undeserving of His favor; yet He Himself has put into our lips that most wonderful of pleas, 'Do not abhor us, for Thy name's sake; do not disgrace the throne of Thy glory; remember, break not Thy covenant with us.' Jeremiah 14:21. When we come to Him confessing our unworthiness and sin, He has pledged Himself to give heed to our cry. The honor of His throne is staked for the fulfillment of His word unto us." – *Christ's Object Lessons*, p. 148**

**"The rainbow above the throne, the bow of promise, testifies to the whole world that God will never forget His people in their struggle. Let Jesus be our theme. Let us with pen and voice present, not only the commandments of God, but the faith of Jesus. This will promote real heart piety as nothing else can." – *The Ellen G. White 1888 Materials*, p. 728–729**

# How to Solve the Global Burden of Obesity



**“And put a knife to thy throat, if thou be a man given to appetite.” Proverbs 23:2**

“Neither can they please God if they bring sickness upon themselves by the disregard of nature’s laws.” —*Child Guidance*, p. 105

Obesity is defined as a chronic and often progressive condition, with many negative impacts on one’s health. It is a disease of lifestyle choices—noncommunicable and largely preventable—therefore educating people on how to prevent obesity from occurring in the first place is the healthiest and most economical option. This effect on economics not only impacts the obese individual in lost income due to time off work because of illness, but also the healthcare system that must take care of someone who is ill.

“If we pursue a course to lessen our vitality, and sickness and death are the result, it is a violation of the law of God. To shorten life by self-murder is a breach of the sixth precept of God’s law. He has not granted us permission to commit suicide gradually any more than He has given us a permit to commit suicide suddenly. While one puts out existence at once, the other does the work according to approved fashion. The fashionable suicides, by wrong and sinful habits, commit suicide gradually, prolonging their own suffering, and casting a heavy burden upon sympathizing friends. Which is the greater sinner?”—*The Health Reformer*, January 1, 1873. When a person is not well, it not only affects themselves but also their loved ones who have the burden of care placed on them.

## **AT A GLOBAL LEVEL**

The phrase “global burden of obesity” is truer now than ever. Obesity is recognized as a growing health problem world-wide. It is no longer a disease of the developed countries alone. Therefore, strategies need to be advanced world-wide to address the growing numbers of

obese people, and obesity-related illnesses. Going back in history, in recognition of the problem, the first discussions on the need for an organization addressing obesity took place in Great Britain as early as 1961. Later, in the 1970’s, research into obesity increased worldwide. In the 1980’s, the International Association for the Study of Obesity (IASO) was created. In 1995, the International Obesity Task Force (IOTF) was formed, to alert the world to the growing health crisis threatened by soaring levels of obesity.

Since that time, many initiatives and strategies have been developed in many different countries to address the growing problem of obesity. In 2005, the IASO spearheaded a new Global Alliance, which created the first ever global action program to address the issues surrounding the prevention of obesity and the chronic diseases related to obesity, with a particular focus on childhood obesity. In 2014, IASO changed its name to the World Obesity Federation, an umbrella organization for 52 national obesity associations, representing 56 countries. The World Obesity Federation looks at four main strategic goals which are: doing research, creating policies, practical training through educational programs and collaborating with other organizations in the global community. What this plan looks like within each country may be different, but the goals are the same. The main goals that they address are nutrient intake and physical activity as an effective means in reducing the risk of disease from obesity.

Also, the World Health Organization (WHO) has developed a Global Strategy on Diet, Physical Activity and Health. The Global Strategy has 4 main objectives:

- Reduce risk factors for chronic diseases that stem from unhealthy diets and physical inactivity through public

health actions.

- Increase awareness and understanding of the influences of diet and physical activity on health and the positive impact of preventive interventions.
- Develop, strengthen and implement global, regional, national policies and action plans to improve diets and increase physical activity that are sustainable, comprehensive and actively engage all sectors.
- Monitor science and promote research on diet and physical activity.

The WHO acknowledges that globally the burden of lifestyle diseases is rapidly increasing with unhealthy diets and physical inactivity among the leading causes of the major noncommunicable diseases, including cardiovascular disease, type 2 diabetes and certain types of cancer, which contribute substantially to the global burden of disease, death and disability. The most important risk factors include high blood pressure, high concentrations of cholesterol in the blood, inadequate intake of fruit and vegetables, overweight or obesity, physical inactivity and tobacco use. Five of these six risk factors, except tobacco use, are related to diet and physical activity. With diet, risks of disease include increased consumption of energy-dense, nutrient-poor foods that are high in fat, sugar and salt.

Regarding physical activity, compounding the problem is that many people live sedentary lives. Advances in technology have made sitting a big part of people's leisure activities; these advances have also contributed to making daily chores and the jobs that people hold, much less physically tasking.

It is interesting how modern day medical science is now understanding the connection between diet, exercise and health, creating global policies to address obesity. This is something that the Spirit of Prophecy, through the writings of Ellen G.



White, wrote about over 100 years ago.

“What influence does overeating have upon the stomach?—It becomes debilitated, the digestive organs are weakened, and disease, with all its train of evils, is brought on as the result.” —*Healthful Living*, p. 62. “The Lord has instructed me that as a general rule, we place too much food in the stomach. Many make themselves uncomfortable by overeating, and sickness is often the result. The Lord did not bring this punishment on them.

They brought it on themselves; and God desires them to realize that pain is the result of transgression.” — *Counsels on Diet and Foods*, p. 136

“Exercise quickens and equalizes the circulation of the blood, but in idleness the blood does not circulate freely, and the changes in it, so necessary to life and health, do not take place.” —*Counsels to the Church*, p. 218. “Those who do not use their limbs every day will realize a weakness when they do attempt to exercise. The veins and muscles are not in a condition to perform their work and keep all the living machinery in healthful action, each organ in the system doing its part. The limbs will strengthen with use. Moderate exercise every day will impart strength to the muscles, which without exercise become flabby and enfeebled. By active exercise in the open air every day, the liver, kidneys, and lungs also will be strengthened to perform their work.” — *Child Guidance*, p. 339

The aim of prevention strategies should be at reducing risk for all, not just in high-risk individuals. Addressing the population as a whole will have the best results. Healthy diets and physical activity together are the most effective strategy to contain the mounting threat of diseases caused by the risk factors, most of which can lead to obesity. One way to address the problem is by increasing awareness of the health risks of obesity by health promotion on a global level, through government programs that are aimed towards increasing awareness of the increased risks to health; thus individuals and also healthcare professionals who treat individuals can develop effective strategies to reduce risk.

In the church, we also have a responsibility to share the message of health reform to those around us who are not well. While we are to help others in our sphere of influence, in the church obesity can also be a problem. “In nine cases out of ten there is more danger of eating too much than too little. . . . There are many sick who suffer from no disease. The cause of their sickness is indulgence of appetite. They think that if the food is healthful, they may eat as much as they please. This is a great mistake. Persons whose powers are debilitated should eat a moderate and even limited amount of food. The system will then be enabled to do its work easily and well, and a great deal of suffering will be saved.” — *Child Guidance*, p. 399

Progress has been made through various initiatives and programs in many countries in reducing premature death rates from coronary artery disease, cerebrovascular disease and some tobacco related cancers. However, the overall burden and number of patients remain high,

and the numbers of overweight and obese adults and children, and of cases, especially of type 2 diabetes, are growing in many developed countries. Even in developing countries, the prevalence of obesity is increasing.

We have much to do in bearing the health message (the right arm of the message) to a sick world. In this way their minds can be clear and more readily able to grasp the truths of this time.

#### AT AN INDIVIDUAL LEVEL

**Education:** is the best method to encourage people to make lifestyle changes. People need to be educated to increase their awareness and understanding of the influences of diet and physical activity on health and the positive impact it will have for preventing obesity and its harmful effects before they get obese. In many parts of the world, the health message is used as an entering wedge to preach the gospel. Many people more will readily listen to the health message before they are willing to hear the gospel message.

**Energy:** Our bodies are constantly working and using energy to complete tasks. We also use energy automatically to keep our bodies functioning, such as breathing. Even when we are sleeping, we use energy; this is known as the basal metabolic rate. Each person has their own basal metabolic rate which varies depending on their age, height, illness and activity. We use energy for conscious tasks such as walking, lifting and talking. We use more energy when we exercise; the more exercise we do the more energy we will burn off. When we stay the same weight, the energy our body gets from food equals the energy we burn off through automatic and conscious activity.

**Metabolism:** is the rate at which people burn calories. An individual's metabolism can change, depending on circumstances, and thus can affect one's ability to maintain weight. Everyone is different. Some people who eat significant amounts of food never gain weight, while others eat the smallest amount of extra calories and gain weight.

**Weight Gain:** As we age, our bodies are less responsive to the typical way of losing weight, which is less calories in and more calories out. Age-related weight gain has very little to do with maintaining a balance between calories consumed and calories used and much more to do with the changes in the aging body combined with adverse environmental and lifestyle factors.

By the age of 30, the body starts to lose lean body muscle, and gain fat. More food energy gets stored as body fat, which is redistributed to the belly. This weight gain

occurs even if a person maintains their normal calorie intake. Reducing calories and increasing exercise to maintain muscle mass is important in weight management. Other factors which contribute to weight gain as people reach their midlife are the loss of vital factors such as hormones, nutrients, sleep, insulin sensitivity and metabolic efficiency (our metabolism slows down) coupled with a gain in stress, unfavourable gut bugs, and environmental toxins. The gut flora is comprised of bacteria that co-habitate our bodies, many of which are critical to our survival. The overgrowth of unfavourable gut bacteria play a vital role in using, extracting and storing energy, contributing to diet-related obesity. A high fat, high sugar diet triggers an overgrowth of a group of bacteria known as the Firmicutes which harvest refined sugar, importing glucose into the body and converting it to fat. Some people are known to have a specific gene that can increase the risk of diet-induced obesity and diabetes.

**Environment:** Our environment can trigger obesity. Since the end of WWII, over 80,000 industrial chemicals have been created. Many of these chemicals have been classified as obesogens: having the potential to alter metabolic function and lead to weight gain. Some of these chemicals are found as pesticides in our food, and chemical agents in plastic materials. Our environment is not just chemically toxic, but also socially and physically. Many people, in trying to accomplish all the tasks of life, including work and home life, end up over-stressed and under-slept. Too much cortisol (stress hormone) and insomnia contribute to weight gain. There is a relationship between sleep and the way our bodies use nutrients for energy; lack of sleep can affect hormones that control hunger urges. Also, in a fast-paced life, it is easier to provide food for oneself and one's family by purchasing readily accessible processed foods which are often high in refined grains and sugars, and trans-fats. A shift in diet to foods that contribute to maintaining lean body mass (muscles), such as healthy fats and plant proteins is vital. Lifestyle changes to decrease stress, sleep better



and minimize exposure to toxins in the environment all help us maintain a healthy body weight.

While the actual rate at which people can gain weight varies and depends on the individual and their metabolism, age, height, fitness and state of health, obesity does not happen overnight. Obesity occurs gradually when one consumes excess calories, often for many years. For each pound of increased weight, it indicates that 3,500 more calories have been eaten than the body has used. The excess calories are stored as body fat. One-hundred extra calories a day can translate to a 10 pound (4.5 kb) weight gain in a year. It is often when we eat past the point of being full that we are likely to gain weight. Eat slowly and listen to your body, and stop when you feel comfortably satisfied. If you are eating until you are stuffed full, chances are you are eating more than your body needs.

Simply put, *prevention of obesity* is establishing a balance between the amount of calories taken in, the calories used, and one's metabolism, taking into account the environmental aspects of our lives that can also affect our weight. *To reduce obesity* an individual's dietary choices should permit them to have enough energy and maintain a healthy weight and limiting fat consumption and turning away from saturated fats to unsaturated fats and eventually eliminating trans-fatty acids. The diet should have an increased amount of fruits and vegetables, and legumes, whole grains and nuts. Simple sugars should be avoided and salt limited from all sources.

**Physical activity** expends energy, and thus is key to the body's energy balance and weight control. Individuals should engage in adequate exercise throughout their entire lives. "More people die for want of exercise than from overwork; very many more rust out than wear out. In idleness the blood does not circulate freely, and the changes in the vital fluid, so necessary to health and life, do not take place." —*Christian Temperance and Bible Hygiene*, p. 101. At least 30 minutes of regular, moderate-intensity physical activity on most days reduces the risk of cardiovascular disease and diabetes, colon cancer and breast cancer. Physical activity also reduces blood pressure, improves the level of high density lipoprotein cholesterol, improves control of blood glucose in overweight people, and reduces risk for certain cancers, even without significant weight loss. Muscle strengthening and balance



training can reduce falls and increase overall functioning among older adults. More intense activity will assist in weight control.

Although prevention of obesity is the goal, unfortunately, many people develop obesity over their lifetime. Often a lack of motivation can affect someone's desire to lose weight and be healthier. When trying to help an obese person be motivated to lose weight, the following factors should be evaluated: reasons and motivation for weight reduction; previous history of successful and unsuccessful weight loss attempts; family, friends, and work support; the person's understanding of the causes of obesity and how obesity contributes to several diseases; attitude toward physical activity; capacity to engage in physical activity; time availability for weight loss intervention; and financial considerations.

The individual needs to be motivated to be willing to participate in weight loss and treatment by reviewing for them the dangers with maintaining obesity and by describing an approved strategy for weight reduction.

If a person takes good care of their health and carefully follows the health principles, they can remain healthy into their seventh, eighth and ninth decades.

Treatment and prevention of obesity needs to occur at all levels, from an individual's person's lifestyle choices, to increased awareness in the healthcare community of the risks of obesity, to government programs that assist at-risk individuals to change behaviours, to the church teaching the health reform message, thus increasing the populations' awareness to the risks of obesity. Implementing interventions at all levels is key to reducing the global burden of obesity.

"God will not work a miracle to keep those from sickness who have no care for themselves, but are continually violating the laws of health and make no efforts to prevent disease. When we do all we can on our part to have health, then may we expect that the blessed results will follow, and we can ask God in faith to bless our efforts for the preservation of health. He will then answer our prayer, if His name can be glorified thereby. But let all understand that they have a work to do. God will not work in a miraculous manner to preserve the health of persons who are taking a sure course to make themselves sick, by their careless inattention to the laws of health." —*A Call to Medical Evangelism and Health Education*, p. 35



**NEXT MONTH: FOCUS ON CHILDHOOD OBESITY**



# Keeping Your Word



"Hello Annie, how are you?"

"Hello Pastor, I'm good, thank you," Annie answered as she shook the Pastor's hand at the end of the service. It was a custom to shake everyone's hands after the second service.

"I heard you have been taking violin lessons, how has that been going?"

"Very good, Pastor, I have learned several hymns. My favourite is 'It is well with my Soul.'"

"That is one of my favourite hymns as well. We would love to hear you play. Would you like to play a special for us next Sabbath?" asked Pastor as he took out his agenda and a pen, ready to write down a reminder.

"Sure Pastor, I can do a special next Sabbath," Annie answered without hesitation. She felt confident. Mother stood by her side and smiled.

As soon as Annie got home, she began to practise her special. However, as the week went by, she started to feel less and less confident. During one of her practise sessions, she began to feel scared. She could already feel everyone looking at her. This would certainly cause her fingers to sweat, her hands to tremble and it was definite she would make a mistake. Just thinking about it made her heart race. No, she couldn't do this; she must ask mother to call Pastor and cancel the special. Mother watched Annie; she could see something was wrong. She had been sitting on the sofa, crocheting, as she listened to Annie practise. Suddenly, the music had

stopped, and Annie was as white as a sheet of paper.

"Annie?" mother stopped crocheting, she was concerned.

"Mother, I can't do it." Annie was almost in tears, "I'm scared, Mother; can you please call Pastor and tell him I won't do it?"

"No, Annie, I can't and I won't," mother said sternly.

"But why? Please Mother, I don't want to anymore."

Mother reached for the family Bible, and opened it up to Ecclesiastes 5:5.

"Annie, you made a promise when you said yes to Pastor," said Mother.

"I didn't promise, I only said yes," said Annie, trying to find a way out.

"Well, when you say yes to someone, it's like you are making a promise. A promise is to assure someone that you will definitely do something. Saying 'yes' is the same thing. The Bible says, 'let your yes be yes and your no be no.' Not only that, in Ecclesiastes 5:5, God tells us through His word that *'better is it that thou shouldst not vow, than that thou shouldst vow and not pay.'* In other words, if you can't keep your word, then you should not say yes in the first place.

"If you said yes, then you follow through. Next time you must not be so impulsive to give an answer. It is better you let the person know you will think about it and later give them an answer rather than answering quickly and then regretting your answer. As Christians, we must keep our word and feel ashamed when we change our answer. This will teach you that when you make a promise to God, you must learn to keep that promise. You said 'yes'; now keep your word."

Annie listened to Mother and it all made sense. She had



# Botswana



# Ethiopia





**Left: Ekuku Agbor church in Delta state of Nigeria**

**Madagascar**



**Burkina Faso**



**Madagascar**



## Consolations of Heaven

How oft have hope's visions  
Deceived the fond-hearted.  
Like the rainbow they shone-  
Like the rainbow departed-  
When their light, that once sparkled,  
Is darkened and gone;  
See! the rainbow that fades not,  
It arches God's throne!

Earth's grounds, oh, how tempting  
Their flowers and their fruit,  
How we love their sweet shadow;  
But a worm's at the root!  
When thy gourd, that once sheltered,  
Is withered away,  
Be the shadow of Jesus  
Thy shelter and stay!

As the Dove, when of old,  
From the ark it went forth,  
Some green spot to rest on,  
To seek through the earth;  
When it found that the deluge,  
So deep and so dark,  
Left no green spot uncovered,  
Returned to the ark,

So when floods of affliction  
Have deluged all round,  
And no green spot of gladness,  
No hope-branch is found,  
Then flee to the Saviour,  
The true ark of rest!  
Oh there's no place of shelter  
Like His pitying breast!

From Him thine own Saviour,  
Whate'er may betide thee,  
No distance can sever,  
No sorrow divide thee:  
Earth's friends may forsake-  
But He'll forsake never;  
Earth's loved ones may die,-  
But He lives forever.  
*- The Advent Review and Sabbath  
Herald, December 8, 1863*

