

THE PHILOSOPHICAL RESEARCH SOCIETY

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THE BEST USE OF SPARE TIME

GREETINGS:

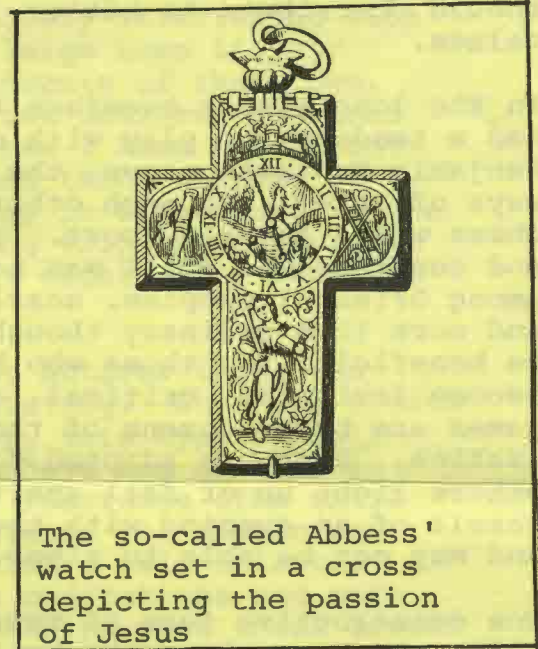


he great physician Hippocrates of Cos once said: "Life is short and art is long." There is so much to learn in this world that very few of us can afford to waste time. It is the most valuable commodity available to us and the supply is limited.

We must all give some of our hours and days to earning a living, advancing our skills, and maintaining our enterprises. With conditions as they are now, we may be forgiven for seeking rest and relaxation. In older times when life was less confusing, we enjoyed more or less useful or inspiring avocational interests. Today, however, we are inclined to "kill time"--in itself a very serious offense. Very often our so-called recreational interests simply contribute to fatigue and tension. In this respect television is a serious offender. There are worthwhile programs which can contribute to the enrichment of character, but these are in the minority. Thoughtful persons are now planning their T. V. watching. They will turn on what appears to be the best news coverage, educational or musical programs which they especially enjoy, and natural history themes. The important point is to turn off material which damages the mind or emotions or advances objectionable policies.

Leisure is expensive at best. We must work many hours in order to earn the right and means to enjoy a quiet evening with friends and family. We can ask ourselves how leisure should be used to advance the total pattern of our living. For example, if we work in an office all day, we need to have avocational activities which bring us into contact with the natural world and the cultural opportunities which our society affords. We need "mind stretchers"--unusual forms of knowledge, human interest stories, travel, and performing arts. What we do not need are business conspiracies, financial corruption, crime, and degeneracy. If we have little contact with the larger world, our occasional glimpses should have constructive significance.

Retired people especially seem to take special pleasure in wasting time. They are drifting along being as comfortable as possible for their remaining years. This is not what nature intended. The years after retirement can be and should be especially meaningful. With more time available, we should all grow more rapidly. Experience



The so-called Abbess' watch set in a cross depicting the passion of Jesus

should contribute to better judgment and keener appreciation of values.

In the long winter evenings those gathered in the country store had a tendency to play with checkers. In the pleasant glow of a Benjamin Franklin stove, the checker champions developed numerous ways of outwitting each other. In the sober light of a plush club, chess was a favored sport. Some games lasted for several days and considerable skill was necessary to make a fair showing. Among Oriental peoples, nearly all games required concentration and more than ordinary thoughtfulness. Games, however, may not be beneficial for those who have neurotic tendencies. They can become irritated, critical, and generally obnoxious. And now the games are back--dozens of them. Many are by-products of computerization. Some are adapted to the television screen, and still others light up or fall apart with the aid of batteries. As a result of an evening with these contraptions, everyone is worn out and may not be able to sleep without a tranquilizer.

One constructive form of recreation is especially recommended for those who have given the best years of their lives to boring or routine responsibilities. Self-expression is a release of creative instincts. To express one's self is much more rewarding than listening to others who are expressing themselves. How about tearing yourself away from the television and learning to play a musical instrument? Then there is drawing and painting, and for the more agile folk dancing. Senior citizens often have opportunities to travel, visit art galleries and museums, or take lessons in handicrafts. The philosophy involved is to become a doer rather than a viewer. Instead of waiting patiently for an hour until the F.B.I. gets its man, one can spend many happy hours designing Christmas cards for the coming season or writing anecdotes which are often accepted by a leading publication. Assuming that you can program your time in advance, you can balance your recreations to give variety and interest to spare time. Most people will be better if once a week they have social contact with friends or neighbors. The second evening can be devoted to serious reading on current affairs. After that, favorite television programs can be watched. Along the way there should be a time set aside for a hobby--preferably an activity which provides elements of learning or original thinking. Saturday, of course, involves practical chores needed for the maintenance of personal living, and Sunday provides time for studies in philosophy, religion, and mysticism, and/or attendance to religious services. These divisions do not need to be kept so rigidly that interruptions become distasteful. Interruptions can be part of the spice of life. The main point is not to do the same thing every evening, not to always have the same friends in, or eat out at a certain restaurant, or take on metaphysical teachings seven days a week.

If you enjoy games allow for them and, if you can endure a television, set aside the leisure for favored programs. Have as much diversity as possible and, if you have reasonable financial security, spend a little now and then for something you really want to do. If you are

in good health, remain active and do those things which you enjoy most. You might find that trivia are seriously interfering with your vital interests. You may not need a large home if your children are all married and have establishments of their own. Relieve yourself of all possible drudgery and conserve time and energy for favorite activities. Some friends I know have spent most of their retirement years traveling and think nothing of starting out on a world cruise or a holiday in Scandinavia. One of them told me that he realized that a long trip at eighty-five presented some hazards, but staying home at eighty-five was also dangerous.

To live successfully with yourself you must outgrow those tendencies which you find unpleasant or disquieting. When you create artificial projects simply to keep you busy, this type of self-deceit brings little satisfaction. If you have had no time in which to develop happy attitudes, you must rearrange time until it brings new opportunities to grow and release the happiness which is locked somewhere in all of us. With a well balanced program there will be less dependence upon medications and more normal appetite and more congenial relationships with those around you. The organization of leisure is a career in itself and is one that you can plan and is not forced upon you by the pressures and responsibilities of business or profession. Wise planning can actually add years to a life expectancy and reduce the probabilities of those psychosomatic ailments which arise largely from boredom or mental idleness.

Always most sincerely,

Marilyn P. Hill

RECOMMENDED READING:

Achad, Frater	Ancient Mystical White Brotherhood	(P)	\$ 4.95
Albertus, Frater	Alchemist's Handbook	(C)	12.50
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