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ABSTRACT

THE NATURE AND ROLE OF HEALTH LAWS
IN THE WRITINGS OF ELLEN G. WHITE

by

Lehel Somogyi

Adviser: Denis Kaiser

ABSTRACT OF GRADUATE STUDENT RESEARCH

Thesis

Andrews University

Seventh-day Adventist Theological Seminary

Title: THE NATURE AND ROLE OF HEALTH LAWS IN THE WRITINGS OF
ELLEN G. WHITE

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The Topic

Since the founding of their denomination, Seventh-day Adventists have advocated a particular concept of health based on the visions and writings of denominational co-founder Ellen G. White (1827–1915). According to her writings, certain natural laws are crucial for maintaining health. These laws are often called “the laws of health” or “the eight laws of health” and include principles such as diet, exercise, water, temperance, and hygiene. In Seventh-day Adventist circles, Ellen G. White is usually perceived as the originator of these health principles. Some scholars suggest that she simply borrowed her health principles from other contemporary health reformers.

The Purpose

This study aims to define the expressions used in the context of the “laws of health” through Ellen G. White’s own writings and to determine the similarities and differences between her writings and those of other contemporary health reformers to identify her unique contributions to the eight principles of health.

The Sources

This study was based on primary sources produced by Ellen G. White and other selected health reformers. Both primary and secondary sources were used for background and historical context. Scientific studies were used to examine the relevance of the concepts presented in the writings of Ellen G. White.

Conclusions

The study found that: (1) The concept of the laws of health can be viewed as a fundamental idea in the health-related writings of Ellen G. White, and they also constitute the Adventist health message. Her health laws have a very broad scope, covering most areas of spiritual and physical life. Her health visions, together with her writings, provided a pure source of health and lifestyle guidance for the developing movement. She always tied these laws to the Bible, pointing out their close relationship with God’s moral laws. (2) Health and healing are among the main theological concepts in the Bible. The health laws presented by Ellen G. White and other health reformers have their source in the Bible. The biblical promise of the final restoration of health and resurrection has the potential to provide comfort to many people with depression or other mental problems. (3) It is remarkable how many people throughout history have dealt with the laws of health. Although they had some errors in their thinking, the basic ideas were sound and

balanced. (4) The comparison of the writings of nineteenth-century health reformers with those of Ellen G. White showed numerous similarities, which serve as a basis to criticize and discredit her as a prophet. This thesis attempts to provide some explanations or counterarguments. First, they all lived in the same age and used the same terminology. Second, the fact that some of her ideas were present decades or centuries before she presented them does not necessarily mean that her ideas did not come from divine inspiration. Inspiration often uses existing sources or common sense to produce a new and error-free guideline for God's people to prepare for a higher life. For Ellen G. White, health was not a goal in itself but rather a tool for character formation and for the mission of the church. (5) Rather than seeing nineteenth-century health reformers as having invented their own ideas and trying to sort out carefully which idea belonged to which reformer and who borrowed from whom, this study found that it is a system that already existed from the time of creation. It can be discovered by man but not invented. Only God can be considered to have invented this system. (6) Scientific data suggest that the health laws promoted by Ellen G. White and other health reformers still have relevance today. The use of these principles for prevention or cure has become a medical specialty under the name "lifestyle medicine." This "new" method uses lifestyle intervention to treat many of the non-communicable diseases (NCSs).

Andrews University
Seventh-day Adventist Theological Seminary

THE NATURE AND ROLE OF HEALTH LAWS
IN THE WRITINGS OF ELLEN G. WHITE

A Thesis
Presented in Partial Fulfillment
of the requirements for the Degree
Master of Arts

by

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Date approved

To my wife

Magdolna Somogyi-Balog

For her patience with me

And to my friend and colleague

Dr. Wynn Horsley

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CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

Background of the Problem

While health should be an important matter for everyone, many people do not care about the long-term effects of their lifestyle choices. Because they do not observe any short-term consequences, they presume they are safe from any long-term effects. Both types of people—those who care and those who do not—coexist. At the same time, there are more health problems than ever. Diseases like cancer, cardiovascular problems, diabetes, and obesity are on the rise, causing millions of deaths each year.¹ In most cases, these diseases have a very strong relationship with one’s lifestyle, which means that these health problems could be prevented, and as a result, many lives could be saved.

Interestingly, many cultures in history developed their own philosophies on health and lifestyle.² For example, in Ancient Greece, there was a positive emphasis on the importance of exercise and temperance. Medicine was well developed, as evidenced by

¹Among them, heart disease and cancer are the leading causes of death in the US. See the website of the Centers for Disease Control and Health Prevention, <https://www.cdc.gov/nchs/fastats/leading-causes-of-death.htm>. See also the website of World Health Organization: Cardiovascular diseases (CVDs), last modified 11 June 2021, accessed March 11, 2023, [https://www.who.int/news-room/fact-sheets/detail/cardiovascular-diseases-\(cvds\)](https://www.who.int/news-room/fact-sheets/detail/cardiovascular-diseases-(cvds)) and Cancer, last modified February 3, 2022, accessed March 11, 2023, <https://www.who.int/news-room/fact-sheets/detail/cancer>.

² Daniel M. Becker, “History of Preventive Medicine”, in *Prevention in Clinical Practice*, eds. Daniel M. Becker, Laurence B. Gardner (New York: Plenum Publishing Corporation, 1988), 13-14.

the works of famous physicians like Hippocrates and Galen.³ In ancient India, vegetarianism was practiced and promoted among Hindus and Jains.⁴ There are certain regions in the world where people live longer and where today's common lifestyle-related diseases are very rare or non-existent.⁵

Since the founding of their denomination, Seventh-day Adventists have advocated a particular concept of health based on the visions and writings of denominational co-founder Ellen G. White (1826-1915). According to her writings, there are certain natural laws that are crucial for maintaining health. These laws are often called “laws of health,” “the laws of life,” or “principles,” and include diet, exercise, water, temperance, and hygiene.⁶ She suggested that if obeyed, these “laws” could prevent most diseases.⁷ White

³ Roy Porter, *Blood and Guts. A Short Story of Medicine* (Allen Lane, The Penguin Press, 2002) 45-60. Kempler Kurt, *A gyógyszeres története /History of Pharmacology/* (Budapest: Gondolat, 1984), 22-33. Christos F. Kleisaris, C. F Kleisaris, C. Sfakianakis, and I. V. Papathanasiou, “Health care practices in ancient Greece: The Hippocratic ideal.” *Journal of Medical Ethics and History of Medicine* vol. 7 no 6. (2014):15.

⁴ Colin Spencer, *The Heretic's Feast. A History of Vegetarianism* (Hanover, NH: University of New England, 1993), 33-68, 69-86.

⁵ These regions are called “blue zones,” a term that appeared for the first time in a demographic work done by Gianni Pes and Michel Poulain, published in 2004 by the journal *Experimental Gerontology*. They identified Sardinia's Nuoro province as the region with the highest concentration of male centenarians. See, M. Poulain, G. Pes, C. Grasland, C. Carru, L. Ferrucci, G. Baggio, and L. Deiana, “Age-validation and non-random Spatial Distribution of Extreme Longevity in Sardinia: the AKEA Study,” *Experimental Gerontology* 39 (2004): 1423-1429. Later other regions were added: Okinawa, Japan; Nicoya Peninsula, Costa Rica; Icaria, Greece; Loma Linda, United States. See: Dan Buettner, “The Secrets of Long Life,” *National Geographic* (November 2005): 2-26; M. Poulain, A. Herm, and G. M. Pes, “The Blue Zones: Areas of exceptional longevity around the world,” *Vienna Yearbook of Population Research* 11 (2013): 87–108, accessed June 10, 2023, <https://doi.org/10.1553/populationyearbook2013s87>.

⁶ Ellen G. White, *The Ministry of Healing* (Oakland, CA: Pacific Press, 1905), 234. Ellen G. White, *An Appeal to Mothers* (Battle Creek, MI: Steam Press of the Seventh-Day Adventist Publishing Association, 1864), 15; Ellen G. White, *Christian Temperance and Bible Hygiene* (Battle Creek, MI: Good Health Publishing Co., 1890), 79.

⁷ White, *Ministry of Healing*, 113, 128.

often reasoned that these principles have not only preventive but also curative power, which is why she called them “natural or simple remedies” or “God’s physicians.”⁸

These eight “laws” seemingly developed over a period of five decades. As a result of this process, in her book *The Ministry of Healing* (1905), she wrote: “Pure air, sunlight, abstemiousness, rest, exercise, proper diet, the use of water, trust in divine power—these are the true remedies.”⁹ Based on this list, the concept of the eight laws of health was created.¹⁰

Ellen G. White elaborated extensively on the individual laws and their effects on the body in *The Ministry of Healing*, other articles, and unpublished materials that were posthumously published in compilations such as *Counsels on Health* (1923), *Medical Ministry* (1932), and *Counsels on Diet and Foods* (1938).¹¹

Over the next half-century, Seventh-day Adventists began to think of health in terms of these eight laws. These simple principles gave rise to hundreds of Adventist schools, hospitals, lifestyle centers, health food stores, and health food factories.¹² These

⁸ Ellen G. White: 6a, 1890, published in Ellen G. White, *Medical Ministry* (Mountain View, CA: Pacific Press, 1932), 259-260. Ellen G. White: *Testimonies for the Churches* (Mountain View, CA: Pacific Press, 1882), 5: 443; White, *The Ministry of Healing*, 128.

⁹ White, *Ministry of Healing*, 128.

¹⁰ This is the most common name of the concept, although in Adventist circles other terms are also used, like “eight doctors,” “eight principles of health,” etc. For example the children book Lisa Kack, 8 Doctors for Little Me, or HOPEsource’s materials, <https://www.hopesource.com/product/eight-principles-of-good-health/>

¹¹ Ellen G. White, *Counsels on Health* (Mountain View, CA: Pacific Press, 1923), Ellen G. White, *Medical Ministry* (Mountain View, CA: Pacific Press, 1932), Ellen G. White, *Counsels on Diet and Foods* (Washington D.C.: Review and Herald, 1938)

¹² Loma Linda University Health is an academic medical center operating six hospitals and other medical organizations (<https://lluh.org/>). AdventHealth is a non-profit health care system operating facilities in 9 states across the United States (<https://www.adventhealth.com/>). Weimar University (<https://weimar.edu/>), Wildwood Health Institute (<https://wildwoodhealth.org/>) and Uchee Pines Institution (<https://www.uchEEPines.org/>) are supporting ministries of the Seventh-day Adventist Church providing

principles inspired the creation of the NEWSTART program by Weimar Institute, based in Weimar, California, in the late 1970s.¹³ Additionally, many individuals learned about this concept through publications and used it for their personal benefit.¹⁴

Millions of lives worldwide were likely saved or extended as a result of the application of the philosophy of health found in the writings of Ellen G. White.

Statement of Problem

In Seventh-day Adventist circles, Ellen G. White is usually perceived as the originator of the concept of the laws of health. However, some scholars, such as Ronald L. Numbers, suggest that she borrowed her health principles from other contemporary American health reformers, denying that she made any unique contribution.¹⁵ Others, such as Don McMahon and Leonard Brand, argue against this assertion, suggesting that her uniqueness lies in her selective appropriation of certain principles and her refusal to embrace others promoted by her contemporaries. Their research, however, was limited to examining White's health advice in relation to today's most common causes of death as

educational, health, business, and evangelistic services. Country Life Natural Foods running a chain of health food stores and restaurants (<https://countrylifefoods.com/>).

¹³ Weimar Institute of Health & Education, and Weimar College (now Weimar University) was opened in 1978. This institute became world-renowned after launching its NEWSART program. According to Vernon Foster, the famous acronym was created by one of their health guests. For more details, see: Vernon W. Foster, *New Start!: New Health, New Energy, New Joy!: The Newstart Program for Renewed Health, Restored Energy and New Pleasure in Living!* (Santa Barbara, CA: Woodbridge, 2000), 17.

¹⁴ Some of the well-known presentations of the eight laws of health is found in the following works, Foster, *New Start!*, Neil Nedley, *Proof Positive: How to Reliably Combat Disease and Achieve Optimal Health Through Nutrition and Lifestyle* (Ardmore, OK: Neil Nedley. M.D., 1998), Aileen Ludington, Hans Diel, *Lifestyle Capsules-A concise, reliable blueprint for better health in easy doses* (Santa Barbara, CA: Woodbridge Press, 1991).

¹⁵ Ronald L. Numbers, *The Prophetess of Health: A Study of Ellen G. White*, 3rd ed. (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 2008).

determined by the World Health Organization.¹⁶ These varying appraisals of White's laws or principles of health, in relation to the writings of other contemporary health reformers, pose unanswered questions about the precise similarities and differences in the nature, meaning, rationale, uniqueness, and relevance of these principles.

Statement of Purpose

The aim of this study is to define the terms used in the context of the "laws of health" through Ellen G. White's own writings and to determine the similarities and differences between her writings and those of other contemporary health reformers. This will help identify her unique contributions to the eight principles of health.

Review of Prior Research

The concept of the laws of health encompasses historical, theological, and scientific aspects. However, relatively few works focus on these aspects comprehensively.

D. E. Robinson's classic work, *The Story of Our Health Message*,¹⁷ is the most complete account of the historical development of Adventist health principles and institutions. Robinson indicates that some basic elements of the Adventist health message

¹⁶ Don S. McMahon, *Acquired or Inspired? Exploring the Origins of the Adventist Lifestyle* (Victoria, Australia: Signs Pub. Co., 2005). McMahon, The nature of inspiration in the health writings of Ellen White, *Ellen White and Current Issues Symposium*. Vol 4, (Berrien Springs, MI.: Center for Adventist Research, 2008); Leonard Brand and Don S. McMahon, *The Prophet and Her Critics: A Striking New Analysis Refutes the Charges That Ellen G. White "Borrowed" the Health Message* (Nampa, ID et al.: Pacific Press, 2005).

¹⁷ D. E. Robinson, *The Story of Our health message* (Nashville, TN: Southern Publishing Association, 1965).

were available at the beginning of the Advent movement. However, he does not provide detailed insights into how these elements developed over time.

Richard Schwartz's *Light Bearers to the Remnant*¹⁸ similarly discusses the development of the health message within the Advent movement, offering only a few hints about the historical background of the idea of health laws.

Don McMahon's *Acquired or Inspired* explores the origin of Adventist lifestyle practices and presents arguments for inspiration as the source of Ellen G. White's health message. He examines contemporary health reformers who influenced White and compares their main ideas with White's teachings using statistical and computerized analysis. McMahon concludes that the medical knowledge found in White's works is more accurate than that of her contemporaries. However, his work lacks a precise comparison of each health principle with exact references to individual statements.

Ronald Numbers, in his book *A Prophetesses of Health*, questions the prophetic ministry of Ellen G. White, arguing that most of her ideas on health were borrowed from external sources rather than inspired sources. He suggests that literary borrowing discredits her as a writer and prophet. Although Numbers provides useful historical context about the Adventist health reform and contemporary health reformers, his work is predominantly focused on portraying Ellen G. White as a plagiarist, which risks bias and exaggeration.

¹⁸ R.W. Schwartz, *Light Bearers to the Remnant* (Mountain View, CA, Omaha NE, Oshawa, Ont.: Pacific Press, 1979).

The staff of the Ellen G. White Estate responded to Numbers' arguments in detail in the book *A Critique of the Book Prophetess of Health*.¹⁹ This study offers valuable information on the historical context in which Ellen G. White lived and worked.

James C. Whorton's *Nature Cures: The History of Alternative Medicine*²⁰ presents the development and popularity of alternative medicinal practices in nineteenth-century America. While critical of the health reformers of that era, Whorton provides a wealth of biographical information. However, his work is limited to the nineteenth century and does not systematically address each health principle, such as diet, exercise, and the use of water.

Lifestyle and Medicine in the Enlightenment, edited by James Kennaway and Rina Knoeff,²¹ explores concepts of lifestyle and natural remedies in the eighteenth century. Although this work provides a unique historical overview, it focuses on a short historical period.

Mervyn Hardinge's *A Physician Explains Ellen White's Counsel on Drugs, Herbs, and Natural Remedies*²² aims to clarify health-related terms in White's works. This work mainly focuses on drugs and medical practices of her era, thus offering a limited perspective.

¹⁹ *A Critique of the Prophetess of Health* (Washington, DC: Ellen G. White Estate, 1976).

²⁰ James C. Whorton, *Nature Cures: The History of Alternative Medicine in America* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2004).

²¹ James Kennaway and Rina Knoeff, "The Six Non-Naturals in the Long Eighteenth Century," in *Lifestyle and Medicine in the Enlightenment*, eds., James Kennaway and Rina Knoeff (New York: Routledge, 2020).

²² Mervyn Hardinge's *A Physician Explains Ellen White's Counsel on Drugs, Herbs, and Natural Remedies* (Hagerstown, MD: Review and Herald, 2001)

Vernon W. Foster's *New Start*, Neil Nedley's *Proof Positive*, and *Lifestyle Capsules* by Aileen Ludington M.D. and Hans Diel provide helpful tools for exploring the scientific aspects of health laws. However, these classic works were written more than twenty years ago. Therefore, it is worthwhile to examine some more recent research findings to assess the continued relevance of the health laws promoted by these health reformers.

Methodology

This work is a descriptive historical study based on published and unpublished primary sources found in various libraries and online databases. An examination of Ellen G. White's writings will provide the necessary information on how she defined the nature and meaning of health laws and the rationale she provided for them. A study of the writings of other contemporary health reformers will offer insights into their understanding and formulation of health principles, including their meaning and rationale. By comparing these two sets of writings, this study aims to determine the similarities, differences, and unique aspects of Ellen White's health laws in relation to those of contemporary health reformers. Additionally, secondary sources will be evaluated to provide context and aid in reconstructing the historical background and development of health principles during Ellen White's time.

Scope and Delimitations

This study will focus on the nature and origin of the key health concepts of Ellen G. White. It will not provide an exhaustive treatment of each health principle under

discussion. Some deeper theological aspects of health and lifestyle, aspects of modern medical knowledge, and philosophical nuances will lie outside the purview of this work.

Design of the Study

This work contains seven chapters. Chapter 1 will examine the term “laws of health” and other related terms in the writings of Ellen G. White. The focus will be on identifying the different lists of health laws found in her writings. Chapter 2 will delve into what Ellen G. White had to say about individual health laws, aiming to elucidate what each health law encompasses. Chapter 3 will explore how these health laws are presented in the Bible, demonstrating the biblical basis for these laws. Chapter 4 will cover the historical development of different concepts of health laws up to the time of Ellen G. White. Chapter 5 will present the perspectives of contemporary health reformers on the main health laws, providing a detailed comparison between their writings and those of Ellen G. White. This chapter will also discuss the issue of literary borrowing. Chapter 6 will highlight the medical aspects of these laws, showing their validity and relevance in light of modern science. Chapter 7 will draw important conclusions from the study, synthesizing the findings of the previous chapters.

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CHAPTER 2

LAWS OF HEALTH IN THE WRITINGS OF ELLEN G. WHITE

Introduction

In this chapter, we will explore how Ellen G. White used the term “laws of health” and other related expressions. We will examine the role of these terms in her writings and how she connected them to moral laws. Then, we will review some of her earliest health-related writings and see how she responded to lifestyle practices of her time. We will also address the two functions of the health laws: their preventive and curative aspects. As demonstrated in the following sections, highlighting their life-giving and restorative power. Finally, we will identify some specific laws by reviewing several paragraphs in chronological order to determine if there is any development of thought.

Defining the Term “The Laws of Health”

The word “law” is usually used to denote a system of rules or principles that have binding force. People are surrounded by various kinds of laws that regulate their lives and surroundings. There are unchanging physical laws that govern the animate and inanimate world, moral laws that help us differentiate between right and wrong, and state laws that regulate human behavior in society.²³ “Health” is generally defined as the condition of

²³ In Noah Webster’s 1828 dictionary, the meaning of the word “law” is listed in 26 categories. Among them the following ones seem to have a relationship with the laws of health: “A rule . . . Law of

being sound in body, mind, or spirit, and particularly freedom from physical disease or pain.²⁴

The term “the laws of health” is one of the major expressions in Ellen White’s health-related writings. This term was widely used by her contemporaries and was clear enough to become a general term. However, Ellen G. White also used several other expressions referring to the same health laws. These expressions include “the laws of

nature . . . Physical laws, or laws of nature.” *An American Dictionary of the English Language*, s.v. “law.” Modern dictionaries give similar definitions. According to the *Compact Oxford English Dictionary*, a law is “a statement of fact to the effect that a particular natural or scientific phenomenon always occurs if certain conditions are present . . . something having binding force or effect.” *Compact Oxford English Dictionary of Current English*, 2nd ed., s.v. “law.” According to the *Collins English Dictionary*, a law can be “a rule or set of rules, enforced by the courts, regulating the government of a state . . . A general principle, formula, or rule describe a phenomenon in mathematics, science, philosophy, etc.” *Collins English Dictionary*, Millennium ed., s.v. “law.”

²⁴ Noah Webster’s 1828 dictionary gives the following meaning: “HEALTH, n. health. [from heal.] That state of an animal or living body, in which the parts are sound, well organized and disposed, and in which they all perform freely their natural functions. In this state, the animal feels no pain. This word is applied also to plants. 1. Sound state of the mind; natural vigor of faculties. 2. Sound state of the mind, in a moral sense; purity; goodness. There is no health in us. 3. Salvation or divine favor, or grace which cheers God’s people. Psalm 43:5. 4. Wish of health and happiness; used in drinking. Come, love and health to all; an elliptical phrase, for, I wish health to you.” *An American Dictionary of the English Language*, s.v. “health,” emphasis original.

life,”²⁵ “the laws of nature” (or nature’s law),²⁶ “natural law,”²⁷ “physical law,”²⁸ “the laws of their being,”²⁹ “health principles,”³⁰ “principles of healthful living,”³¹ “the

²⁵ “Mothers should educate their daughters in regard to the laws of life. They should understand their own frame, and the relation their eating, drinking, and every-day habits, have to health, and a sound constitution, without which the sciences would be of but little benefit.” Ellen G. White, *An Appeal to Mothers* (Battle Creek, MI: Steam Press of the Seventh-day Adventist Publ. Assn., 1864), 15. “Many groan under a burden of infirmities because of wrong habits of eating and drinking, which do violence to the laws of life and health.” Ellen G. White, “Bible Temperance,” *Health Reformer*, November 1, 1882, 336. “Against every transgression of the laws of life, nature will utter her protest. She bears abuse as long as she can; but finally the retribution comes, and it falls upon the mental as well as the physical powers. Nor does it end with the transgressor; the effects of his indulgence are seen in his offspring, and thus the evil is passed down from generation to generation.” Ellen G. White, *Christian Temperance and Bible Hygiene* (Battle Creek, MI: Good Health, 1890), 44-45. “The Lord has given us reason, and He expects that we shall exercise reason, and act in harmony with the laws of life implanted within us, obeying them that we may have a well-balanced organization.” Ellen G. White, “Come Ye Yourselves Apart, . . . and Rest Awhile,” *Review and Herald*, November 7, 1893, 693-694. “Those who act as teachers are to be intelligent in regard to disease and its causes, understanding that every action of the human agent should be in perfect harmony with the laws of life.” Ellen G. White, “The Circulation of Our Health Journals,” *Review and Herald*, November 12, 1901, 730.

²⁶ “Fashions the most unlovely and unhealthful, the most contradictory to the laws of nature, are readily accepted by them. By eagerly beholding these fashions, they become changed to the likeness of what they so much admire.” White, *Christian Temperance and Bible Hygiene*, 95. “They rebelled against the laws of nature, and suffered the punishment of her abused laws. Suffering and mortality now prevail everywhere, especially among the children.” Ellen G. White, *Christian Education* (Battle Creek, MI: International Tract Society, 1894), 11. “In its human wisdom the world knows not God. Its wise men gather an imperfect knowledge of God through his created works, and then in their foolishness exalt nature and the laws of nature above nature’s God.” Ellen G. White, *Healthful Living* (Battle Creek, MI: Medical Missionary Board, 1897), 294. “The material world is under God’s control. The laws of nature are obeyed by nature. Everything speaks and acts the will of the Creator.” Ellen G. White, *Christ Object Lesson* (Oakland, CA: Pacific Press, 1900), 82. “Parents should study the laws of nature. They should become acquainted with the organism of the human body. They need to understand the functions of the various organs, and their relation and dependence.” Ellen G. White, *Ministry of Healing* (Oakland, CA: Pacific Press, 1905), 380. “Let it be made plain that the way of God’s commandments is the way of life. God has established the laws of nature, but His laws are not arbitrary exactions. Every ‘Thou shalt not,’ whether in physical or in moral law, implies a promise. If we obey it, blessing will attend our steps. God never forces us to do right, but He seeks to save us from the evil and lead us to the good.” White, *Ministry of Healing*, 114. Here is a paragraph in which the “nature’s law” form is used: “Sin and crime, and the violation of nature’s laws, are the causes of this accumulation of human woe and suffering. A large share of the youth now living are worthless.” White, *An Appeal to Mothers*, 63.

²⁷ “And although the antediluvians generally gave themselves up to sin without restraint, it was more than two thousand years before the violation of natural law was sensibly felt. White, *Christian Temperance and Bible Hygiene*, 7. “Men and women cannot violate natural law by indulging depraved appetite and lustful passions, without violating the law of God. Therefore he has permitted the light of health reform to shine upon us, that we may realize the sinfulness of breaking the laws which he has established in our very being.” White, *Christian Temperance and Bible Hygiene*, 9.

²⁸ This term first appears in the title of the article: “Moral and Physical Law,” *Health Reformer*, October 1, 1872, 314. From that point on, it is frequently used in her health-related writings. “The violation of physical law, with its consequent suffering and premature death, has so long prevailed that these results

principles of health reform,”³² and “the philosophy of health.”³³ In some cases, she used the more general term “the right principles.”³⁴ The fact that she used several expressions for the same concept can be illustrated by the following quote:

Disease never comes without a cause. The way is prepared, and disease invited, by disregard of the laws of health. Many suffer in consequence of the transgression of their parents. While they are not responsible for what their parents have done, it is nevertheless their duty to ascertain what are and what are not violations of the laws of health. They should avoid the wrong habits of their parents and, by correct living, place themselves in better conditions. The greater number, however, suffer because of their own wrong course of action. They disregard the principles of health by their habits of eating, drinking, dressing, and working. Their transgression of nature’s laws produces the sure result; and when sickness comes upon them, many do not credit their suffering to the true cause, but murmur against God because of their afflictions. But God is not responsible for the suffering that follows disregard of natural law.³⁵

are regarded as the appointed lot of humanity; but God did not create the race in such a feeble condition.” White, *Christian Temperance and Bible Hygiene*, 8.

²⁹ It first appears in 1864 in *Spiritual Gifts*, vol. 4: “Multitudes remain in inexcusable ignorance in regard to the laws of their being. They are wondering why our race is so feeble, and why so many die prematurely.” Ellen G. White, *Spiritual Gifts*, 4 vols. (Battle Creek, MI: James White; Steam Press of the Seventh-day Adventist Publishing Association, 1858-1864), 4:137.

³⁰ This term is used mainly in her later works: “In both home and foreign fields the presentation of health principles must be united with it, but not be independent of it or in any way take its place; neither should this work absorb so much attention as to belittle other branches.” Ellen G. White, *Testimonies for the Church*, 9 vols. (Mountain View, CA: Pacific Press, 1948), 6:209.

³¹ This term first appeared in 1895: “Gospel workers should be able also to give instruction in the principles of healthful living. There is sickness everywhere, and most of it might be prevented by attention to the laws of health.” White, *Ministry of Healing*, 146.

³² “The angel Gabriel was sent from heaven to instruct the parents of John in the principles of health reform.” White, *Christian Temperance and Bible Hygiene*, 38.

³³ This expression is seen in some of her early works: “Men and women should inform themselves in regard to the philosophy of health. The minds of rational beings seem shrouded in darkness in regard to their own physical structure, and how to preserve it in a healthy condition.” Ellen G. White, “Duty to Know Ourselves,” *Health Reformer*, August 1, 1866, 2-3.

³⁴ This expression is widely used in her writings in regards to health, education, tithing, etc. For example, “If right principles in regard to temperance were implanted in the youth who are to form and mold society, there would be little necessity for temperance crusades.” White, *Christian Temperance and Bible Hygiene*, 79.

³⁵ White, *Ministry of Healing*, 234.

Here, she used the terms “the laws of health,” “principles of health,” “nature’s law,” and “natural law” interchangeably, employing them in reference to certain lifestyle factors such as “habits” in “eating, drinking, dressing, and working.” By practicing “wrong habits” or a “wrong course of action,” these laws are disregarded and violated, resulting in disease. On the other hand, by practicing “correct living” or correct habits, people may greatly improve their condition.

The Origin and Importance of Health Laws

In the writings of Ellen G. White, the health laws are often connected to the “moral law” or to “the laws of God,” specifically the Ten Commandments, signifying their utmost importance. She made it clear that violating the laws of nature is a sin against God. She also pointed to the author of these laws, God Himself.

Transgression of physical law is a transgression of the moral law; for God is as truly the author of physical laws as He is the author of the moral law. His law is written with his finger upon every nerve, every muscle, which has been entrusted to man. And every misuse of any part our organism is a violation of that law.³⁶

It is interesting to notice that in Ellen G. White’s theology, the physical laws (health laws) are so closely connected to the moral law that one cannot violate a physical law and still remain morally pure. As an explanation, she pointed to the same author behind both categories of rules. It is understandable that a violation of both laws constitutes disobedience to God. In the following quotation from 1897, she placed even greater emphasis on the close relationship between physical laws and moral law.

The Creator of man has arranged the living machinery of our bodies. Every function is wonderfully and wisely made. And God has pledged Himself to keep this human machinery in healthful action if the human agent will obey His laws and cooperate with God. Every law governing the human machinery is to be considered just as truly

³⁶ White, *Christ’s Object Lesson*, 347-348.

divine in origin, in character, and in importance as the word of God. Every careless, inattentive action, any abuse put upon the Lord's wonderful mechanism by disregarding His specified laws in the human habitation, is a violation of God's law. We may behold and admire the work of God in the natural world, but the human habitation is the most wonderful.³⁷

In this passage, she referred to the laws "governing the human machinery" as "His laws" or "God's laws." These laws are "as divine in origin, in character, and in importance as the word of God," assigning them supreme importance. This emphasis was not a later development; it is visible in an earlier statement from 1872 where she used the same words, making the same connection between health laws and the Ten Commandments. Here, she mentioned the "indulgence of depraved appetite" and "lustful passions" as means to violate "the law of God," and highlighted God's grace as it was presented through the health message.³⁸

In 1890, she reiterated the same idea: "It is as truly a sin to violate the laws of our being as it is to break the ten commandments. To do either is to break God's laws. Those who transgress the law of God in their physical organism, will be inclined to violate the law of God spoken from Sinai."³⁹ When writing about the duty of physicians in *Ministry of Healing* (1905), she again emphasized the close relationship between the laws of nature and the Decalogue: "He knows that the laws of nature, as truly as the precepts of the Decalogue, are divine, and that only in obedience to them can health be recovered or preserved."⁴⁰

³⁷ Ellen G. White quoted in J. H. Kellogg, "God in Nature—No. 2," *General Conference Daily Bulletin*, February 18, 1897, 75.

³⁸ Ellen G. White, "Moral and Physical Law," *Health Reformer*, October 1, 1872, 314.

³⁹ White, *Christian Temperance and Bible Hygiene*, 53.

⁴⁰ White, *Ministry of Healing*, 113.

Ellen White clearly differentiated between distinct habits as sin and certain habits with negative long-term effects. The first group violates two of the Ten Commandments, idolatry which is compulsory spending of money for non-food items (tobacco, caffeinated tea, alcohol); and killing which means consuming these items that kill the body and its organs. The second group refers to practices whose long-term effects may be unhealthful. Knowingly engaging in those practices anyway is a violation of God's laws of health. However, the harmful effects usually occur when the practice occurs outside certain optimal parameters. Habitual meat-eating may lead to cardiovascular diseases, but leaving meat away without replacing it with all the nutrients the body needs may lead to malnutrition. It is true that meat has nutritional value, but habitual eating of meat has negative long-term effects. In this group, we also find Ellen White applying the principle of "circumstances alter conditions." Taking a daily bath may not be possible when traveling. Yet, when not traveling, it is good to shower or bath daily, especially when doing work where a lot of perspiration occurs.

The Laws of Health" in the Earliest Health Related Writings of Ellen G. White

To understand why Ellen G. White wrote about the laws of health, one must consider the lifestyle and medical practices of the mid-nineteenth century. On one hand, stimulants such as tobacco, alcoholic beverages, and caffeinated tea became widely available, gradually impairing people's health.⁴¹ On the other hand, medicine relied on

⁴¹ Steve Olson and Dean R. Gerstein, *Alcohol in America: Taking Action to Prevent Abuse* (Washington, DC: National Academies Press, 1985), 4-5.

erroneous practices such as massive bloodletting, violent purgatives, and emetics.⁴² In this setting, a physician's main task was to "conquer nature" with some kind of drug.⁴³ As for diet, it was largely based on the consumption of meat (mostly pork), lard, cheese, butter, refined wheat, and strong spices such as pepper, mustard, and horseradish.⁴⁴

Due to a lack of knowledge about balanced lifestyle habits, these harmful lifestyle practices were prevalent even among early Adventists.⁴⁵ Considering these circumstances, early Adventists needed counsel on correct lifestyle habits and medical practices. Therefore, Ellen White's health writings met a real need and helped address it.

In her 1864 book *Spiritual Gifts*, vol. 4, she presented health principles in detail for the first time. Here, she used the term "the laws of health" several times.⁴⁶ The chapter "Health" is based on her comprehensive health reform vision received on June 5, 1863, in Otsego, Michigan.⁴⁷

⁴² James C. Whorton, *Nature Cures: The History of Alternative Medicine in America* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2004), 5.

⁴³ Herbert E. Douglass, *Messenger of the Lord* (Nampa, ID: Pacific Press, 1998), 279.

⁴⁴ On the American diet in general in the mid-nineteenth century, see James M. Volo, *Antebellum America: Cultural Connections through History, 1820-1860*, Traditional American History Series 10 (N.p.: CreateSpace, 2014). On white flour, see: Whorton, *Nature Cures*, 88.

⁴⁵ Douglass, *Messenger of the Lord*, 280, 288.

⁴⁶ White, *Spiritual Gifts*, 4:120, 124, 130,134, 140, 144, 145.

⁴⁷ The series *Spiritual Gifts* is a four-volume set of Ellen White's writings on a variety of biblical, biographical, and health themes, published between 1858-1864. Vol. 4 contains two sections: first is subtitled "Important Facts of Faith: Laws of Health" (152 pp.), and second is an condensed reprint of "Testimonies, Nos. 1-10" (160 pp). The first section (vol. 4a) is an account of biblical history from Sinai to Solomon, with two chapters bridging to the advent of Christ, and a chapter entitled "Health," accompanied with related materials. The biblical history was later amplified as the last part of *The Spirit of Prophecy*, vol 1 (Battle Creek, MI: Steam Press of the Seventh-day Adventist Publ. Assn., 1870). The 32-page chapter "Health" is the first comprehensive presentation of the health message as given to Ellen White in a vision on June 5, 1863. This chapter was amplified in six chapters in the six pamphlets *Health: or How to Live*, ed. James White (Battle Creek, MI: Steam Press of the Seventh-day Adventist Publ. Assn., 1865). The second section (vol. 4b) is a condensed reprint of the *Testimonies for the Church*, nos. 1-10.

The human family have violated the laws of health, and have run to excess in almost everything. Disease has been steadily increasing. The cause has been followed by the effect. . . . They do not understand that it is the violation of God's constitution and laws, and the violation of the laws of health, that has produced this sad degeneracy. The transgression of God's commandments has caused his prospering hand to be removed. . . . Many are living in violation of the laws of health, and are ignorant of the relation their habits of eating, drinking, and working sustain to their health. . . . Multitudes remain in inexcusable ignorance in regard to the laws of their being.⁴⁸

In 1864, Ellen G. White published the brief booklet *An Appeal to Mothers*, in which she addressed the issue of "secret vice," likely referring to masturbation. Viewing it as both a health and moral issue, she pointed out the harmful effects of the practice. Stressing the importance of self-control, she warned that "at this critical period, while merging into manhood and womanhood, nature makes them feel the violation of her laws."⁴⁹

A year later, in 1865, she published six articles entitled "Disease and Its Causes," which appeared in six issues of the publication *How to Live*.⁵⁰ Here, the term "the laws of

⁴⁸ White, *Spiritual Gifts*, 4:120, 124, 134, 137.

⁴⁹ White, *An Appeal to Mothers*, 12.

⁵⁰ More information about the publication *How to Live* is found in the *Ellen G. White Encyclopedia*. There, it says that it was a "series of six pamphlets, including six articles written by Ellen White and a large number of articles by several physicians and popular health reformers who were included to demonstrate that contemporary authorities supported the health reform concepts White was promoting. Following her major vision on health reform in June 1863, Ellen White began to write extensively on the subjects of health, nutrition, and lifestyle. Her first presentation of the subject appeared in *Spiritual Gifts* in a chapter titled Health (vol. 4a, pp. 120-151). In 1865 she amplified this chapter into a series of six articles published as part of the pamphlets series *Health: or How to Live*. That same year James White published the six pamphlets in a booklet under the same title, in which he also included a number of articles by other health reformers of the time, not all of which espoused views adopted by the church or in harmony with Ellen White's teachings. The six Ellen White articles were later republished in shorter segments in the *Review and Herald* in 1899 and 1900, and again in 1958 in *Selected Messages* (book 2, pp. 409-479) under the title *Disease and Its Causes*. Later, fuller presentations such as *Ministry of Healing* (1905) replaced many earlier publications on health, including the *Health: or How to Live* series. These six Ellen White articles dealt with a wide variety of subjects: nutrition and vegetarianism; overeating versus self-control of appetite; various aspects of temperance, especially abstinence from alcohol; home environment and the responsibilities of parents toward their children, prenatal influences on the unborn; use of drugs, causes of diseases and treatment of the sick, and slavery to fashion. In all these areas Ellen White urged faithful observance of God's natural laws of health and hygiene." Denis Fortin, "Health: or How to Live (1865)," in

health” is used alongside “the laws of your being,” “physical law,” and “nature’s law.” She wrote that “God has established the laws of our being. If we violate these laws, we must, sooner or later, pay the penalty. The laws of our being cannot be more successfully violated than by crowding upon the stomach unhealthy food, because craved by a morbid appetite.”⁵¹

She used these terms quite frequently: in chapters 1 to 6, she employed them a combined 19 times. She used the single term “nature” even more often, citing it 39 times in chapter 3 alone. She emphasized that one should not weaken nature’s “fine machinery” (i.e., the human body) and that nature alone is “the effectual restorer” of the diseased body. In that chapter, she began to use a new term: “the philosophy of health.” She wrote:

The philosophy of health should compose one of the important studies for our children. It is all-important that the human organism be understood, and then intelligent men and women can be their own physicians. If the people would reason from cause to effect, and would follow the light which shines upon them, they would pursue a course which would insure health, and mortality would be far less.⁵²

Here, the word “philosophy” is used as a guiding principle, or the knowledge of how to preserve health, reasoning from cause to effect.

By 1866, many Adventists became interested in the subject of health preservation. To meet this demand, Ellen White published an article in the *Health Reformer* in which she wrote: “Many have inquired of me, ‘What course shall I take to best preserve my health?’ My answer is, Cease to transgress the laws of your being; cease to gratify a depraved appetite; eat simple food; dress healthfully, which will require modest

The Ellen G. White Encyclopedia, eds. Denis Fortin and Jerry Moon (Hagerstown, MD: Review and Herald, 2014), 858-859.

⁵¹ Ellen G. White, “Disease and its Causes,” in *How to Live*, 52.

⁵² White, “Disease and its Causes,” in *How to Live*, 179.

simplicity; work healthfully; and you will not be sick.”⁵³ Again, one can see an emphasis on health laws using the same vocabulary. She added, “Men and women should inform themselves in regard to the philosophy of health.”⁵⁴ Six years later, in 1872, she published another article in the *Health Reformer* where she dealt with health laws and their importance. Here, she used the terms the “laws of health,” “the laws of their being,” “nature’s laws,” and “the laws of nature” interchangeably. She stressed obedience to these laws and condemned the willful ignorance of the people.⁵⁵

In sum, Ellen White often used the word “law” in relation to principles of health and nature. She employed different terms to signify her key concepts on health, stressing that there are unchanging laws in nature that people should follow as God’s laws. Violation of these laws brings misery and disease to those who transgress them and their progeny. Correct knowledge of these laws may be described as the “philosophy of health.”

The Double Nature of the Health Laws of Ellen G. White

In her literature on health laws, Ellen G. White presented these laws as having two distinctive purposes: to prevent diseases and to cure diseases. While prevention ideally aims at avoiding disease, curing a disease becomes necessary when prevention fails or when even healthy people get sick.

To emphasize the importance of differentiating between the two functions of these laws, she wrote, “The distinction between prevention and cure has not been made

⁵³ White, “Duty to Know Ourselves,” 2.

⁵⁴ White, “Duty to Know Ourselves,” 2.

⁵⁵ Ellen G. White, “Degeneracy—Education,” *Health Reformer*, November 1, 1872, 349.

sufficiently important. Teach the people that it is better to know how to keep well than how to cure disease.”⁵⁶ Here, she equated prevention with “keeping well,” or in other words, with preserving health. Further, teaching “how to keep well” implies health education on the best principles to prevent diseases and preserve health. She provided a detailed list of such principles in the following quotations.

Now in regard to that which we can do for ourselves: There is a point that requires careful, thoughtful consideration. I must become acquainted with myself. I must be a learner always as to how to take care of this building, the body God has given me, that I may preserve it in the very best condition of health. I must *eat* those things, which will be for my very best good physically, and I must take special care to have my *clothing* such as will conduce to a healthful circulation of the blood. I must not deprive myself of *exercise* and *air*. I must get all the *sunlight* that it is possible for me to obtain. I must have wisdom to be a faithful guardian of my body.

I should do a very unwise thing to enter a cool room when in a perspiration; I should show myself an unwise steward to allow myself to sit in a draft and thus expose myself so as to take cold. I should be unwise to sit with cold feet and limbs and thus drive back the blood from the extremities to the brain or internal organs. I should always protect my feet in damp weather. I should *eat regularly of the most healthful food* which will make the best quality of blood, and I should *not work intemperately* if it is in my power to avoid doing so. And when I violate the laws God has established in my being, I am to repent and reform, and place myself in the most favorable condition under the doctors God has provided—*pure air, pure water*, and the healing, precious *sunlight*.⁵⁷

In these passages, she emphasized knowing oneself, becoming a continual learner, eating regularly and healthily, proper clothing, exercise, clean air, sunlight, becoming a faithful guardian of one’s body, and protection from coldness, dampness, and drafts. Ellen White called these principles the “laws of health,” emphasizing their preventive power. If

⁵⁶ Ellen G. White, Manuscript, 99, 1902, printed in Ellen G. White, *Medical Ministry* (Mountain View, CA: Pacific Press, 1932), 221.

⁵⁷ Ellen G. White to Brother Wessels, February 16, 1890, Lt 35, 1890, Ellen G. White Estate, Silver Spring, MD (emphasis supplied).

violated, the same laws became “doctors” with curative power. Interestingly, in her writings, prevention is one of the central subjects of health reform.

God’s blessing will rest upon every effort made to awaken an interest in health reform; for it is needed everywhere. There must be a revival on this subject; for God purposes to accomplish much through this agency. Present temperance with all its advantages in reference to health. Educate people in the laws of life so that they may know how to preserve health. The efforts actually put forth at present are not meeting the mind of God. Drug medication is a curse to this enlightened age.

Educate away from drugs. Use them less and less, and depend more upon hygienic agencies; then nature will respond to God’s physicians-pure air, pure water, proper exercise, a clear conscience.⁵⁸

Here, she emphasized not only the preventive but also the curative power of these laws, calling them “God’s physicians.” She also warned against the drugs or medication of her time. Calling for the gradual reduction of their use, she did not seem to have a rigid perspective that the use of drugs would necessarily violate moral laws.

She also used the expressions “nature’s great medicinal resources” and “nature’s wonderful resources.” Using this terminology, she pointed out that nature has a number of effective remedies, such as sunshine and fresh air that have “life-giving power.” She made it plain that being surrounded by nature positively affects the nervous system.⁵⁹

In sum, Ellen G. White’s terminology suggests the laws of nature have both preventive (life-giving) and curative (restorative) powers. She often talked of obeying the laws of health when emphasizing prevention and called them “God’s physicians,” “doctors,” or “remedies” when referring to their curative power.

⁵⁸ Ellen G. White to the Managers of the Health Institution at Crystal Springs, St. Helena, California, April 1890, Lt 6a, 1890, printed in Ellen G. White, *Medical Ministry* (Mountain View, CA: Pacific Press, 1932), 259-260.

⁵⁹ Ellen G. White to Percy T. Magan, May 7, 1902, Lt 71, 1902, printed in White, *Medical Ministry*, 231, 232.

Identifying Some Specific Laws in Her Writings

The previous section identified some of Ellen G. White's health laws. This section will discuss those specific laws more closely. Numerous statements in her writings identify these laws and present various lists of them.

Some specific health laws or remedies appeared in her writings as early as 1848.⁶⁰ In a vision, she was shown the harmful effects of tobacco, caffeinated tea, and coffee. She wrote, "I have seen in vision that tobacco was a filthy weed, and that it must be laid aside or given up. Unless it is given up, the frown of God will be upon the one that uses it, and he cannot be sealed with the seal of the living God."⁶¹ This counsel pointed to the importance of abstemiousness even though she did not use that term in that particular case.

Her second health vision was received in 1854 and dealt with cleanliness, temperance, rich foods, and fine food. She wrote: "I saw some who were sickly among the saints, made themselves (so) by indulging the appetite. If we wish good health we must take special care of the health God has give us, deny the unhealthy appetite, eat more coarse food with little grease."⁶²

Her third major health vision occurred on June 6, 1863, which dealt with various health topics. Remarkably, this vision emphasized health as an aid to intellectual and

⁶⁰ James White in "Western Tour," *Review and Herald*, November 8, 1870, 165, put the time of the vision in the fall of 1848: "It was twenty-two years ago the present autumn, that our minds were called to the injurious effects of tobacco, tea and coffee, through the testimony of Mrs. White. . . . When we had gained a good victory over these things, and when the Lord saw that we were able to bear it, light was given relative to food and dress."

⁶¹ Ellen G. White to Robert Barnes, December 14, 1851, Lt 5, 1851, published in Ellen G. White, *Manuscript Releases*, 21 vols. (Silver Spring, MD: Ellen G. White Estate, 1983-1993), 5:377.

⁶² Ellen G. White, "Reproof for Adultery and Neglect of Children," February 12, 1854, Ms 1, 1854, published in White, *Manuscript Releases*, 6:218.

spiritual growth. It also pointed out that health reform is not only a personal matter but also has social and missional implications. This vision refers to several health laws that later appear in her other works. According to this vision, we must control our appetite; many people die from eating flesh food; intemperance is a guilt; caffeinated tea and coffee, like tobacco, are slow poisons; pure water should be used freely and to cure diseases; light and pure air are essential; outdoor exercise is very important; caring for health is a spiritual matter; and a healthy mind and body affect moral thinking and discernment of truth.⁶³

As discussed earlier, this vision led her to write for the first time on the subject of health, presented in *Spiritual Gifts*, vol. 4, in 1864. This book contains an entire chapter on health that provides detailed descriptions of several health laws, albeit not in catalog

⁶³ In the discussion of meat eating it is important to make some clarifications. First, Ellen G. White makes it clear that any transgression of health laws is to be considered sin and meat eating is against some of the health laws. Second, however, in the Old Testament there are cases when God commanded the eating of meat at the sanctuary and at Passover. Third, in 1889, Ellen G. White said that we should avoid eating meat not because it is a sin but because it is not healthy: “I advise every Sabbath-keeping canvasser to avoid meat eating, not because it is regarded as sin to eat meat, but because it is not healthful. The animal creation is groaning.” Ellen G. White, “Counsels to Our Colporteurs Regarding Carefulness in Diet,” c. 1889, Ms 15, 1889, Ellen G. White Estate, Silver Spring, MD. Fourth, until 1893, Ellen G. White herself occasionally still ate meat, primarily in emergency situations. Here she seemed to imply that not all violations of health laws are equal. While some violations may be considered sin without question, such as the use of alcohol or tobacco, in other cases she did not draw a specific line. “Tea, coffee, tobacco, and alcohol we must present as sinful indulgences. We cannot place on the same ground, meat, eggs, butter, cheese and such articles placed upon the table. These are not to be borne in front, as the burden of our work. The former—tea, coffee, tobacco, beer, wine, and all spirituous liquors—are not to be taken moderately, but discarded. The poisonous narcotics are not to be treated in the same way as the subject of eggs, butter, and cheese.” Ellen G. White, “Proper Use of the Testimonies on Health Reform,” March 23, 1881, Ms 5, 1881, published in White, *Manuscript Releases*, 3:283-288. To clarify why she categorized tobacco, tea, coffee and alcohol as sins, one can find valuable information in Gerard Damsteegt, *Foundations of the Seventh-day Adventist Message and Mission* (Berren Springs:MI, Andrews University Press, 1977), 221-241. Damsteegt’s research on the issue showed clearly that (1) these items all have no nutritional value; (2) they tend to cause addiction; (3) they require money to obtain them drawing resources from the mission; (4) the craving for those items and the spending of money for them was a form of covetousness and idolatry (10th and 1st commandments); (5) those substances were actually slow killers and those indulging in them were slowly killing themselves (6th commandment). (6) Therefore, indulging in those substances was perceived as a clear violation of God’s moral law. The same cannot be said about meat, yet there were a number of reasons why meat was not an ideal item of diet.

form. The following “laws” can be identified: temperance in all things, abstaining from stimulants, self-control, cleanliness, the application of water, proper diet, light, and air.⁶⁴

Looking for a catalog of these basic health principles, we find some remarkable statements from the 1890s:

Drug medication, as it is generally practiced, is a curse. Educate away from drugs. Use them less and less, and depend more upon hygienic agencies; then nature will respond to God’s physicians—pure air, pure water, proper exercise, a clear conscience. Those who persist in the use of tea, coffee, and flesh meats will feel the need of drugs, but many might recover without one grain of medicine if they would obey the laws of health. Drugs need seldom be used.⁶⁵

Here, she called these principles “God’s physicians,” thus emphasizing their curative qualities. Compared to the list found in *Ministry of Healing*, this list contains only four elements, three of which (pure air, pure water, proper exercise) are also found in *Ministry of Healing*. A clear conscience as part of the concept of true remedies appears only here.

The following paragraph from 1889 also contains a list of health principles termed “God’s remedies”:

Pure air and water, cleanliness, a proper diet, purity of life, and a firm trust in God are remedies for the want of which thousands are dying; yet these remedies are going out of date because their skillful use requires work that the people do not appreciate. Fresh air, exercise, pure water, and clean, sweet premises are within the reach of all with but little expense, but drugs are expensive, both in the outlay of means and in the effect produced upon the system.⁶⁶

Here, although not in one sentence, we find most of the eight health principles: pure or fresh air, pure water, proper diet, exercise, firm trust in God, cleanliness or clean, sweet premises, and purity in life. She did not mention sunlight, rest, and abstemiousness, but

⁶⁴ White, *Spiritual Gifts*, 4:146, 129, 126, 133, 131, 142.

⁶⁵ Ellen G. White quoted in O. A. Olsen, “Council Meeting—No. 3: Health and Temperance Work,” *General Conference Daily Bulletin*, January 29-30, 1893, 36.

⁶⁶ White, *Testimonies for the Church*, 5:443.

she added cleanliness and purity, which are missing from the list in *Ministry of Healing*. Thirteen years later, she again gave a list of some “natural ways” of healing: “Life in the open air is good for body and mind. It is God’s medicine for the restoration of health. Pure air, good water, sunshine, the beautiful surroundings of nature—these are His means for restoring the sick to health in natural ways.”⁶⁷ The additional element here is “the beautiful surroundings of nature.”

The most detailed catalog appears in *Ministry of Healing*, in the chapter “The Physician, an Educator”:

Pure air, sunlight, abstemiousness, rest, exercise, proper diet, the use of water, trust in divine power—these are the true remedies. Every person should have a knowledge of nature’s remedial agencies and how to apply them. It is essential both to understand the principles involved in the treatment of the sick and to have a practical training that will enable one rightly to use this knowledge.⁶⁸

As one can see in the first sentence, eight elements are mentioned: pure air, sunlight, abstemiousness, rest, exercise, proper diet, the use of water, and trust in divine power.⁶⁹

The first thing that should grab our attention is that she called these „true remedies.” It is obvious that a remedy is what cures. Interestingly, four of these eight laws or remedies have to do with substances of a physical nature: pure air, sunlight, water, and proper diet. All these things influence the outside and/or inside of our body. The remainder of the list—rest, exercise, and abstemiousness—may be classified as practices because they deal with what we do to our body. The list concludes with trust in divine power, a principle

⁶⁷ White, *Testimonies for the Church*, 7:85.

⁶⁸ White, *Ministry of Healing*, 128.

⁶⁹ This number inspired the term “Eight Laws of Health” generally used by Adventist health educators and lifestyle centers. Although this term has become the hallmark of Adventist philosophy of health, it is important to note that this term was actually never used by Ellen White.

that points to a higher sphere of life, touching on how one thinks and whom he trusts. The statement is placed within the context of her injunction to every person to study these remedies.

Conclusion

The purpose of this chapter was to examine the origin, importance and nature of health laws in the writings of Ellen G. White. It also aimed to identify some of the specific laws and the lists she used when discussing these laws. Reviewing the various lists of health laws, we may draw several conclusions: (1) *Multiplicity of Health Laws*: There are more than eight health laws in the writings of Ellen G. White. (2) *Incomplete Catalogs*: None of the catalogs contain a complete list of all the health laws. (3) *Diverse Nature of Health Laws*: The individual health laws differ in nature, scope, and magnitude. Some laws pertain to substances (like air, water, and diet), others regulate activities (like exercise and rest), and still others relate to attitudes (like trust or temperance). For instance, temperance or cleanliness has a broader scope in life than sunlight or diet. (4) *Degrees of Consequence*: Violating these laws is considered a sin, but the consequences vary. For example, using meat or butter is not on the same level as using alcohol or tobacco. While Ellen G. White often highlighted the harmful effects of meat consumption, she did not consider it a moral issue. She acknowledged situations where less ideal food items might be necessary due to poverty, climate, etc.⁷⁰ (5) *Comprehensive Coverage*: As general laws, they cover most areas of our physical and spiritual life. Although several health laws appeared in her early writings, more complete

⁷⁰ The issue of diet will be discussed in more details in the next chapter.

lists are found in her later works. The most detailed catalog is in *Ministry of Healing*, where eight of these laws are listed and discussed individually throughout the book. In total, Ellen White identified thirteen different health laws: pure air, sunlight, abstemiousness, rest, exercise, proper diet, the use of water, trust in divine power, cleanliness or clean, sweet premises, purity in life, proper dress, a clear conscience, and the beautiful surroundings of nature.

CHAPTER 3

TAKING A CLOSE-UP VIEW OF THE MAIN HEALTH PRINCIPLES IN THE WRITINGS OF ELLEN G. WHITE

Introduction

After reviewing the health laws in general, this chapter will examine the individual laws/remedies as they are described in the writings of Ellen G. White. In each case, we will first look at what she has to say about the importance of that particular health law. Then, we will focus on its effects and the possible results of its violation. We will also examine her practical advice related to each law.

Ellen G. White did not write about each of these laws to the same extent. She placed special emphasis on issues such as diet and temperance, while also extensively addressing the use of water and cleanliness. Trust in divine power as a health principle is discussed in several of her works.

Reviewing her statements on these health laws, we will start with those of a physical nature (diet, water, air, sunlight), continue with those that involve activities (exercise, rest), and move toward those that are more directly related to our spirituality (temperance, trust, cleanliness, and dress).

Diet

Ellen G. White often emphasized the subject of diet in her writings, presenting it as a key aspect of health reform.⁷¹ In her most significant work on health, *Ministry of Healing* (1905), she dedicated three chapters to this topic. Regarding the importance of proper nutrition, she wrote:

Our bodies are built up from the food we eat. There is a constant breaking down of the tissues of the body; every movement of every organ involves waste, and this waste is repaired from our food. Each organ of the body requires its share of nutrition. The brain must be supplied with its portion; the bones, muscles, and nerves demand theirs. It is a wonderful process that transforms the food into blood and uses this blood to build up the varied parts of the body; but this process is going on continually, supplying with life and strength each nerve, muscle, and tissue.⁷²

Regarding the ideal diet, she discussed the issue in detail. “Grains, fruits, nuts, and vegetables constitute the diet chosen for us by our Creator. These foods prepared in as simple and natural a manner as possible, are the most healthful and nourishing. They impart a strength, a power of endurance, and a vigor of intellect, that are not afforded by a more complex and stimulating diet.”⁷³ Here, she recommended a plant-based whole-food diet consisting of four elements: grains, fruits, nuts, and vegetables. She also emphasized simplicity and natural methods of food preparation, contrasting this with diets consisting of refined, processed, and stimulating foods.

⁷¹ To illustrate how much Ellen G. White wrote about this subject, one may look at the 500-page-long compilation *Counsels on Diet and Foods* (Washington, DC: Review and Herald, 1938, 1946), which contains her most important statements on diet.

⁷² Ellen G. White, *Ministry of Healing* (Oakland, CA: Pacific Press, 1905), 295.

⁷³ White, *Ministry of Healing*, 296.

Diet was the first theme in her initial major discussion on health in *Spiritual Gifts*, vol. 4 (1864),⁷⁴ and in the publication *How to Live* (1865).⁷⁵ In these early publications, she based her main arguments on the Bible, specifically on the books of Genesis and Exodus. She argued that God designed a plant-based diet for humanity, that intemperance in diet caused the fall of man, that no animal food was consumed until the flood, and that the Israelites preferred slavery over being deprived of meat, despite being fed with bread from heaven.⁷⁶ She strongly emphasized the effects of meat eating: “Many die of disease caused wholly by meat-eating, yet the world does not seem to be the wiser.”⁷⁷ She highlighted the dangerous conditions under which farm animals are slaughtered: “Animals are frequently killed that have been driven quite a distance for the slaughter. . . . Their blood is highly inflamed, and those who eat of their meat, eat poison.”⁷⁸ She also noted specific health issues caused by meat consumption: “Some are not immediately affected, while others are attacked with severe pain, and die from fever, cholera, or some unknown disease.”⁷⁹

⁷⁴ Ellen G. White, *Spiritual Gifts*, 4 vols., vol. 4 (Battle Creek, MI: Steam Press of the Seventh-day Adventist Pub. Assn., 1858-1864).

⁷⁵ James White, ed., *How to Live*, 6 nos. (Battle Creek, MI: Steam Press of the Seventh-day Adventist Pub. Assn., 1865).

⁷⁶ Ellen G. White, *Spiritual Gifts*, 4 vols., vol. 4 (Battle Creek, MI: Steam Press of the Seventh-day Adventist Pub. Assn., 1858-1864). 120-121, James White, ed., *How to Live*, 6 nos. (Battle Creek, MI: Steam Press of the Seventh-day Adventist Pub. Assn., 1865). 1:51-53

⁷⁷ White, *Spiritual Gifts*, 4:147.

⁷⁸ White, *Spiritual Gifts*, 4:147.

⁷⁹ White, *Spiritual Gifts*, 4:147.

White gave numerous recommendations on the curative power of a healthful diet. For example, she wrote: “It is important to become familiar with the benefit of dieting in case of sickness. All should understand what to do [for] themselves.”⁸⁰ She also mentioned:

Intemperate eating is often the cause of sickness, and what nature most needs is to be relieved of the undue burden that has been placed upon her. In many cases of sickness, the very best remedy is for the patient to fast for *a meal or two*, that the overworked organs of digestion may have an opportunity to rest. A fruit diet for *a few days* has often brought great relief to brain workers.⁸¹

Here, she stressed the healing properties of temporary intermittent fasting and a temporary fruit diet, especially for brain workers. Fasting, in her context, referred to abstaining from solid food diet while still consuming liquids.⁸²

In her writings on diet, White provided several additional principles and recommendations concerning diet reform: (1) *Gradual Change*: Diet reform should be progressive with gradual changes aiming for the most ideal diet.⁸³ (2) *Flexibility*: People should not follow rigid laws.⁸⁴ (3) *Personalization*: No one should set a strict standard for

⁸⁰ Ellen G. White, “Health Reform Principles,” August 25, 1897, Ms 86, 1897, in White, *Manuscript Releases*, 20:1-9.

⁸¹ White, *Ministry of Healing*, 235 (emphasis supplied).

⁸² Some health reformers promote a so-called dry fast but this method is not mentioned in her writings.

⁸³ The words „progressive” and “to progress” is used in several places: „Let the diet reform be progressive. Let the people be taught how to prepare food without the use of milk or butter. Tell them that the time will soon come when there will be no safety in using eggs, milk, cream, or butter, because disease in animals is increasing in proportion to the increase of wickedness among men. The time is near when, because of the iniquity of the fallen race, the whole animal creation will groan under the diseases that curse our earth.” Ellen G. White: *Testimonies for the Churches* (Mountain View, CA: Pacific Press Publishing Association, 1902) 7:135; The Lord presented a general plan before me. I was shown that God would give to His commandment-keeping people a reform diet, and that as they received this, their disease and suffering would be greatly lessened. I was shown that this work would progress.” Ellen G. White, “Remarks by Mrs. E. G. White”, *General Conference Bulletin*, April 12, 1901, 203.

⁸⁴ While Ellen G. White often recommended not to use animal flesh, she did not regard it as an absolute or rigid law: “I at once cut meat out of my bill of fare. After that I was at times placed where I was compelled to eat a little meat.” Letter 83, 1901, in *The Paulson Collection of Ellen G. White Letters* (Leaves-Of-Autumn Books, 1985), 1-2.

others.⁸⁵ (4) *Milk and Eggs*: These were not inherently bad, though they were not pure plant-based items.⁸⁶ (5) *Meal Frequency*: A two-meals-per-day plan is generally preferable over a three meals per day.⁸⁷ (6) *Avoidance of Certain Substances*: Strong spices and condiments (mustard, pepper, etc.), stimulants (vinegar), and baking powder should be avoided completely.⁸⁸ (7) *Moderation*: Salt and sugar should be used only in small quantities.⁸⁹ (8) *Food Combination*: Avoid certain combinations, like eating fruits and vegetables together or using eggs, milk, and sugar together.⁹⁰ (9) *Regularity*: Regularity in eating is important; snacking between meals or eating just before bedtime should be avoided.⁹¹ (10) *Refined Products*: Refined products like white wheat should be

⁸⁵ For example, she wrote, “I make myself a criterion for no one else.” Letter 45, 1903, in White, *Manuscript Releases*, 13:37-43.

⁸⁶ „Milk, eggs, and butter should not be classed with flesh meat. In some cases the use of eggs is beneficial. The time has not come to say that the use of milk and eggs should be wholly discarded.” Ellen G. White: Testimonies for the Churches (Mountain View, CA: Pacific Press Publishing Association, 1902) 7:135

⁸⁷ “As for the rationale that lies behind the two-meal-per-day meal plan, she wrote, In many cases the faintness that leads to a desire for food is felt because the digestive organs have been too severely taxed during the day. After disposing of one meal, the digestive organs need rest. At least five or six hours should intervene between the meals, and most persons who give the plan a trial will find that two meals a day are better than three.” White, *Ministry of Healing*, 304.

⁸⁸ On condiments: “Condiments are injurious in their nature. Mustard, pepper, spices, pickles, and other things of a like character, irritate the stomach and make the blood feverish and impure.” White, *Ministry of Healing*, 325. On soda: The use of soda or baking powder in breadmaking is harmful and unnecessary. Soda causes inflammation of the stomach and often poisons the entire system. White, *Ministry of Healing*, 300.

⁸⁹ “Use little sugar, and cook the fruit only long enough to ensure its preservation. Thus prepared, it is an excellent substitute for fresh fruit. ...Do not eat largely of salt, ...” White, *Ministry of Healing*, 299, 305.

⁹⁰ “It is not well to eat fruit and vegetables at the same meal. If the digestion is feeble, the use of both will often cause distress and inability to put forth mental effort. It is better to have the fruit at one meal and the vegetables at another. ...Especially harmful are the custards and puddings in which milk, eggs, and sugar are the chief ingredients... The free use of milk and sugar taken together should be avoided.” White, *Ministry of Healing*, 299-301.

⁹¹ “Regularity in eating is of vital importance.” White, *Ministry of Healing*, 303.

eliminated.⁹² (11) *Contextual Considerations*: Special circumstances, such as financial situation, time, climate, and occupation, should be considered when choosing one's diet.⁹³ By following these guidelines, White believed individuals could achieve better health and well-being.

Water

Ellen G. White called water "heaven's greatest (or choicest) blessings,"⁹⁴ highlighting its divine origin and beneficial effects. Water has a life-giving properties and is essential for most physiological processes in the human body. The simplest form of using water is drinking. She wrote "Pure water to drink and fresh air to breathe invigorate(s) the vital organs, purify the blood, and help nature in her task of overcoming the bad conditions of the system."⁹⁵ Here, she connected water with air to emphasize their combined positive effects. Regarding additional preventive and curative properties, she noted that "water is the best liquid possible to cleanse the tissues."⁹⁶

Throughout her life, Ellen White promoted the use of water. In her writings, she often pointed to the healing effects that come from its internal and external use

⁹² "For use in breadmaking, the superfine white flour is not the best. Its use is neither healthful nor economical. Fine-flour bread is lacking in nutritive elements to be found in bread made from the whole wheat. It is a frequent cause of constipation and other unhealthful conditions." White, *Ministry of Healing*, 300.

⁹³ "Care should be taken in the selection of food. Our diet should be suited to the season, to the climate in which we live, and to the occupation we follow. Some foods that are adapted for use at one season or in one climate are not suited to another. So there are different foods best suited for persons in different occupations." White, *Ministry of Healing*, 296, 297.

⁹⁴ White, *Spiritual Gifts*, 4:136.

⁹⁵ Ellen G. White, "Disease and its Causes," in *How to Live*, 55.

⁹⁶ Ellen G. White, "The Duty to Preserve Health," *Review and Herald*, July 29, 1884, 481.

(hydrotherapy). In *Ministry of Healing*, she provided several guidelines on when and how to use water.

In health and in sickness, pure water is one of heaven's choicest blessings. Its proper use promotes health. It is the beverage which God provided to quench the thirst of animals and man. Drunk freely, it helps to supply the necessities of the system and assists nature to resist disease. The external application of water is one of the easiest and most satisfactory ways of regulating the circulation of the blood. A cold or cool bath is an excellent tonic. Warm baths open the pores and thus aid in the elimination of impurities. Both warm and neutral baths soothe the nerves and equalize the circulation.⁹⁷

She emphasized the preventive power of water when used internally, calling it a “beverage” provided by God. Drinking water will “supply” the needs of the system and “assist nature to resist disease.” She also gave specific examples of the effects of the external application of water: “regulating the circulation of the blood;” “excellent tonic” (cold application); “open the pores and aid the elimination of impurities” (warm baths); and “soothe the nerves and equalize circulation” (both warm and neutral baths).

To elaborate more on the physiology of hydrotherapy, she said that “a bath, properly taken, fortifies against cold, because the circulation is improved, for the blood is brought to the surface, and a more easy and regular flow of the blood through all the blood-vessels is obtained.”⁹⁸ In summary, Ellen G. White consistently promoted the use of water for both drinking and external applications, stressing its essential role in maintaining health and aiding in disease prevention and treatment.

⁹⁷ White, *Ministry of Healing*, 237.

⁹⁸ Ellen G. White, *Healthful Living* (Battle Creek, MI: Medical Missionary Board, 1897), 187.

Air and Sunlight

According to Ellen G. White, air is “the richest blessing we can enjoy” or “the precious boon of heaven.”⁹⁹ She referred to sunlight as “precious sunlight,” indicating its value, power, and heavenly origin. God created both the atmosphere and light as prerequisites of life, and through these elements, we receive gifts directly from God.

As shown in the previous chapter, Ellen White often placed air and sunlight at the beginning of her lists of health laws. These elements are not only essential for life but also necessary to maintain health. When discussing their preventive power, she often listed these two elements together, sometimes adding exercise. She wrote in the spring of 1871: “There are but few who realize that, in order to enjoy health and cheerfulness, they must have an abundance of sunlight, pure air, and physical exercise. We pity little children who are kept confined indoors when the sun is shining gloriously without.”¹⁰⁰ Here, she emphasized an “abundance” of sunlight and “pure” air. Both elements can be best obtained through outdoor activities, which she often recommended.

Regarding the importance of air, she made a remarkable statement in *Christian Temperance and Bible Hygiene* (1890), where she called air “the food for the lungs.” She wrote: “To deprive the lungs of air, is like depriving the stomach of food. Air is the food that God has provided for the lungs. Welcome it; cultivate a love for it, as a precious boon of heaven.”¹⁰¹ Discussing the preventive qualities of air, she provided a detailed list in the first volume of *Testimonies for the Church*:

⁹⁹ Ellen G. White, *Christian Temperance and Bible Hygiene* (Battle Creek, MI: Good Health Publishing Co., 1890), 104.

¹⁰⁰ Ellen G. White, “Spring Has Come,” *Health Reformer*, April 1, 1871, 228.

¹⁰¹ White, *Christian Temperance and Bible Hygiene*, 104.

The influence of pure, fresh air is to cause the blood to circulate healthfully through the system. It refreshes the body and tends to render it strong and healthy, while at the same time its influence is decidedly felt upon the mind, imparting a degree of composure and serenity. It excites the appetite, and renders the digestion of food more perfect, and induces sound and sweet sleep.¹⁰²

She pointed to the beneficial effects on circulation, mind, appetite, digestion, and sleep, noting that air has a comprehensive effect because it “refreshes the body” and “tends to render it strong and healthy.” In another statement on air, she said that it is “calculated to electrify the whole system.”¹⁰³

Additionally, she stressed the curative power of air in relation to the sick. She compared the importance of air with medicine and food, stating that “fresh air will prove far more beneficial to sick persons than medicine, and is far more essential to them than their food. They will do better and will recover sooner when deprived of food than when deprived of fresh air.”¹⁰⁴

Besides the healing properties of air, she also gave specific recommendations concerning air and breathing: (1) *Building and Furnishing*: It is important to build and furnish houses in a way that allows air and sunlight to be freely available to its inhabitants.¹⁰⁵ (2) *Constant Circulation*: Air must be in “constant circulation” in the house, especially in the sleeping room.¹⁰⁶ (3) *Health Risks*: Disregarding this principle can result

¹⁰² Ellen G. White: *Testimonies for the Church*, 9 vols. (Mountain View, CA: Pacific Press, 1909), 1:702.

¹⁰³ White, *Testimonies for the Church*, 1:701.

¹⁰⁴ Ellen G. White, “Disease and Its Causes: Impure Air,” *Review and Herald*, December 5, 1899, 786.

¹⁰⁵ White, *Spiritual Gifts*, 4:142

¹⁰⁶ White, *Testimonies for the Church*, 1:702

in rheumatism, neuralgia, and lung complaints.¹⁰⁷ (4) *Proper Breathing*: “Full, deep inspirations of pure air” are the best way to breathe and will soothe the nerves.¹⁰⁸ (5) *Common Practices*: Practices like “stooping at one’s work” cause the lungs to be compressed, leading to superficial breathing.¹⁰⁹ (6) *Dress*: Certain dresses and tight lacing cause the same effect.¹¹⁰ (7) *Systemic Impact*: Improper breathing affects most parts of the body: blood, lungs, stomach, liver, and brain, causing the entire system to become “depressed and inactive,” and more “susceptible to disease.”¹¹¹

Regarding sunlight, Ellen G. White said that “each ray of sunshine . . . is a gift of love.”¹¹² As for its importance, she stated: “I must get all the sunlight that is possible for me to obtain,” adding “I must have wisdom to be a faithful guardian of my body.”¹¹³

Reviewing her health-related writings, one can observe that she did not discuss the beneficial effects of sunlight separately. In most cases, these effects were presented together with other health laws, such as air, exercise, and rest. However, she described the use and positive effects of sunlight in several ways. (1) *Regular Airing of Houses*: “There should be a circulation of air and an abundance of light through every apartment of the

¹⁰⁷ White, *Christian Temperance and Bible Hygiene*, 144.

¹⁰⁸ White, *Ministry of Healing*, 272.

¹⁰⁹ White, *Ministry of Healing*, 272, 273.

¹¹⁰ White, *Ministry of Healing*, 273.

¹¹¹ White, *Ministry of Healing*, 273-274.

¹¹² Ellen G. White, *Thoughts from the Mount of Blessing* (Oakland, CA: Pacific Press, 1896), 75.

¹¹³ Ellen G. White to Brother Wessels, February 16, 1890, Lt 35, 1890, Ellen G. White Estate, Silver Spring, MD.

house for several hours each day.”¹¹⁴ (2) *Prioritizing Sunlight*: Get all possible sunlight, even “at the expense of the colors of your carpets.”¹¹⁵ (3) *Health-Preserving Properties*: Sunlight will bring “a healthy glow” to the faces of children.¹¹⁶ (4) *Sunlight for Bedding*: Even bed clothing should be exposed to sunlight.¹¹⁷ (5) *Sunlight for the Elderly*: Aged persons need much sunlight.¹¹⁸

In summary, Ellen G. White consistently promoted the importance of air and sunlight, emphasizing their essential roles in maintaining and improving health. She provided practical advice on how to incorporate these elements into daily life, highlighting their preventive and curative powers.

Exercise and Rest

Exercise and rest can be viewed as complementary activities because our body need both to function properly. Ellen G. White frequently emphasized the importance of these two health laws. She promoted physical exercise with statements such as the following ones. “Action is a law of our being.”¹¹⁹ “Another precious blessing is proper exercise.”¹²⁰ “Each organ and muscle has its work to do in the living organism. Every wheel in the

¹¹⁴ Ellen G. White, *Spiritual Gifts*, 4 vols. (Battle Creek, MI: James White; Steam Press of the Seventh-day Adventist Publ. Assn., 1858-1864), 4:142.

¹¹⁵ White, *Testimonies for the Church*, 2:527.

¹¹⁶ White, *Ministry of Healing*, 275.

¹¹⁷ Ellen G. White, “Beware of the Spare Bed,” *Review and Herald*, January 2, 1872, 23.

¹¹⁸ White, *Ministry of Healing*, 175.

¹¹⁹ White, *Ministry of Healing*, 237.

¹²⁰ White, *Testimonies for the Church*, 2:528.

machinery must be a living, active, working wheel.”¹²¹ However, she also noted: “The Lord is not pleased to have us so prolong our seasons of activity that there will not be time for periods of rest.”¹²² White presented the preventive qualities of exercise as well as the consequences of its neglect: “Exercise will aid the work of digestion.”¹²³ She saw multiple other benefits, as highlighted in the following quotation.

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. The skin, too, becomes inactive. Impurities are not expelled as they would be if the circulation had been quickened by vigorous exercise, the skin kept in a healthy condition, and the lungs fed with plenty of pure, fresh air. This state of the system throws a double burden on the excretory organs, and disease is the result.¹²⁴

Among the beneficial effects of exercise, she mentioned two systems: the blood circulation and the digestive system. Exercise “quickens and equalizes” blood circulation, and when exercise is neglected, the circulation of the blood and skin is the first to be affected. As impurities build up in the system, the excretory organs (liver, kidneys) are overburdened, leading to disease.

Continuing the discussion of effects, she said, “By neglecting to take physical exercise, by overworking mind or body, we unbalance the nervous system. Those who thus shorten their lives by disregarding nature’s laws are guilty of robbery toward God.”¹²⁵ Here, she focused on the nervous system, which is also affected by neglecting exercise. By mentioning “robbery toward God,” she highlighted the seriousness of this issue.

¹²¹ White, *Testimonies for the Church*, 3:77,78.

¹²² Ellen G. White, “We Are Responsible for the Use of Our Talents,” *Youth’s Instructor*, February 3, 1898, 83.

¹²³ White, *Testimonies for the Church*, 2:530.

¹²⁴ White, *Ministry of Healing*, 238.

¹²⁵ Ellen G. White, *Christ’s Object Lesson* (Oakland, CA: Pacific Press, 1900), 346.

White also provided several general and specific recommendations about the regularity and type of exercise, as well as proper clothing. (1) *Daily Exercise*: Based on the weather conditions, one should “walk in the open air every day, summer and winter.” (2) *Proper Clothing*: Clothing “should be suitable for the exercise, and the feet should be well protected.” (3) *Type of Exercise*: Walking is highly beneficial. (4) *Best Time*: The best time to walk would be after meals, “holding the head erect, putting back the shoulders.” (5) *Moderation*: Exercise should be done in moderation.¹²⁶

Regarding the importance of proper rest, she stated, “Recreation is needful to those who are engaged in physical labor and is still more essential for those whose labor is principally mental. It is not essential to our salvation, nor for the glory of God, to keep the mind laboring constantly and excessively, even upon religious themes.”¹²⁷ She stressed that even the urgency or the greatness of our work are insufficient reasons to neglect rest:

Though time is short, and there is a great work to be done, the Lord is not pleased to have us so prolong our seasons of activity that there will not be time for periods of rest, for the study of the Bible, and for communion with God. All this is essential to fortify the soul, to place us in a position where we shall receive wisdom from God to employ our talents in the Master’s service to the highest account.¹²⁸

For White, rest was not complete inactivity but included certain activities such as Bible study and communion with God. She often warned against overwork, noting that “some make themselves sick by overwork.”¹²⁹

¹²⁶ White, *Christian Temperance and Bible Hygiene*, 101.

¹²⁷ White, *Testimonies for the Church*, 1:514.

¹²⁸ White, “We Are Responsible for the Use of Our Talents,” 83–84.

¹²⁹ White, *Ministry of Healing*, 236.

She also provided specific advice on restoring health. Among them, she emphasized “rest, freedom from care, and a spare diet” as means to restore one’s health. For mental exhaustion, she recommended a “visit to the country, where they can live a simple, carefree life, coming in close contact with the things of nature.” She specifically recommended: (1) walking through fields and the woods; (2) picking flowers; and (3) listening to the songs of the birds.¹³⁰ These activities were seen as effective means of recovery.

In summary, Ellen G. White highlighted the vital roles of exercise and rest, providing practical advice to incorporate both into daily life. Exercise promotes physical health and proper circulation, while rest ensures mental and spiritual well-being. Both are essential for maintaining a balanced and healthy life.

Temperance

Temperance is one of the health laws that Ellen G. White frequently addressed in her writings. She even dedicated an entire book to the issue, titled *Christian Temperance and Bible Hygiene*.¹³¹ She often used expressions such as “temperance,” “moderation,” “self-control,” “self-denial,” and “self-mastery.” Temperance was sometimes linked with regularity, as evident in the following statement: “The observance of temperance and regularity in all things has a wonderful power.”¹³² To express how important temperance was, she stated, “The law of temperance must control the life of every Christian.”¹³³ To

¹³⁰ White, *Ministry of Healing*, 236.

¹³¹ Ellen G. White and James White, *Christian Temperance and Bible Hygiene* (Battle Creek, MI: Good Health Pub. Co., 1890). There is also a compilation on that subject. Ellen G. White, *Temperance* (Mountain View, CA: Pacific Press, 1949).

¹³² Ellen G. White, *Education* (Oakland, CA: Pacific Press, 1903), 206.

¹³³ Ellen G. White, “The Right Use of God’s Gifts,” *Review and Herald*, December 1, 1896, 757.

define what temperance is, she wrote in 1877: “True temperance teaches us to abstain entirely from that which is injurious, and to use judiciously only healthful and nutritious articles of food.”¹³⁴

According to her view, temperance has two aspects: (1) *Avoiding Injurious Substances*: This includes substances like alcohol, tobacco, and coffee, where the ideal amount is zero. Therefore, these substances should be completely discarded. (2) *Using Healthful Substances Judiciously*: This pertains to healthful elements such as diet, pure water, air, sunlight, and exercise, where moderation is key, and one should find the ideal amount in each case.

Of all the health laws, temperance has the largest scope, as it is applicable to all areas of life. She asserted: “In order to preserve health, temperance in all things is necessary. Temperance in labor, temperance in eating and drinking. Because of intemperance a great amount of misery has been brought upon the human family.”¹³⁵ “We are under sacred obligations to God so to govern our bodies and rule our appetites and passions that they will not lead us away from purity and holiness, or take our minds from the work God requires us to do.”¹³⁶ Temperance was also emphasized in mental activities, such as studying, and in spiritual activities, such as Bible study.

¹³⁴ Ellen G. White, “The Primal Cause of Intemperance,” *Health Reformer*, April 1877, 107. We find the same idea with different wording in the book *Patriarchs and Prophets*: “True temperance teaches us to dispense entirely with everything *hurtful* and to use judiciously that which is *healthful*.” Ellen G. White, *Patriarchs and Prophets* (Battle Creek, MI: Review and Herald, 1890), 562, (emphasis added).

¹³⁵ White, *Spiritual Gifts*, 4:146.

¹³⁶ White, “The Right Use of God’s Gifts,” 757.

Moreover, temperance plays an important role in the restoration of humanity to the state of Eden: “With our first parents, intemperate desire resulted in the loss of Eden. Temperance in all things has more to do with our restoration to Eden than men realize.”¹³⁷

In the book *Education*, she pointed to both the preventive and curative powers of temperance: “The power of the will and the importance of self-control, both in the preservation and in the recovery of health, the depressing and even ruinous effect of anger, discontent, selfishness, or impurity, and, on the other hand, the marvelous life-giving power to be found in cheerfulness, unselfishness, gratitude, should also be shown.”¹³⁸

She suggested that temperance was the health law most frequently violated, starting with the Fall and resulting in increasing disease and misery. “The human family have violated the laws of health, and have run to excess in almost everything. Disease has been steadily increasing. The cause has been followed by the effect.”¹³⁹ Besides causing physical diseases, intemperance has “benumbed the fine sensibilities, so that sacred things have been placed upon a level with common things.”¹⁴⁰ She added that intemperance makes “it impossible for them to appreciate or place the right value upon eternal things. Temperance in all things is necessary to health and the development and growth of a good Christian character.”¹⁴¹

¹³⁷ White, *Ministry of Healing*, 129.

¹³⁸ White, *Education*, 197.

¹³⁹ White, *Spiritual Gifts*, 4:120.

¹⁴⁰ White, *Spiritual Gifts*, 4: 124.

¹⁴¹ Ellen G. White, “Duty to Know Ourselves,” *Health Reformer*, August 1, 1866, 3.

In her writings, she extensively discussed how to achieve temperance. She often stressed the role of “the higher powers,” specifically the will and reason. “The body is to be brought into subjection. The higher powers of the being are to rule. The passions are to be controlled by the will, which is itself to be under the control of God. The kingly power of reason, sanctified by divine grace, is to bear sway in our lives.”¹⁴² Later, she added, “Men and women must be awakened to the duty of self-mastery, the need of purity, freedom from every depraving appetite and defiling habit. They need to be impressed with the fact that all their powers of mind and body are the gift of God, and are to be preserved in the best possible condition for His service.”¹⁴³

Regarding practical advice on temperance, she pointed first to the harmful effects of tobacco, calling it a “slow poison” “in whatever form it is used.” She stressed its effect on the brain “benumbing the sensibility.”¹⁴⁴ She addressed caffeinated tea and coffee as “stimulants” with “similar effects to those of tobacco.”¹⁴⁵

In summary, Ellen G. White emphasized temperance as a fundamental principle of health and spiritual well-being. By avoiding harmful substances and using healthful ones judiciously, individuals can maintain better physical health, mental clarity, and spiritual purity. Temperance is not only about abstaining from harmful substances but also about practicing moderation in all aspects of life, thereby contributing to overall well-being and the development of a strong Christian character

¹⁴² White, *Ministry of Healing*, 130.

¹⁴³ White, *Ministry of Healing*, 130.

¹⁴⁴ White, *Spiritual Gifts*, 4:126.

¹⁴⁵ White, *Spiritual Gifts*, 4:128.

Trust in Divine Power

In the writings of Ellen G. White, trust and faith are key theological tenets. She often emphasized trust in a personal Savior and the faith that brings justification into someone's life. Interestingly, she also drew a strong connection between the spiritual and physical realms, stating that "true religion and the laws of health go hand in hand."¹⁴⁶

She stressed that God works "through the agencies of nature . . . day by day, hour by hour, moment by moment, to keep us alive, to build up and restore us." She added that in case of an injury, "nature's agencies are set at work to restore soundness. But the power working through these agencies is the power of God. All life-giving power is from Him."¹⁴⁷ Her reasoning is clear: if all life-giving and healing power is from God, trust in Him is crucial for health.

Regarding the importance of faith and trust, she said, "Faith in God is essential for health. In order to have perfect health, our hearts must be filled with love and hope and joy in the Lord."¹⁴⁸ She indicated that faith means being filled with love, hope, and joy in the Lord. To trust in God, we need to control and use our minds. "A person whose mind is quiet and satisfied in God is in the pathway to health."¹⁴⁹

Discussing the curative power of trust, she said: "Let the mind become intelligent and the will be placed on the Lord's side, and there will be a wonderful improvement in

¹⁴⁶ White: *Testimonies for the Church*, 7:137.

¹⁴⁷ White, *Ministry of Healing*, 112.

¹⁴⁸ Ellen G. White, "Our Talents," *Review and Herald*, April 9, 1901, 225.

¹⁴⁹ Ellen G. White, "Sentimentalism," *Health Reformer*, March 1, 1872, 92.

the physical health.”¹⁵⁰ More specifically, she pointed to “the religion of Christ” as one of “the most effectual remedies, for it is a potent soother of the nerves.”¹⁵¹

To explain the physiological effects of trust, she provided a detailed description in *Christian Temperance and Bible Hygiene*.

If the mind is free and happy, from a consciousness of rightdoing and a sense of satisfaction in causing happiness to others, it creates a cheerfulness that will react upon the whole system, causing a freer circulation of the blood and a toning up of the entire body. The blessing of God is a healing power, and those who are abundant in benefiting others will realize that wondrous blessing in both heart and life.¹⁵²

From this, we see that rightdoing will: (1) cause the mind to be free and happy; (2) bring cheerfulness; (3) react upon the whole body; and (4) improve blood circulation and tone up the entire body.

Given the importance of trust in preserving health, it is not surprising that the lack of it can cause serious health problems. She wrote, “Many of the diseases from which men suffer are the result of mental depression. Grief, anxiety, discontent, remorse, guilt, distrust, all tend to break down the life forces and to invite decay and death.”¹⁵³ “Disease is sometimes produced, and is often greatly aggravated, by the imagination. Many are lifelong invalids who might be well if they only thought so.”¹⁵⁴

There are many simple encouragements in the writings of Ellen G. White concerning faith and trust: (1) *Trusting in God’s Promises*: “You must learn the simple art

¹⁵⁰ Ellen G. White, *Special Testimonies Relating to Medical Missionary Work* (1893), 3. See also “Medical Missionary Work,” *Medical Missionary*, December 1, 1892, page unknown.

¹⁵¹ White, *Testimonies for the Church*, 5:444.

¹⁵² White, *Christian Temperance and Bible Hygiene*, 13.

¹⁵³ White, *Ministry of Healing*, 241.

¹⁵⁴ White, *Ministry of Healing*, 241.

of taking God at His word; then you have solid ground beneath your feet.”¹⁵⁵ (2) *Casting one’s burdens and cares upon God*: “Whatever burdens lay heavily, cast them on the Lord. He that keepeth Israel neither slumbers nor sleeps. Repose in God. He is kept in perfect peace whose mind is stayed on God.”¹⁵⁶

In summary, Ellen G. White emphasized that trust in divine power is essential for both spiritual and physical health. By trusting in God and maintaining a mindset filled with love, hope, and joy, individuals can experience significant improvements in their overall well-being. Conversely, a lack of trust can lead to mental and physical health issues, highlighting the critical role of faith in maintaining a healthy, balanced life.

Cleanliness and Dress

Cleanliness is often listed among the most important health laws, although it is missing from some lists of these laws.¹⁵⁷ Ellen G. White frequently used terms such as “cleanliness,” “purity,” “hygiene,” or “sanitation.” She also used the term “perfect cleanliness.”¹⁵⁸ Additionally, she referred to purity regarding other health laws, such as “pure water” and “fresh air.”

Cleanliness has two aspects: physical cleanliness and spiritual cleanliness. Ellen G. White often wrote about both, presenting heaven as a model for humanity. “Heaven is pure

¹⁵⁵ Ellen G. White, “The Mirror,” *Youth’s Instructor*, August 18, 1886, 130.

¹⁵⁶ Ellen G. White to O. A. Olsen, October 26, 1892, Lt 19e, 1892, published in Ellen G. White, *My Life Today* (Washington, DC: Review and Herald, 1952), 10.

¹⁵⁷ Some, among them Walter Strachan, a visiting psychiatrist of the Uchee Pines Institute, call it the “ninth health law.”

¹⁵⁸ White, *Ministry of Healing*, 276.

and holy, and those who pass through the gates of the city of God must here be clothed with inward and outward purity.”¹⁵⁹

Another aspect of cleanliness is orderliness, as stated in the following quotation: “Order is heaven’s first law, and the Lord desires His people to give in their homes a representation of the order and harmony that pervade the heavenly courts. Truth never places her delicate feet in a path of uncleanness or impurity.”¹⁶⁰ About its preventive quality, she said: “Perfect cleanliness, plenty of sunlight, careful attention to sanitation in every detail of the home life, are essential to freedom from disease and to the cheerfulness and vigor of the inmates of the home.”¹⁶¹ Giving special attention to this health law was crucial to prevent diseases and sickness, as shown in the following statements.

Violent epidemics of fevers have occurred in villages and cities that were considered perfectly healthful, and these have resulted in death or broken constitutions. In many instances the premises of the very ones who fell victims to these epidemics contained the agents of destruction which sent forth deadly poison into the atmosphere, to be inhaled by the family and the neighborhood.¹⁶²

When severe sickness enters a family, there is great need of each member's giving strict attention to personal cleanliness and diet, to preserve himself in a healthful condition, thus fortifying himself against disease. It is also of the greatest importance that the sickroom, from the first, be properly ventilated. This is beneficial to the afflicted, and highly necessary to keep those well who are compelled to remain a length of time in the sickroom.¹⁶³

¹⁵⁹ Ellen G. White, “Without Spot or Wrinkle,” *Review and Herald*, June 10, 1902, 12.

¹⁶⁰ White, “Without Spot or Wrinkle,” 12.

¹⁶¹ White, *Ministry of Healing*, 276.

¹⁶² White, *Christian Temperance and Bible Hygiene*, 105-106.

¹⁶³ White, “Disease and its Causes,” in *How to Live*, 54-61.

Besides her discussion of the preventative benefits of cleanliness, she offered a remarkable description of the physiological effects of violating that health law in the following statement from *Spiritual Gifts*, vol. 4 (1864).

Impurities are constantly and imperceptibly passing from the body, through the pores, and if the surface of the skin is not kept in a healthy condition, the system is burdened with impure matter. If the clothing worn is not often washed and frequently aired, it becomes filthy with impurities which are thrown off from the body by sensible and insensible perspiration. And if the garments worn are not frequently cleansed from these impurities, the pores of the skin absorb again the waste matter thrown off. The impurities of the body, if not allowed to escape, are taken back into the blood and forced upon the internal organs. . . . This effort produces fevers and what is termed disease.¹⁶⁴

Regarding physical cleanliness, she gave numerous practical recommendations: (1) *Strict and Scrupulous Cleanliness*: “Essential to both physical and mental health.” (2) *Frequent Bathing*: Advisable for maintaining cleanliness. (3) *Neat and Clean Clothing*: Helps keep thoughts pure and sweet. (4) *Divine Disfavor*: “God looks with disfavor on uncleanness of any kind.”¹⁶⁵ (5) *Clean Living Spaces*: “Unclean, neglected corners in the house will tend to make impure, neglected corners in the soul.”¹⁶⁶

When discussing moral purity, she pointed to its far-reaching effects: “The mind must be firmly controlled to dwell upon subjects that will strengthen the moral powers. . . . The thoughts must be pure, the meditations of the heart must be clean, if the words of the mouth are to be words acceptable to Heaven and helpful to your associates.”¹⁶⁷

Regarding healthful clothing, she made numerous statements discussing its effect on health. She often warned against uncleanness in dress: “Our dress should be cleanly.

¹⁶⁴ White, *Spiritual Gifts*, 4:140.

¹⁶⁵ White, “Without Spot or Wrinkle,” 12.

¹⁶⁶ White, “Without Spot or Wrinkle,” 12.

¹⁶⁷ Ellen G. White, “The Renewing of the Mind,” *Review and Herald*, June 12, 1888, 369.

Uncleanliness in dress is unhealthful, and thus defiling to the body and to the soul.”¹⁶⁸ She stressed the health of the soul and body: “Both are promoted by healthful dress.”¹⁶⁹ Dress can have a serious physiologic effect. She wrote, “Perfect health depends upon perfect circulation. Special attention should be given to the extremities, that they may be as thoroughly clothed as the chest and region over the heart.”¹⁷⁰

When discussing dress reform, she stressed not only cleanliness but also simplicity and modesty. “By the things of nature Christ illustrates the beauty that Heaven values, the modest grace, the simplicity, the purity, the appropriateness, that would make our attire pleasing to Him.”¹⁷¹

In summary, Ellen G. White emphasized cleanliness and appropriate dress as crucial components of health and spiritual well-being. Cleanliness, both physical and spiritual, is essential for preventing disease and maintaining a harmonious environment. Proper clothing should promote health, modesty, and simplicity, contributing to the overall well-being of individuals and their communities.

Conclusion

Closing the discussion on the individual health laws, it is evident that Ellen G. White wrote extensively and in detail about them. She often delved deeply into physiological discussions to explain the preventive and curative effects of these laws.

¹⁶⁸ White, *Ministry of Healing*, 288.

¹⁶⁹ White, *Ministry of Healing*, 288.

¹⁷⁰ White, *Christian Temperance and Bible Hygiene*, 142-143.

¹⁷¹ White, *Ministry of Healing*, 289.

We also saw how she emphasized the far-reaching effects of proper nutrition, advocating a plant-based diet as the most ideal. Regarding the use of water, she highlighted both its internal and external applications. She often linked some of these laws together, emphasizing their combined effects. For instance, she frequently connected the benefits of air, sunlight, exercise, and rest.

In her view, these laws should be seen as a system in which each element is essential. When discussing temperance, she elaborated on its two aspects: (1) discarding anything harmful, and (2) using all good things in moderation. She stressed trust's essentialness and centrality for both physical and spiritual health.

This integrated philosophy is rarely found in the writings of other health reformers. Ellen G. White's approach presents a comprehensive system where each law interconnects, highlighting the holistic nature of her health principles. This integrated view underscores the importance of balance and harmony in maintaining physical and spiritual well-being.

CHAPTER 4
THE BIBLICAL ORIGIN OF THE CONCEPT OF
“THE LAWS OF HEALTH”

Introduction

The purpose of this chapter is to present compelling arguments for the biblical origin of the health laws discussed by Ellen G. White. Initially, we will explore the biblical perspective on health and healing in general. Subsequently, we will focus on passages that demonstrate the connection between laws and the issue of health. We will then identify where and how these health laws are presented in the Bible and examine the context of these passages. Although the laws of health are not explicitly listed in the Bible, individual elements can be identified in various places throughout the Old and New Testaments. We will delve into topics such as diet, the use of water, sunlight, air, exercise, and rest, beginning with the book of Genesis and extending to other books of the Scriptures. Due to their significance, we will address the issues of temperance, trust, and cleanliness in separate sections.

The Theology of Health and Healing in the Bible

The issue of health and healing is central to the Bible, with both the Old and New Testaments containing several widely used words related to this subject. The main Hebrew terms include *shalom* (completeness, wholeness, soundness, welfare, peace, health), *yeshuah* (deliverance, help, safety, security), *arukhah* (healing of a wound,

restoration), *marpé* (healing, cure, health), and *riphuth* (healing).¹⁷² For example, *shalom* is used in Genesis 43:28, where Joseph inquires about his father's health, and his brothers respond: "Thy servant our father is in good health [*shalom*], he is yet alive. And they bowed down their heads and made obeisance." *Arukah* appears in Isaiah 58:2, where God promises: "Your healing [*arukah*] shall spring forth speedily, and your righteousness shall go before you," linking physical and spiritual restoration. Malachi uses the word *marpé*, promising, "Unto you that fear my name shall the Sun of righteousness arise with healing in his wings" (Mal 4:2). The word *riputh* is found only in Proverbs 3:8, "It will be health to your flesh, and strength to your bones."¹⁷³

In Greek, the words for health include *soteria* (deliverance, safety, welfare, well-being, salvation), *hugiaino* (to be in good health, be healthy or sound both in physical and spiritual sense), and *hugiés* (healthy, sound, undamaged). In Act 27:34, Paul uses *sotera* in the sense of health: "Therefore I urge you to take nourishment, for this is for your survival (*soteria*), since not a hair will fall from the head of any of you."¹⁷⁴ The word *hugiaino* appears several times in the New Testament, such as in Luke 5:31, 7:10, and 15:27. John uses *hugiaino* in his third epistle: "Beloved, I pray that you may prosper in all things and be in health, just as your soul prospers" (3 John 2). Other related words like

¹⁷² William H. Shea, "Creation," in *The Handbook of the Seventh-day Adventist Theology*, ed. Raoul Dederen, Commentary Reference Series 12 (Hagerstown, MD: Review and Herald, 2000), 418.

¹⁷³ According to *The Handbook of the SDA Theology* "Health in the OT falls into four broad categories, (1) a state of wholeness and fulfillment, (2) integrated harmony with God and His law, (3) as righteousness—including a right relationship with God and neighbor, and (4) physically in the sense of strength, the ability to achieve, fulfilled in long life." George W. Reid, "Health and Healing," in *The Handbook of the Seventh-day Adventist Theology*, ed. Raoul Dederen, Commentary Reference Series 12 (Hagerstown, MD: Review and Herald, 2000), 512.

¹⁷⁴ In the King James Version, this verse reads: "Wherefore I pray you to take some meat: for this is for your health: for there shall not an hair fall from the head of any of you."

therapeia (healing, treatment) and *therapeuó* (care for, treat medically, heal) also appear in the New Testament, especially concerning Jesus' healing ministry.

In contrast to the modern concept of health, which focuses mainly on present physical, spiritual, and social well-being, the Bible has a much broader view.¹⁷⁵ Here, health is not something humans can acquire solely through their efforts or wisdom; the Bible is clear that health and wholeness are found only in God as a person is connected to Him. Health is a present condition and a promise of the final and perfect restoration of the body and soul.

When discussing health, it is crucial to understand where diseases come from and why an omnipotent God allows them to happen. According to the Scriptures, several points can be stated:

(1) *Creation's Perfection*: The story of Creation (Gen 1–2) shows that God created Adam and Eve with perfect health. When God finished His creation, He „saw that everything He has made, and indeed it was very good” (Gen 1:31). This indicates that sicknesses and death were not part of God's original plan.

(2) *The Fall's Consequence*: Sickness and death came as a direct result of the Fall. Paul writes: “Just as through one man sin entered the world, and death through sin, and thus death spread to all men, because all sinned” (Rom 5:12). Isaiah uses poetic language to describe humanity's condition: “The whole heart is sick, and the whole heart faints. From the sole of the foot even the head, there is no soundness in it, but wounds

¹⁷⁵ According to the WHO, “Health is a state of complete physical, mental and social well-being and not merely the absence of disease or infirmity.” See “Health and Well-Being,” The World Health Organization, accessed September 30, 2024, <https://www.who.int/data/gho/data/major-themes/health-and-well-being>.

and bruises and putrefying sores; they have not been closed or bound up, or soothed with ointment.” (Isa 1:5–6).

(3) *Satan’s Role*: The Bible presents Satan as the originator of all diseases: “He was a murderer from the beginning” (John 8:44). The book of Job shows Satan spreading disease to Job: “So Satan went out from the presence of the Lord, and struck Job with painful boils from the sole of his foot to the crown of his head” (Job 2:7). This story also indicates that Satan has only limited power to hurt people.

(4) *Human Responsibility*: Humans are responsible for preserving their health. Jesus warned the paralytic in the Temple after healing him at the pool of Bethesda: “See, you have been made well. Sin no more, lest a worse thing come upon you” (John 5:14). This suggests that personal sin can contribute to disease. Paul also highlights this responsibility: “Do you not know that you are the temple of God and that the Spirit of God dwells in you? If anyone defiles the temple of God, God will destroy him. For the temple of God is holy, which temple you are” (1 Cor 3:16–17).

(5) *Divine Discipline*: Sickness can be a disciplinary measure from God. Job gained a deeper knowledge of God after his healing: “I have heard of You by the hearing of the ear. But now my eye sees You” (Job 42:5). Hezekiah recognized the lesson in his illness: “Indeed it was for my own peace that I had great bitterness” (Isa 38:17). Paul also understood why God allowed a disease in his life that seemingly hindered his mission.¹⁷⁶

¹⁷⁶ He plainly wrote to the Corinthians about his struggles with his weakness, “And lest I should be exalted above measure by the abundance of the revelations, a thorn in the flesh was given to me, a messenger of Satan to buffet me, lest I be exalted above measure. Concerning this thing I pleaded with the Lord three times that it might depart from me. And He said to me, My grace is sufficient for you, for My strength is made perfect in weakness. Therefore most gladly I will rather boast in my infirmities, that the power of Christ may rest upon me” (2 Cor 12:7-9). As for his health condition, see Gal 4.13-15. See also Nichol, ed., *The Seventh-day Adventist Bible Commentary*, 6:920, 921.

Both the Old and New Testaments present a God who is deeply interested in restoring health. The Old Testament includes examples such as the healing of Abimelech's wife (Gen 20:18), the healing of those bitten by the poisonous snakes (Num 21), the cleansing of Naaman's leprosy (2 King 5), and Hezekiah's recovery (Isa 38). In Isaiah 53, the coming Messiah is described as one who will bear our sicknesses and bring healing through his sufferings:

Surely He has borne our griefs [*choli* = sickness] And carried our sorrows [*makob* = pain]; Yet we esteemed Him stricken, Smitten by God, and afflicted. But He was wounded for our transgressions, He was bruised for our iniquities; The chastisement for our peace was upon Him, And by His stripes we are healed [*rapha* = heal].¹⁷⁷

God's redemptive act, the "wounds," "bruises," and stripes" of the Messiah, is presented as the basis for all healings, whether physical or spiritual.

According to the Gospels, Jesus devoted considerable time to healing physical sicknesses during his ministry. For example, Matthew 4:23 states: "And Jesus went about all Galilee, teaching in their synagogues, preaching the gospel of the kingdom, and healing (*therapeuón*) all kinds of sickness and all kinds of disease among the people." The restoration of the paralytic at Bethesda (John 5), the cleansing of the leper, and the healing of the centurion's servant (Matt 8) are some illustrations showing that even in its fallen condition, our body is valuable to God.

God also promises to restore the health of those who will eventually enter His kingdom. John expresses this great promise in Revelation 21:4, where the restoration includes both spiritual ("wipe away every tear from their eyes") and physical restoration

¹⁷⁷ Isa 53:4-5

(“no more pain”).¹⁷⁸ The same idea is expressed by Paul when discussing the issue of resurrection: “The dead will be raised incorruptible, and we shall be changed” (1 Cor 15:52).

In summary, the terms health and healing are closely connected both semantically and theologically. While health is a condition that can be lost due to sin, healing is God’s act to restore it. Health in the Bible denotes physical soundness, completeness, the perfect functioning of the body, and the absence of disease. It also includes prosperity, peace, and a state of physical, spiritual, and social well-being. Health is closely related to ideas like salvation, final restoration, and eternal life. When God provides salvation, He also aims to restore someone’s health to its fullness at the resurrection.

Even though one has to live in a world of sin and may not be able to achieve perfect health in this life, he must protect his body from diseases and strive for ideal health through obedience to God. This issue will be discussed in the next section.

The Idea of Laws Governing Human Health

Even on the first pages of the Bible, God gave laws to humanity to keep them in ideal conditions. He provided the necessary conditions for life: soil, light, air, water, and food. He also set out the ways and times for activity and rest. For the Israelites leaving Egypt, God laid down a number of laws for the cleanliness of their bodies and camp. Only by obeying these laws could the great promise of escape from the diseases of Egypt be fulfilled. “If you diligently heed [*shama*] the voice of the Lord your God and do what is right in His sight, give ear to His commandments [*mitzvah*] and keep all His statutes

¹⁷⁸ The full verse reads, “God will wipe away every tear from their eyes; there shall be no more death, nor sorrow, nor crying. There shall be no more pain, for the former things have passed away.”

[*choq*], I will put none of the diseases [*machaleh*] on you which I have brought on the Egyptians. For I am the LORD who heals [*rapha*] you” (Exod 15:26). This passage contains a significant principle: if Israelites rendered perfect obedience to God’s commandments, He would heal them just as He healed the water and preserved them from the diseases of Egypt.¹⁷⁹

The same divine principle is expressed in other places in the Bible. For example, in Proverbs, Solomon warns: “My son, do not forget my law [*torah*], But let your heart keep my commands [*mitzvah*]; For length of days and long life and peace they will add to you. Do not be wise in your own eyes; Fear the Lord and depart from evil” (Prov 3:1–2). Here, Solomon also talks about “writing God’s commandments on the tablet of the heart” and “trusting” and “fearing” the Lord. If these conditions are met, the following promise can be fulfilled: “It will be health [*riphuth*] to your flesh, and strength to your bones” (Prov 3:5–8).

The Ten Commandments also touch on several aspects of health: clarity of thought, balance between work and rest, human relationships, protection of life, and restraint of desires are all covered by these commandments.¹⁸⁰

In summary, the Bible presents a framework of divine laws and principles aimed at preserving human health. By following these laws, individuals can maintain physical, mental, and spiritual well-being. These principles were given to ensure that humans live

¹⁷⁹ Commenting on this verse, the *Seventh-day Adventist Bible Commentary* states, “This great principle was true not only in the time of the Hebrews but through all ages. The physical well-being of the human race is still to a large extent dependent upon their regard for divine law. Those who disregard the laws that govern healthful living have but themselves to blame for the consequences. On the other hand, those who live according to the divinely imparted instructions on health will experience a marked freedom from disease.” Nichol, ed., *The Seventh-day Adventist Bible Commentary*, 1:574

¹⁸⁰ See Exod. 20:2-17, Deut. 5:6-21

in harmony with God’s design, fostering a holistic approach to health that encompasses obedience, trust, and a balanced lifestyle.

Some Basic Health Laws in the Book of Genesis

The laws of health are not explicitly listed in the Bible, but individual elements can be identified in various places in the Old and New Testaments. Many of these laws are encountered in the story of Creation and the Fall (Gen 1–3). Here, we see how God first created the earth with its atmosphere, hydrosphere, and solar system objects like the Sun and the Moon providing light. Thus, God brought into existence a suitable environment providing the necessary conditions for life. Then God created all living things, including plants, animals, and humans. The Bible does not refer to light, air, and water as remedies but presents them as prerequisites for all life forms.

According to Genesis 1, God’s first act was to create “the heavens and the earth” [*hassamayim weet haarets*], which also included the “waters” [*hammayim*] but “without form” [*tohu wabohu*] (Gen 1:1–2). This indicates that God first created the basic substances and then continued to form and organize them over the following days to create a system capable of sustaining life. The account suggests that air as a substance was created on the first day but acquired its final form as the atmosphere [*raqia* = firmament] on the second day (Gen 1:8).

God also created light [*or*] on the first day of creation: “Then God said, “Let there be light”; and there was light. And God saw the light, that it was good; and God divided the light from the darkness” (Gen 1:3–4). Interestingly, it was only on the fourth day that God created the Sun as a source of light (see Gen 1:14–18).

The creation account places special emphasis on the creation of waters. Water as a substance was present on the first day, although its creation is not specifically mentioned (Gen 1:2).¹⁸¹ On the second day, God did additional work on the waters, separating them into different forms (Gen 1:6). The next day, God separated the water from the dry land, completing the seas (Gen 1:9–10). For watering the land, the account states that “a mist went up from the earth and watered the whole face of the ground” (Gen 2:6). Later, after planting the Garden of Eden, a river flowed from Eden to water the garden (Gen 2:10).

In the story of creation, we also find the first statement regarding the ideal diet for humanity: “And God said, Behold, I have given you every herb [*kol eseb*] bearing seed, which is upon the face of all the earth, and every tree, in the which is the fruit of a tree [*peri ets*] yielding seed [*zera*]; to you it shall be for meat” (Gen 1:29). The main categories of food identified here include grains, nuts, and fruits.¹⁸² After the Fall, another dietary instruction appears: “You shalt eat the herb of the field [*eseb sadeh*]” (Gen 3:18). Many commentators interpret this addition as a reference to vegetables as part of the human diet.¹⁸³ At this point, meat was not part of the ideal diet plan designed by God. The description of the Garden of Eden suggests that the food God provided for Adam and Eve was delicious and nourishing. “And out of the ground the Lord God made every tree grow that is pleasant to the sight and good for food” (Gen 2:9). God encouraged them to “freely eat” of every tree in the garden, except for the tree of the knowledge of good and evil.

¹⁸¹ Here the term *pene hammayim* (the face of the waters) is used.

¹⁸² Nichol, ed., *The Seventh-day Adventist Bible Commentary*, 1:217

¹⁸³ Nichol, ed., *The Seventh-day Adventist Bible Commentary*, 1:234

According to Genesis, God allowed meat consumption only after the flood, but with clear restrictions. Noah and his descendants were permitted to consume only clean animals, with the prohibition of eating blood (See Gen 9:3-4). Notably, the clean-unclean distinction existed centuries before the birth of the nation of Israel, indicating that it was a general dietary law applicable to all humanity. It is very probable that the change in diet to include meat—together with other factors—contributed to the gradual decrease in lifespan presented in Genesis.¹⁸⁴

In terms of exercise and rest, the creation account presents a God who rested after His six-day-long creation process. The appointment of the seventh day for rest served as an example for humanity, as God Himself did not get tired. “And on the seventh day God ended His work which He had made; and He rested [*shabath*] on the seventh day from all his work which he had made” (Gen 2:2). This seventh-day rest was later included in the Ten Commandments. The first mention of sleep occurs when God created Eve and took a rib from Adam: “God caused a deep sleep [*tardemah*] to fall on Adam” (Gen 2:21).

There are two references to exercise. Right after creation, God put man into the Garden of Eden “to dress it and to keep it” (Gen 2:15). After the Fall, God cursed the ground, saying: “In the sweat of your face you shall eat bread, till you return to the ground” (Gen 3:19). This “curse” implied that cultivating the soil would require more work and became more tiresome. Interestingly, this change also had a positive side: involvement in hard work would provide significant protection from further temptations.

In summary, while the Bible does not explicitly list health laws, individual elements can be identified throughout its text, particularly in the book of Genesis. These

¹⁸⁴ This gradual change becomes apparent when Gen. 5 and Gen 11 are compared.

elements include the provision of a suitable environment for life, an ideal diet, and principles for exercise and rest, all of which are crucial for maintaining health and well-being.

Health Laws in Other Books of the Bible

This section will look at additional biblical statements on diet, the use of water, sunlight, air, exercise, and rest.

God designed and provided food for humanity to be a source of joy and strength. For example, Elijah received a “cake” from God and he “ate and drank; and he went in the strength of that food forty days and forty nights as far as Horeb, the mountain of God” (1Kgs 19:8). After Saul’s conversion, it is written, “When he had received food, he was strengthened” (Acts 9:19).

As discussed earlier, God allowed certain animals to be consumed after the flood but with explicit restrictions. The first detailed description of which animals were considered unclean appears in Leviticus 11.¹⁸⁵ Additionally, other rules were added for health reasons, such as the prohibition of eating fat, blood, and internal organs.¹⁸⁶

Plants, especially grains (wheat, barley), remained the basic food items in biblical times.¹⁸⁷ God never encouraged people to eat meat in large quantities. When wandering

¹⁸⁵ For a detailed commentary, see Jiri Moskala, *The law of clean and unclean animals of Leviticus 11 Their nature, theology, and rationale (an intertextual study)*, Andrews University doctoral dissertation abstracts, 1999.

¹⁸⁶ For the relevance of these dietary restrictions in the time of NT, see Acts 15.

¹⁸⁷ The word (Heb. *lechem*, Greek *artos*) bread is mentioned 296 times in the OT, and 45 times in the NT. The book of Ezekiel even contains a bread recipe, “Also take for yourself wheat, barley, beans, lentils, millet, and spelt; put them into one vessel, and make bread of them for yourself. During the number of days that you lie on your side, three hundred and ninety days, you shall eat it.” (Eze. 4:7) What is remarkable here is the combination of grains and legumes. It is well known today that one can produce wholesome food by combining legumes and grains.

in the desert, the Israelites received manna from God, which was “like white coriander seed, and the taste of it was like wafers made with honey” (Exod 16:31).¹⁸⁸ The story of the quails indicates that God did not consider meat, even in a clean form, to be an ideal diet for them.¹⁸⁹

In relation to diet, the Bible emphasizes temperance and the use of reason. Even the right timing and motivation count: “Blessed are you, O land, when your king is the son of nobles, and your princes feast at the proper time—For strength and not for drunkenness” (Eccl 10:17). Concerning the use of honey, Proverbs warns to use it in moderation: “Have you found honey? Eat only as much as you need, Lest you be filled with it and vomit” (Prov 25:16).

Water appears in numerous stories in the Bible. The significance of water appears in the value that people ascribed to wells, in the story of the Flood as a means of judgment, in the crossing of the Red Sea as a means of deliverance, and the quenching of the Israelites’ thirst in the desert. Water also became a symbol of cleansing from sin (baptism). Christ became thirsty and asked for water (John 4:7; 19:28). In Revelation, “a pure river” coming from the throne of God (Rev 22:1) symbolizes God’s life-giving power.

Regarding the origin of the sun and light, the Psalmist says, “The day is Yours, the night also is Yours; You have prepared the light [*ma’or*] and the sun [*shemesh*]” (Ps

¹⁸⁸ The book of Psalms call it “the bread of heaven” (see Psalm 78:24).

¹⁸⁹ See Num. 11.

74:16). As for the benefit of sunlight, Solomon says, “Truly the light is sweet, And it is pleasant for the eyes to behold the sun” (Eccl 11:7).

Interestingly, the Hebrew term *ruach* means both air as a substance and breathing as life-sustaining process.¹⁹⁰ Job, when arguing with Bildad, says, “He will not allow me to catch my breath [*ruach*], but fills me with bitterness” (Job 9:18). According to Paul, even breathing is maintained by God, “He gives to all life, breath [*pnoé*], and all things.” (Acts 17:25).

Exercise as a command is rarely mentioned in the Bible because it was always part of daily life. Several occupations (agriculture, animal farming, carpentry, fishing, etc.) involved significant physical activity. During the Exodus, the Israelites moved from place to place on foot (Exod 12:23). The prophets often walked long distances; for example, Elijah once walked approximately 200 miles.¹⁹¹ In the New Testament, John the Baptist, Jesus, and the Apostles travelled extensively by foot.¹⁹² Paul refers to running and boxing as symbols of the Christian life.¹⁹³

The Bible mentions different types of rest. Daily sleep was necessary to regain strength and vital energies. “When you lie down, you will not be afraid; Yes, you will lie down and your sleep will be sweet” (Prov 3:24). The Sabbath-day rest was included in

¹⁹⁰ In the book of Genesis, air is mostly presented as the dwelling place of birds. See for example: Gen 1:26, 28, 30, 2:19, 20, 6:7, 7:3, 23 etc.

¹⁹¹ See 1King. 19:8

¹⁹² See Gen 18:16, 2 Kings 2:11, Mat. 4:18 etc.

¹⁹³ These sports were well known for the Christians. However, Paul did not recommend to get involved in contemporary sporting activities: “For bodily exercise profits a little, but godliness is profitable for all things, having promise of the life that now is and of that which is to come” (1 Tim. 4:8).

the fourth commandment, regulating a six-plus-one-day weekly cycle of work and rest.¹⁹⁴ The Bible mentions longer periods of rest needed after hard work. Jesus told the disciples, “Come aside by yourselves to a deserted place and rest a while” (Mark 6:31). Even Jesus, in human form, needed time for rest. Christ promised spiritual rest to those who come to Him (see Matt 11:28).

In conclusion, various books of the Bible provide guidance on diet, the use of water, sunlight, air, exercise, and rest. These principles emphasize temperance, reason, and the importance of maintaining both physical and spiritual well-being.

The Concept of Temperance as a Central Health Law in the Bible

In English, the word “temperance” comes from the Latin *Temperantia*, meaning “habitual moderation in the indulgence of the appetite or passions.”¹⁹⁵ Its synonyms include moderation, abstemiousness, self-control, and self-restraint. These words will be used interchangeably in this section.

Although the Old Testament does not have a specific term for temperance, the idea is present in numerous books. Both positive and negative examples can be found. While positive examples have their motivating power, negative examples provide valuable lessons, showing basic cause-effect correlations.

The significance of this health law is illustrated in the story of the Fall. God gave Adam and Eve clear instructions about what they could eat and what they should not. From this point, it was their free decision to obey. This story also present Satan as the

¹⁹⁴ See Exod 20:8-11

¹⁹⁵ *Webster's New Colligate Dictionary*, 6th ed., s.v. “temperance.”

Tempter, whose main effort is to cause humans to disobey God's command. To this end, he used deception. The story of the Fall indicates that appetite is an area where every human may expect the strongest temptations.

Before continuing, it is essential to explain why temperance is so vital and what makes it challenging to practice. As recorded in the Bible, even in an ideal world, Satan was able to deceive humans. After the Fall, as human nature changed, people are born with a tendency to follow their instincts. Satan can now use his deceptive techniques even more successfully through corrupted human nature. Without strict control, humans are condemned to fall like Adam and Eve. However, the Bible illustrates that faithful individuals were able to learn and practice abstemiousness in different areas of life.

One can see vivid examples of abstemiousness in the lives of some of the Patriarchs. For instance, Abraham allowed Lot to choose the most fertile land, denying himself (Gen 13). Joseph did not succumb to temptation when approached by Potiphar's wife (Gen 39). In the Babylonian court, Daniel made a firm decision not to defile himself with the king's food and drink (Dan 1).

In contrast, we see the lack of self-control in the life of Esau when he sold his birthright for a "stew of lentils" (Gen 25). Following his uncontrolled passion, Samson chose a Philistine wife (Judg 14). Belshazzar used the Temple's silver and gold vessels to party with his lords and their wives, eating and drinking carelessly. These examples show the power of human nature to disobey God's commandments.

The New Testament also provides numerous examples of temperance. Consider the lives of John the Baptist, Jesus, and the apostles. Both John and Jesus lived very simple lifestyles. John is described as being "clothed in camel's hair, with a leather belt

around his waist; and his food was locusts [*akrides*] and wild honey [*meli agrios*]” (Matt 3:4).¹⁹⁶ Jesus, immediately after his baptism, went through various temptations, where Satan tempted Him with appetite, presumption, and love for power. Jesus defeated all of them using God’s word as a tool to silence the Tempter (Matt 4; Luke 4).

In Paul’s letters, we find specific terms denoting the idea of temperance: *enkrateia* (temperance, abstemiousness, self-control) and *sóphrosyné* (sobriety, wisdom, temperance).¹⁹⁷ In 1 Corinthians 9:24-25, Paul uses an example from contemporary sports to illustrate that Christian life is a “race” where temperance is vital. In sports, victory may depend on the athlete’s lifestyle: “Everyone who competes for the prize is temperate in all things [*panta enkrateuomai*].” Likewise, in the Christian life, this virtue plays a central role in achieving victory. The incorruptible crown of victory is a reward that cannot be measured by earthly standards.¹⁹⁸

In Galatians 5:22-23, Paul uses the image of fruit-bearing to express how temperance is formed in the Christian life. According to this passage, life is like a tree: if one is rooted in God and the Holy Spirit dwells in him, then among other virtues, *enkrateia* will ripen as a “fruit.” Here the Bible stresses that self-control is never the result of human effort alone, but the work of the Holy Spirit within us.

Another area where abstemiousness is emphasized in the Bible is the use of alcohol. The principles we gain here can be applied to other addictions that were not present in biblical times such as the use of tobacco, drugs, and coffee. In Old Testament times, it seems that the use of alcoholic drinks was not forbidden for common people.

¹⁹⁶ On the the meaning of the heb. *akrides*, see Nichol, ed., The Seventh-day Adventist Bible Commentary, 5:303-306.

¹⁹⁸ The imagery of race is also found in the following verses: Phil 2:16, 3:14, 2 Tim 2:5.

Nevertheless, the Bible does not encourage anyone to use it. Solomon writes: “Wine is a mocker, strong drink is a brawler” (Prov 20:1). There are numerous stories in the Old Testament where drunkenness is described and condemned. The stories of Lot’s daughter (Gen 19:32–33), Nabal (1 Sam 25:36–37), and Amnon (2 Sam 13:28) are striking examples. Excessive wine consumption contributed to Solomon’s downfall.¹⁹⁹

Interestingly, priests and Nazarites were to avoid drinking wine in any form (Num 6:3–4). For example, God’s instruction to Samson’s parents included this command (Judg 13:4, 7). In Leviticus 10:8–11, we find a significant passage concerning the use of alcohol and its effects.

Then the Lord spoke to Aaron, saying: Do not drink wine or intoxicating drink, you, nor your sons with you, when you go into the tabernacle of meeting, lest you die. It shall be a statute forever throughout your generations, that you may distinguish [*badal*] between holy and unholy, and between unclean and clean, and that you may teach the children of Israel all the statutes which the Lord has spoken to them by the hand of Moses.

According to this passage, the reason God forbade alcohol to the priests was to preserve their moral discernment and their ability to teach. This clearly indicates that other stimulants like tobacco and coffee would have the same effect, thus making them unsafe to use in any form.²⁰⁰ The apostles also regarded this issue as very important. For example, Paul pointed out the harmful effects of wine drinking: “And do be not drunk with wine, in which is dissipation; but be filled with the Spirit” (Eph 5:18).

Paul also emphasizes the importance of the physical condition of the body: “I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that ye present your bodies a

¹⁹⁹ Eccl 2:4

²⁰⁰ For the relevance of this passage for today’s Christians, see 1 Pet 2:9.

living sacrifice, holy, acceptable unto God, which is your reasonable service. And be not conformed to this world: but be ye transformed by the renewing of your mind [*nous*], that ye may prove what is that good, and acceptable, and perfect, will of God” (Rom 12:1).

Here we see the idea of moral discernment: to know what is good, acceptable, and perfect. To be capable of that discernment, one first has to present his body to God as a living sacrifice. In biblical thinking, a sacrificial animal must be complete and sound.²⁰¹ Apostle Peter also warns Christians, pointing to the close connection between soberness and prayer: “But the end of all things is at hand: be ye therefore sober [*sophrosyne* = temperate, sober], and watch unto prayer” (1 Pet 4:7).

Placing the issue of self-control in the context of the great controversy between God and Satan, one may recognize that it is Satan’s goal to weaken our thinking, thereby decreasing our moral capabilities. With weakened discernment, humans will not be able to see and value God’s laws and will fail to obey. In contrast, God’s goal for humanity is clear thinking, sharp discernment between right and wrong, and moral purity.

In summary, temperance is a central health law in the Bible. It encompasses the idea of habitual moderation and self-control in various aspects of life. The Bible illustrates the importance of temperance and the consequences of intemperance through positive and negative examples. This virtue is vital for maintaining physical and spiritual health, enabling believers to discern and follow God’s will.

²⁰¹ Fort condition of the sacrificial animals the Hebrew *tamim* is used meaning complete, sound like in Lev 1:3 “If his offering is a burnt sacrifice of the herd, let him offer a male without blemish (*tamim*); he shall offer it of his own free will at the door of the tabernacle of meeting before the Lord.”

Trust in God

Trust is one of the key theological concepts in the Bible. The Hebrew term *emunah* and the Greek term *pistis* both mean faith, trust, fidelity, and faithfulness. Even in English, the verb “trust” means to have faith, to place confidence in, or to rely upon somebody or something.

Hebrews 11:1 gives a unique definition of what trust is: “Now faith [*pistis*] is the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen. For by it, the elders obtained a good testimony. By faith we understand that the worlds were framed by the word of God, so that the things which are seen were not made of things which are visible” (Heb 11:1). Here, faith is characterized by two key words: substance (*hypostasis* = essence) and evidence (*elegchos*). According to this passage, faith/trust functions like our vision. By faith, one can “look back” in time and understand past events or “look forward” to see God’s promises as reality. Thus, the main function of faith is to see and understand reality from God’s viewpoint. This underscores God’s purpose: to heal our vision because sin has blinded us to heavenly realities and even to reality in general.

This idea of trust can be seen in the lives of Abel, Enoch, Noah, Abraham, Sarah, Isaac, Jacob, and many others. Hebrews 11 refers to these individuals as examples of true faith. Before each name, the term “by faith” (*pistei*) appears, indicating that these people used their trust in God as a principle in their daily lives when making decisions or facing difficult situations.

The concept of trust being a “life source” is clearly expressed in Habakkuk 2:4: “Behold, his soul which is lifted up is not upright in him: but the just shall live by his

faith.”²⁰² Here, Habakkuk states that faith (*emunah*) is not primarily a confession or a doctrine to believe but a “tool” to live by (*hajah*), a source of power. This also means that real life starts when someone acquires this type of faith.

Trust implies a close relationship between two persons. This is why the biblical concept of trust is closely connected to prayer and Bible study. Through Bible study, one can understand the thoughts of God. Through prayer, a channel of communication is formed between God and the believer. Great examples of faith used these tools of communication on a daily basis (e.g., Job 22:22; Jer 15:26; 2 Tim 3:15; Dan 6:10, Luke 21:36; Col 4:2).

In the Bible, trust is also presented as a healing agent. “Trust in the Lord with all your heart. . . . Fear the Lord and depart from evil. It will be health to your flesh, And strength to your bones” (Prov 3:6–8). Here, the result of trust and fear of the Lord is health [*riphuth*] and strength [*shiqquy*]. The same idea is expressed in Proverbs 17:22, although the term “trust” is not used: “A merry heart does good, like medicine [*gehah* = healing, cure], but a broken spirit dries the bones.”

Trust also opens the way before God’s wonder-working power. Jesus said to the father of the son with a mute spirit, “If you can believe, all things are possible to him who believes [*pisteuó*]” (Mark 9:23). Jesus also warned the disciples, “If you have faith as a mustard seed, you can say to this mulberry tree, ‘Be pulled up by the roots and be planted in the sea,’ and it would obey you” (Luke 17:6). The illustration of the mustard seed shows that it is not the quantity but the quality of faith that matters. Although the mustard

²⁰² This verse is quoted three times in the NT: Rom. 1:17, Gal. 3:11, Heb. 10:38. Paul use this verse as a foundational thought for his letter to the Romans in which he presents the issue of righteousness by faith extensively.

seed is small, if nourished, it will grow and exceed other plants in height (see Matt 13:31–32).

Even the great theological concept of righteousness by faith can be viewed as God’s healing effort to restore His image in humans. Abraham is presented as a person who “believed the Lord, and he credited it to him as righteousness” (Gen 15:6). God first “credits” righteousness based on trust, and then He actually makes one righteous. This idea of God changing the heart is expressed in Jeremiah 31:33: “‘This is the covenant I will make with the people of Israel after that time,’ declares the Lord. ‘I will put my law in their minds and write it on their hearts. I will be their God, and they will be my people.’”²⁰³ This change signifies God’s final healing act: putting His law in the heart to direct one’s thoughts and acts from within.

Cleanliness and Dress

Both the Old Testament and the New Testament address different aspects of cleanliness. In the book of Leviticus, God gave numerous laws on physical cleanliness. The Bible presents personal hygiene as one of the foundations of health. For example, it deals with issues like impurity caused by childbirth, different skin conditions, and uncleanness caused by the normal functions of the sex organs. Concerning these laws, water is often presented as a means of purification and prevention of diseases (e.g., Lev 13:58; 14:8; 14:47).

In the book of Deuteronomy, additional laws emphasize the cleanliness of the environment. For example, God commanded the designation of toilets and the disposal of

²⁰³ Ezekiel also presents transforming power of trust, “A new heart also will I give and a new spirit [*ruach*] will I put within you...” (36:26).

human excrement and other waste to protect the camp from spreading infections.²⁰⁴ This provision also points to the close link between physical cleanliness and holiness. God cannot sanctify them and dwell among them if they do not make every effort to maintain both physical and spiritual purity.²⁰⁵

Spiritual cleanliness is emphasized throughout the Old Testament. Because idolatry, adultery, and prostitution were widespread among the surrounding nations, and these sins were easily committed in Israel, God sought to stop them with strict laws to prevent their spread.²⁰⁶ The main purpose of these laws was to purify them and keep away evil, ensuring the welfare of the people.

In the New Testament, moral purity is a key virtue. The term “pure in heart” appears several times.²⁰⁷ In the Beatitudes, Jesus said, “Blessed are the pure in heart [*hoi katharoi té cardia*], for they shall see God” (Matt 5:8). In 1 Peter, this purity is closely associated with love: “Since you have purified your souls in obeying the truth through the Spirit in sincere love of the brethren, love one another fervently with a pure heart [*katharas cardia*]” (1 Pet 1:22). The New Testament also uses the terms “pure conscience” (1 Tim 3:9; 2 Tim 1:3) and “pure minds” (2 Pet 3:1).

The dress issue also appears several times in both the Old and New Testaments. After the Fall, God prepared the first dress for Adam and Eve, making “tunics of skin.”²⁰⁸ He also designed the dress of the high priests (see Exod 28). Jesus used the example of

²⁰⁴ See Deut 23:12-14

²⁰⁵ This idea is also found in Exod 19:10, 11.

²⁰⁶ See Deut. 5: 17, 2-5; 22, 22; 23, 17.

²⁰⁷ See Luke 8:15, Acts 2:46, 1 Tim 1:5

²⁰⁸ Gen. 3:21

the lilies of the field to show how God clothed them with natural beauty (Matt 6:28–30). Paul admonished the women in the church to “adorn themselves in modest apparel [*katastolé komios*], with propriety and moderation, not with braided hair or gold or pearls or costly clothing, but, which is proper for women professing godliness, with good works” (1Tim 2:9). Here, Paul points to modesty, sobriety, and economy as the main principles in dress.

In the Bible, pure, white dress also serves as a symbol of moral perfection. When Zechariah saw the high priest in vision, God said, “Take away the filthy garments from him. . . . See, I have removed your iniquity from you, and I will clothe you with rich robes” (Zech 3:4). In the book of Revelation, the last-day saints are described using this symbol: “And to her it was granted to be arrayed in fine linen, clean and bright, for the fine linen is the righteous acts of the saints” (Rev 19:8).

Conclusion

At the end of this section, one can draw several conclusions. First, the issue of health and healing is among the main theological concepts in the Bible. The Bible presents a holistic view of health, including physical and spiritual well-being and the future and final restoration of health at the resurrection. Second, the promise of health and healing is always tied to certain conditions that humans must meet and fulfil. These conditions can generally be termed as health laws. Third, the Bible addresses several health laws to varying extents. For example, the issues of air, water, sunlight, and exercise appearing in Genesis are more like prerequisites for life and are not discussed as extensively as the issues of diet and rest, especially the seventh-day rest. Self-control and trust stand out as the most discussed health laws in the Bible. Fourth, in these health laws,

spiritual and physical aspects are closely connected, as seen in the issue of cleanliness. Finally, one can easily detect the biblical roots of the health laws discussed by Ellen G. White. Her concepts were deeply inspired by biblical ideas.

CHAPTER 5

THE LAWS OF HEALTH FROM A HISTORICAL PERSPECTIVE

Introduction

So far, this study has focused on the health principles presented by Ellen G. White, examining her views on individual laws, their interrelations, and physiological effects. We have also touched on the theological aspects of these principles. In this chapter, we will place the health laws within their historical context. We will first explore the health ideas of ancient, medieval, and early modern societies. Then, we will present key figures in the health reform movements in Europe and the United States. Finally, we will discuss how these laws appeared in the Advent movement.

The Idea of Health Laws in Ancient Times

The concept of preserving health by following certain rules or laws is not modern in origin. Numerous dietary, lifestyle and personal hygiene codes can be found in the Old Testament, as we discussed in the previous chapter. Historical documents and archaeological findings suggest that ancient people had some knowledge of health principles similar to those discussed.

Evidence of sanitary engineering was found even in the earliest Mesopotamian civilization. Sanskrit writings from 2000 BC recommended using copper plumbing and

charcoal filtration of water. In ancient China, diet, sunbathing, water, and therapeutic exercise were emphasized.²⁰⁹

Vegetarianism was practiced in ancient India among Hindus and Jains. It was also prevalent in Greek culture, with followers of Pythagoras known for their vegetarianism. However, after the Christianization of the Roman Empire, vegetarianism disappeared from Europe, although some monks abstained from meat for ascetic reasons.²¹⁰

Various baths were used to treat disease in Babylon, Egypt, Greece, and Rome. Treatments included cooling and heating baths. Sparta mandated cold baths in some cases. In Rome's heyday, public baths were common, with daily water consumption as high as 300 liters per person.²¹¹ In ancient Greece, physical activity was essential for promoting physical and mental health, as seen in training programs for the Olympic Games. Since the Greeks believed that mental and physical health were closely connected, they encouraged keeping the body and the mind in harmony.²¹²

The idea of preventing and treating diseases through lifestyle was first developed by the Greek physician Hippocrates (460–370 BC), often called the “Father of Medicine.” His contributions included placing medicine on a scientific foundation and

²⁰⁹ Daniel M. Becker, “History of Preventive Medicine”, in *Prevention in Clinical Practice*, eds. Daniel M. Becker, Laurence B. Gardner (New York, NY: Plenum Publishing Corporation, 1988), 13-14.

²¹⁰ Michael Allen Fox, *Deep Vegetarianism. Philadelphia* (Philadelphia, PA: Temple University Press 1999, p. 134. “Hinduism has the most profound connection with a vegetarian way of life and the strongest claim to fostering and supporting it.”; Colin Spencer, *The Heretic's Feast. A History of Vegetarianism* (Hanover, NH: University of New England, 1993), 33-68, 69-86; John Passmore, “The Treatment of Animals,” *Journal of the History of Ideas* 36 (1975): 196–201.

²¹¹ Agatha Thrash and Calvin Thrash, *Home Remedies-Hydrotherapy, Massage, Charcoal and Other Simple Treatments* (Seale, AL: Thrash Publications, 1981) 5.

²¹² Christos F. Kleisiaris, Chrisanthos Sfakianakis, and Ioanna V. Papathanasiou, “Health Care Practices in Ancient Greece: The Hippocratic ideal.” *Journal of Medical Ethics and History of Medicine* 7 no. 6 (March 2014) accessed May 30, 2023, <https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC4263393>.

emphasizing “the healing power of nature” (*vis medicatrix naturae*), meaning that the human body has the potential to heal itself.²¹³

The Greek philosopher and scientist Aristotle (384–322 BC) wrote on lifestyle issues in his work *Parva Naturalia*. Galen (129–216 AD) also significantly influenced medical practice, believing that health requires an equilibrium between the four bodily humors: blood, yellow bile, black bile, and phlegm.²¹⁴

The Idea of Health Laws in Medieval Times

Galen’s ideas were developed into the formula of “six non-naturals” in medieval Arabic and Western medicine, remaining the basis of medical thinking until the early modern period. These include air, food, exercise, sleep, excretions, and passions.²¹⁵

Avicenna (980–1037) was the most influential among Arabic writers.²¹⁶ His *Canon of Medicine* became a standard text in medieval universities. The word canon comes from the Arabic term “qanun,” meaning code of laws and series of principles. This work can be divided into five books. In *Book I*, he deals with hygiene, health and sickness, regimens, and dietary treatments. Here, he wrote: “The regimen for maintaining health consists essentially in the regulation of (1) exercise, (2) food, and

²¹³ The term reads in Greek, “nosón physeis introi” which means literally, “nature is the physician(s) of diseases”. For a more detailed treatment of the term, see: James C. Worthon, *Nature Cures- The History of Alternative Medicine in America* (Oxford, New York, Oxford University Press, 2002), 6.

²¹⁴ *Encyclopedia Britannica*, s.v. “Galen,” accessed 21 July 2023, <https://www.britannica.com/biography/Galen>.

²¹⁵ Max Neuberger, “An Historical Survey of the Concept of Nature from a Medical Viewpoint,” *Isis* 35, no. 1 (1944): 16–28.

²¹⁶ *Encyclopedia Britannica*, s.v. “Avicenna,” accessed 23 July 2023, <https://www.britannica.com/biography/Avicenna>.

(sleep).”²¹⁷ Remarkably, he makes a close connection between the body and spiritual life, “The real object of conserving the energies of the body lies in the attainment of spiritual development.”²¹⁸

Besides Avicenna’s writings, the *Code of Health of the School of Salerno* influenced medieval medical thinking the most. According to John Ordronaux, “It was for ages the medical Bible for all Western Europe, and held undisputed sway over the teachings of its schools, next to the writings of Hippocrates and Galen.”²¹⁹ The significant influence of this work can be illustrated by the fact that since its first publication in printed form in 1480, it had 240 editions. It is generally believed that the Scola Medica Salernitana created this work in the twelfth or thirteenth century by an unknown author. As a didactic poem written in hexameter verse, it was based on the Galenic concept of “six non-naturals,” mainly dealing with daily lifestyle practices like diet, breathing, drinking, sleep, etc.²²⁰

²¹⁷ O. Cameron Gruner, *A Treatise on the Canon of Medicine of Avicenna Incorporating a Translation of the First Book*, (London, 1930, repr. New York: AMS Press Inc. 1973) 382, Avicenna also wrote on the value of exercise, friction massage, hot bath, movement or activity after meal, quantity of food, too many varieties, drinking after meal. He warned that it is bad to drink much cold water-especially after meal. On sleep, he wrote, it is “best if meal has been completed.” See also 393-394, 409, 417.

²¹⁸ Gruner, *A Treatise on the Canon of Medicine of Avicenna*, 381.

²¹⁹ John Ordronaux “Preface,” in *Code of Health of the School of Salerno* (Philadelphia, PA: J.B. Lippincott, 1871), 12.

²²⁰ At the beginning, the author points out to the correlation between obedience and longevity, “These rules if thou wilt follow to the end, Thy life to greater length thou mayst extend.” (I). He warns against sleeping right after meal, “Postprandial sleep, ye mortals, put afar.” (V) “Great suppers will the stomach’s peace impair.” (V), “Eat not again till thou dost certain feel, Thy stomach freed of all its pervious meal.” (VII 6) On air, the advice is, “Let air you breathe be sunny, clear and light, Free from disease, or cesspool fetid blight.” (XV 14), “Yet too much water drunk the food disturbs, The stomach frets, and digestion curbs.” (XXVII 27), On handwashing, he wrote, “Wash your hands each passing day.” (XXIII. 23) Laws: Coffee: headache relived. Sleep: “Six hours sleep suffice for sire and son.”

Lifestyle and Medicine in the Early Modern Period

In the early modern period, the concept of six non-naturals remained a central idea in medicine. It was also called “health regimen,” which was parallel with the modern term “healthy lifestyle.” These “regimens” were designed to keep out the disease.²²¹ It is noteworthy how one seventeenth-century writer advised his readers, “If we were careful to keep out diseases, we should not be troubled to drive them out: Reason tells us ‘tis better to keep out an enemy, then to let him in, and afterwards to beat him out...”²²²

One noted figure of this time period was Luigi Cornaro (ca 1466-1566), a Venetian nobleman and patron of arts. In medicine, he is remembered for his four books of *Discorsi* (1550-1562), in which he discussed the secrets of longevity and sobriety. In his work, Cornaro tells honestly that he followed a very intemperate lifestyle, almost killing him at the age of 40. Then, he adopted a regimen based on the non-naturals. This lifestyle change gave him strength and mental clarity.²²³ It is remarkable what he wrote about habit formation: “It is generally agreed that custom, in time, becomes a second nature forcing men to use that, whether good or bad, to which they had been habituated; in fact, we see habit, in many instances, gain the ascendancy over reason.”²²⁴

Another influential figure of this age was the German-Swiss physician Paracelsus or Phillipus Aureolus (1493-1541). Born in Eisdeln, Switzerland, Paracelsus became

²²¹ L. Hill Curth, “Lessons from the Past: Preventive Medicine in Early Modern England” *Medical Humanities* 29, (2003): 16-20.

²²² R. Saunders, *Apollo anglicanus* (London: n.p., 1681), sig A7r.

²²³ Robert J. Davis, *The Healthy Sceptic: Cutting Through the Hype about your Health* (Berkeley, et al.: University of California Press, 2008), 15.

²²⁴ Luigi Cornaro, *Discourses on the Sober Life (Discorsi Della Vita Sobria)*, (New York: Thosmas Y. Crowell Company Publishers, 1916), 15.

one of the most sought-after doctors of his age. He rejected the Scholasticism of Aristotle, Galen, and Avicenna. In his lectures, he stressed the healing power of nature and criticized some of the malpractices of his time, including some of the pills, infusions, balms, fumigants, etc.: “If you prevent infection, Nature will heal the wound all by herself.”²²⁵ Interestingly, it was Paracelsus who designed and promoted less natural chemical remedies, some of them containing mercury, sulfur, iron, and copper sulfate. His practice of using chemicals later became widespread and was heavily criticized by some of the health reformers of the nineteenth century.

In the Enlightenment period (seventeenth and eighteenth century), the “six non-naturals” continued to provide the framework for understanding how lifestyle affects health. Actually, “the 18th century was the last age of the terminology the »non-naturals«—as a comprehensive health programme, this expression disappeared from clinical medicine in the 19th century.”²²⁶ The “six non-naturals” also appear in the famous French *Encyclopedia* (1751-1772) edited by Diderot and D’Alambert. Here, the entry’s author notes, the “term is inappropriate... things which do not compose our nature or our being, but by which the animal economy experiences great effects, great changes, great alterations.”²²⁷

The seventeenth and eighteenth centuries revived classical thinking on exercise, sports, and health. Numerous writers were interested in sleep and wakefulness. Based on

²²⁵ *Encyclopedia Britannica*, s.v. “Paracelsus,” accessed 23 July 2023, <https://www.britannica.com/biography/Paracelsus>.

²²⁶ James Kennaway and Rina Knoeff, “The Six Non-Naturals in the Long Eighteenth Century,” in *Lifestyle and Medicine in the Enlightenment*, eds., James Kennaway and Rina Knoeff (New York: Routledge, 2020), 5.

²²⁷ Denis Diderot and Jean le Rond d’Alabert, eds., *Encyclopédie* (Paris: 1751-1772), 11: 217-218

the Aristotelian treatise, *De Somne et Vigilia*, physicians were puzzling about healthy sleep, dreaming, sleep terrors, insomnia, and nocturnal emissions. At this age, medicine saw a remarkable comeback of ancient humorism. For example, it was widely accepted that good health is based on periodic removal of excessive humours. For this reason, purging was popular. In addition, mental states and passions (anger, hurt, sadness, surprise, scorn, disgust, and despair) became the central aspect of lifestyle. They realized that an overemotional state would weaken the body and provide weakening conditions for disorders.²²⁸

Within Europe, it was England where the “non-naturals” gained the most interest and attention. Numerous writers emerged discussing these “health regimens” in popular medicinal books. For example, they stressed the importance of fresh air, stating that rural areas are better than polluted towns. They also emphasized that exercise was an essential part of a good health regimen, saying, “Exercise is the best, for him that in old Age would live at rest” or for “the man that is in health, exercise is the only medicine.”²²⁹ Some specific exercise types they recommended include football, running, hunting, hawking, shooting, bowling, tennis, leaping, swimming, and gardening. These early modern writers also realized that insufficient sleep affects mental functions, mainly concertation and general mental well-being. One noted figure of the age N. Culpeper wrote, “It comforts nature, refreshes the memory, cleavers the spirit, quickens the senses.”²³⁰ According to

²²⁸ Kennaway, “The Six Non-Naturals in the Long Eighteenth Century,” 6-7.

²²⁹ T. Trigge, *Calendarium astrologicum*. (London: n.p., 1681), 4: sig A2v; R. Neve, *A new almanac* (London: n.p., 1671), sig A5r.

²³⁰ N. Culpeper, *Galen's Art of physic* (London: n.p., 1657), 129.

their advice, it is not safe to sleep directly after a blood draw or after eating meat. As for diet, they generally advised people to eat a varied diet, avoiding salted meat and recommending raw vegetables, fruits, nuts, and occasionally eggs and shellfish.²³¹

In this age, longevity, vegetarianism and hydrotherapy were popular topics besides the non-naturals. For example, the Dutch medical teacher Herman Boerhave (1668-1738) gained popularity mainly because of his lectures on diet and longevity. He also emphasized temperance and sobriety.

One of the best-known promoters of vegetarianism in this age was George Cheyne (1672-1743), a Scottish physician, philosopher, and mathematician. His works include *An Essay on Health and Long Life* (1724) and *An Essay on Regimen* (1740). The former is based on the idea of six non-naturals dealing with air, meat and drink, sleeping, exercise, evacuation, and passion. Here, he urges the readers that “if men would but observe the golden mean in all their passions, appetite and desires...they would enjoy a greater measure of health they do...live with less pain, and die with less horror.”²³² The latter work promotes vegetarianism, “I cannot find any great difference between feeding on human flesh and feeding animal flesh, except custom and practice.”²³³

In Germany, Johann Sigmund Hahn (1696-1773), a physician and early proponent of vitalism²³⁴, laid the foundation of modern hydrotherapy. One of his principal works

²³¹ Curth, “Lessons from the past: preventive medicine in early modern England”, 16-20.

²³² George Cheyne, *The Essay of Health and Long Life* (London: n.p., 1724), 231.

²³³ George Cheyne, *The Essay on Regimen* (London: n.p., 1740) 70.

²³⁴ According to the Encyclopedia Britannica, vitalism is a “school of scientific thought—the germ of which dates from Aristotle—that attempts (in opposition to mechanism and organicism) to explain the nature of life as resulting from a vital force peculiar to living organisms and different from all other forces found outside living things. This force is held to control form and development and to direct the activities of the organism. Vitalism has lost prestige as the chemical and physical nature of more and more vital

was *Lessons in the Power and Strength of Fresh Water in its Internal and External Use* (1738). Remarkably, four editions were published while he was still alive. In it, he linked his findings and experiment on hydrotherapy with statements of earlier writers on this subject.²³⁵ The physician Théophile de Bordeu (1722-1776) pioneered hydrotherapy in France. He wrote several works on the effects of water. He also had other vital discoveries in physiology, like the function of glands or the structure of tissues.²³⁶

Health Preservation and Natural Remedies in Nineteenth-Century Europe

Health preservation remained a popular topic from the turn of the century to the 1800s. In some European countries, it was taught as a university subject under the term “hygiene,” which became a general term denoting a healthy lifestyle.²³⁷ In France, the *Journal of Health* (1829) was started but only existed for a short time. The main topics in it were based on the “non-naturals” like air, food, exercise, the reciprocal action of the body and mind, climate and localities, clothing, and the physical education of children.

phenomena have been shown.” *Encyclopedia Britannica*, s.v. “vitalism,” accessed 25 July 2023, <https://www.britannica.com/topic/vitalism>.

²³⁵ *Wikipedia – The free encyclopedia*, s.v. “Johann Siegmund Hahn,” accessed 23 July 2023, https://de.wikipedia.org/w/index.php?title=Johann_Siegmund_Hahn&oldid=231496442

²³⁶ Some of his works include *Aquitaniae minerales aquae*, (Paris: Quillau, 1754), *L’usage des eaux de Barèges et du mercure, pour les écrouelles: ou dissertation sur les tumeurs scrophuleuses*, (Paris: Debure, 1757), *Lettres contenant des essais sur l’histoire des eaux minérales du Béarn sur leur nature, différence, propriété ; sur les maladies auxquelles elles conviennent, & sur la façon dont on doit s’en server*, (Paris : n.p., 1746).

²³⁷ The term “hygiainó” and its derivatives appear in Classic Greek literature denoting health, and health preservation. According to the *Encyclopedia Britannica*, hygiene is „the science of preserving health. The subject embraces all agencies affecting the physical and mental well-being of humans. It involves, in its personal aspect, consideration of diet and consumption of water and other beverages; clothing; work, exercise and sleep; personal cleanliness; and mental health. In its public aspect it deals with climate; soil; character, materials and arrangement of dwellings; heating and ventilation; removal of waste matters; medical knowledge on incidence and prevention of disease; and disposal of the dead.” *Encyclopedia Britannica*, s.v., “hygiene,” accessed 25 July 2023, <https://www.britannica.com/science/hygiene>.

One key figure in health education in England was Sir John Sinclair (1745-1835), a Scottish politician, military officer, and writer. One of his principal works, *The Code of Health and Longevity* (1807), is an in-depth treatment of health preservation on more than 650 pages. The first part of his book loosely follows the order of the “six non-naturals.” He calls the objects discussed here “essential for man.” At the end of this section, he summarizes the rules for the preservation of life in seven points,

1. Breathe pure air; 2. Use a moderate proportion of liquid food; 3. Consume no more solid food than the stomach can easily subdue; 4. Preserve the organs of digestion in good order; 5. Take regular exercise without over-fatigue; 6. Sleep as many hours as necessary to restore the strength of the body and mind. 7. Control the passions and bear with fortitude the disappointments of life: --These are the most effectual means of preserving health, enjoying life, and attaining longevity.²³⁸

As for the ingredients of the diet, he recommended a mixed diet of vegetable and animal food. Sinclair also stood against distilled or ardent spirits, blaming them as a “source of greater moral degradation and turpitude.” The second part deals with articles that are “not so essential, but which require attention, more especially from men of civilization and refinement.”²³⁹ Here, he deals with clothing, habitation, change of residence, customs and habits, bathing, and preventing accidents.

Early in the nineteenth century, vegetarianism continued to be a topic of interest. In 1802, an English antiquary and vegetarianism activist, Joseph Ritson (1752-1803), published his work *An Essay on Abstinence from Animal Food as a Moral Duty*. In 1812, Martha Brotherton anonymously published the first vegetarian cookbook (1783–1861)

²³⁸ Sir John Sinclair, *The Code of Health and Longevity: or, A Concise View of the Principles Calculated for Preservation of Health, and the Attainment of Long Life* (Edinburgh: A. Constable, 1807), 283.

²³⁹ Sinclair, *The Code of Health and Longevity*, 16.

under the title *Vegetable Cookery: With an Introduction, Recommending Abstinence from Animal Food and Intoxicating Liquors*.²⁴⁰ In 1847, the first vegetarian Society in the modern world was founded in England.²⁴¹

In Germany, Vincenz Priessnitz (1799-1851) and Sebastian Kneipp (1821-1897) promoted water cures and healthful living. Priessnitz was originally a peasant farmer living in Grafenberg (now Lázně Jeseník, Czech Republic) and learned the curative power of water through self-treatment and experimentation on farm animals and family members. By 1829, he perfected his practice, calling it “hydropathy.” Later, he was able to open an institute in his hometown. His success inspired many other hydropaths throughout Europe and America to start similar institutions.²⁴² Although he stressed remedies such as food, air, exercise, rest, and water, he focused on hydrotherapeutic practices. He held that the body tended toward health naturally. For example, in 1839, 1500 patients arrived, including one monarch, a duke and duchess, 22 princes, 149 counts, and a countess.²⁴³

Kneipp, just like Priessnitz, used water as his primary therapeutic means and established an institute. Born in Bavaria, he began his training for the priesthood at the age of 23. In 1847, he became sick with tuberculosis and started reading books about

²⁴⁰ Derek Antrobus, *A Guiltless Feast: The Salford Bible Christian Church and the Rise of the Modern Vegetarian Movement* (Salford, UK: City of Salford Education and Leisure, 1997), 72.

²⁴¹ James Gregory, *Of Victorians and Vegetarians: The Vegetarian Movement in Nineteenth Century Britain* (London: Tauris Academic Studies, 2007), 1.

²⁴² James C. Whorton, *Nature Cures: The History of Alternative Medicine in America* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2004), 78.

²⁴³ Richard Metcalfe, *Life of Vincent Priessnitz: Founder of Hydrotherapy* (London: Simpkin, Marshall, Hamilton, Kent, 1898), 92.

water cures. Among the books, Sigmund Hanh's work made a big impression on him. He was also familiar with Priessnitz's work. He became "an able and enthusiastic follower of Priessnitz whose work he took up where Priessnitz left it."²⁴⁴ His name is commonly associated with "Kneipp Cure"—the application of water through various methods. Kneipp was a proponent of an entire system consisting of five essential elements: 1. Hydrotherapy. 2. Phytotherapy (the use of botanical medicines), 3. Exercise 4. Balanced nutrition (a wholesome diet of whole grains, fruits, and vegetables with limited meat), 5. Regulative therapy.²⁴⁵ For Kneipp, one cure is insufficient; he believed combining these things would bring better results. His principal works include *Thus Shallt Thou Live, Hints and advice for healthy and sick on Simple and Rational Mode of Life and Natural Method of Cure* (1894) and *My Water Cure* (1886).²⁴⁶

Health Movements in the Nineteenth-century America

Lifestyle and medicine went through dramatic changes in nineteenth-century America. As the economy was growing, stimulants like tobacco, alcoholic drinks, and tea became available to the masses. The average diet consisted of mainly meat dishes (pork); lard, cheese, butter, refined flour, sugar, and pungent spices (pepper, mustard,

²⁴⁴ Metcalfe, *Life of Vinzent Priessnitz*, 117.

²⁴⁵ Lutz Ehnert and Caroline Geiser, "Was ist gesichert in der Kneipp-Therapie? Die internistische Sicht," *Innere Medizin* 63, no. 12 (November 2022): 1229-36, accessed May 11, 2023, <https://doi.org/10.1007/s00108-022-01423-8>; Cornelia Locher and Christof Pforr, "The legacy of Sebastian Kneipp: linking wellness, naturopathic, and allopathic medicine," *Journal of Alternative and Complementary Medicine*, vol. 20,7 (2014): 521-526, accessed May 11, 2023. <https://www.liebertpub.com/doi/10.1089/acm.2013.0423>.

²⁴⁶ Sebastian Kneipp, *Thus Shallt Thou Live, Hints and Advice for Healthy and Sick on Simple and Rational Mode of Life and Natural Method of Cure* (Kepten: Joseph Kösel, 1894); Sebastian Kneipp, *My Water Cure and Tested Through More than Thirty Years and Described for the Healing of Diseases and the Preservation of Health*. Translated by A. de F. (Edinburg and London: William Balckwood).

horseradish) were in daily use. Typhoid fever, diphtheria, malaria, and tuberculosis (TB) were common diseases. Medical training was limited to a few months, and medicine was conducted mainly on a “trial and error” basis. In their effort to conquer nature, physicians often used dangerous methods like the use of mercuric chloride to induce diarrhea and purging. Besides that, arterial cutting or bloodletting was also common.²⁴⁷

It was in this context that several health reform movements emerged. Although each movement has a focal point like health education, temperance, diet, exercise, or natural remedies, they generally emphasized the general elements of hygiene, and all of them sought and managed to reach greater masses. Their leading figures, in most cases, espoused Christianity and saw nature as good and designed by God, who is also the author of health laws and morality. One noted figure of the age, Orson Squire Fowler (1809-1887), summarized the thinking of these health reformers, saying that “by laws of things, whatever depraves or vitiates the body, thereby depraves the nervous system, and through it the brain, and thereby the mind.”²⁴⁸

Two physicians, Benjamin Waterhouse (1754-1846) and Robley Dunglison (1798-1869) stood out among those who sought to reform medical education. As a physician, Waterhouse was the first to test the smallpox vaccine. He was a co-founder of Harvard Medical School. In his works and public lectures, he enthusiastically promoted

²⁴⁷ R.W. Schwartz, *Light Bearers to the Remnant* (Mountain View, CA, Omaha NE, Oshawa, Ont.: Pacific Press, 1979) 104; Don S McMahon, *Acquired or Inspired?* (Victoria, Australia: Signs Publishing Company, 2005), 6-9. Herbert E. Douglass, *Messenger of the Lord* (Nappa ID, Oshawa, Ont.: Pacific Press, 2005), 278-279.

²⁴⁸ James C. Worthon, *Crusaders for Fitness: The History of American Health Reformers* (New Jersey, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1982), 6.

healthy lifestyle.²⁴⁹ For example, for the treatment of gout, Waterhouse said, “There is but little to be done by medicine, but changes in regimen may alleviate symptoms.”²⁵⁰ He also wrote and lectured extensively, especially to young people, to show “the evil tendency of the use of tobacco.”²⁵¹ Dunglison, born in England, moved to America to join the faculty of the University of Virginia. Later, he became Thomas Jefferson's personal physician and was considered the “father of American Physiology.”²⁵² His main work on health preservation is titled *Human Health* (1844).²⁵³ In it, he used the term “the laws of health,” stressing their importance, the need to be acquainted with them, and their role in restoring the sick and preserving the healthy from disease.²⁵⁴ According to him, hygiene “comprises the influence of physical and moral agents on healthy man and the

²⁴⁹ *Encyclopedia Britannica*, s.v. “Benjamin Waterhouse,” accessed 26 July 2023, <https://www.britannica.com/biography/Benjamin-Waterhouse>.

²⁵⁰ Benjamin Waterhouse, “Lecture: Dissertation on the Causes and Treatment of the Gout,” *OnView*, accessed, September 23, 2024, <https://collections.countway.harvard.edu/onview/index.php/items/show/17207>.

²⁵¹ Benjamin Waterhouse, *Cautions to Young Persons Concerning Health: In a public lecture delivered at the close of the medical course in the chapel at Cambridge, November 20, 1804* (Cambridge, MA: University Press by Hilliard & Metcalf, 1822); Benjamin Waterhouse, Lecture: *Recapitulation of Lecture on Tobacco and Conclusion on Longevity* (1811), *OnView*, accessed July 26, 2023, <https://collections.countway.harvard.edu/onview/items/show/17242>.

²⁵² *Encyclopedia Virginia*, s.v. “Robley Dunglison”, accessed 25 July 2023, <https://encyclopediavirginia.org/entries/dunglison-robley-1798-1896/>

²⁵³ The full title of his work: Robley Dunglison, *Human health, or The influence of Atmosphere and Locality: Change of Air and Climate, Seasons, Food, Clothing, Bathing and Mineral Springs, Exercise, Sleep, Corporeal and Intellectual Pursuits, etc. on Healthy Man: Constituting Elements of Hygiene*. (Philadelphia, PA: Carey, Lea and Blanchard, 1844).

²⁵⁴ The work also deals with the food, natural food for man, sugar, fat, drinking, effects of various drinks: juices, vinegar, tea, cafe, soda water, eating too great quantity of food, number of meals, clothing, the effects, cold, warm, hot, tepid bath, “active exercise” (walking, leaping, running, dancing, boxing, wrestling, singing, reading aloud), and “passive exercise” (riding in a carriage, sailing etc.).

means for preserving the healthy play of the function.” He argued that hygiene should be part of practical medicine.²⁵⁵

The first large-scale health reform movement was centered on the issue of temperance. Starting in the 1820s, the Temperance Movement promoted temperance or complete abstinence from alcoholic beverages. Its members included Benjamin Rush, Lyman Beecher, Charles Garndison G. Finney, John Edgar, Abraham Lincoln, and Joseph Bates. Lyman Beecher’s *Six Sermons on Intemperance* (1826) described drunkenness as a “national sin.”²⁵⁶ In 1826, the American Temperance Society was formed in Boston, MA. According to Robinson, within a decade years, it had 5000 local societies and 1,000,000 members.²⁵⁷ A Presbyterian preacher and revivalist, Finney thought the body was the “temple of God.”²⁵⁸ The ideas of the temperance movement spread even to Europe (England), New Zealand, and Australia.²⁵⁹

One health reformer who sought to reform physical education was Diocletian Lewis (1823-1886). He was also a prominent temperance leader and a physical culture advocate. Born near Auburn, NY, he organized a school in Lower Sadusky, OH. He got into medicine and studied at Harvard Medical School, which he could not finish because

²⁵⁵ Duglison, *Human Health*, iii.

²⁵⁶ Ruth Clifford Engs, *Clean Living Movements: American Cycles of Health Reform* (Westport, CT: Praeger Publishers, 2000).

²⁵⁷ D. E. Robinson, *The Story of Our Health Message* (Nashville, TN: Southern Publishing Association, 1965) 41. According to other estimates, the number of local societies reached 8,000, with the membership of 1,250,000. See *Encyclopedia of American Women and Religion*, 2nd ed., s.v. “Temperance Movement”.

²⁵⁸ Jack S. Blocker, *American Temperance Movements: Cycles of Reform* (Woodbridge, CT: Twayne Publishers, 1989), 24.

²⁵⁹ Brian Harrison, *Drink & the Victorians, The Temperance Question in England, 1815–1872*. (London: Faber and Faber, 1971), 15.

of financial issues. Later, he became interested in homeopathy and published magazine *The Homoeopathist*. He developed a new exercise system and, in 1861, started the Normal Institute of Physical Education, which influenced the present system of physical culture.²⁶⁰

The Popular Health Movement emerging in the 1830s promoted rational skepticism toward the claims of medical expertise. Its proponents encouraged ordinary people to study the principles and practices of health care. One of the movement's key figures was Samuel Thompson (1769-1843), a self-taught American herbalist. He founded an alternative system of medicine, later called Thomsonianism. His famous book was called the *New Guide to Health, or Botanic Family Physician* (1822).²⁶¹ Thompson sharply criticized the medication of his age, stating that “much of what is at this day called medicine, is a deadly poison, and were people to know what is offered them of this kind they would absolutely refuse ever to receive it as a medicine.”²⁶²

The proponents of vegetarianism also had their own movement. Its key figures were Sylvester Graham, William Metcalfe, and William A. Alcott. As a result of the growing interest in vegetarianism, the American Physiological Society (1837) and, later, the American Vegetarian Society (1850) were founded. In 1835, the philanthropist Asenath Nicholson published the first American vegetarian cookbook under the title

²⁶⁰ Fred Eugene Leonard, *A Guide to the History of Physical Education* (Philadelphia, et. al.: Lea and Febiger, 1923), 251–263., Barry J. Fraser and Kenneth George Tobin, eds., *International Handbook of Science education* (Dodrecht, Netherlands: Springer Dordrecht, 2003), 104.

²⁶¹ Samuel Thompson *New Guide to Health, or Botanic Family Physician* (Brockville, Ont: W. Willes, 1831).

²⁶² Daniel Drake, *The people's doctors: a review* (Cincinnati, OH: 1830), 14.

Kitchen Philosophy for Vegetarians (1849), which is often referred to as the first vegan cookbook.²⁶³

The Water-Cure Movement emphasized the therapeutic use of water. Its main proponents included the physicians Joel Shew, Russell Thacher Trall, and James C. Jackson. The movement's influence and popularity can be illustrated by the fact that by the 1850s, more than 100 hydrotherapy institutions existed in the USA.²⁶⁴ Because of the last two movements' importance and influence on Adventism, their key figures will be presented in a separate section of this work.

The Work and Influence of Sylvester Graham, William Alcott, Joel Shew, Russel T. Trall, and James C. Jackson

Historians generally agree that Sylvester Graham (1794-1851) was among the most significant figures of the nineteenth-century health reform movements.²⁶⁵ As a Presbyterian minister, he became well known for emphasizing vegetarianism, temperance, and eating whole-grain bread. Born in Suffield, CT, he had repeated illnesses and experienced improvement through lifestyle changes. In 1830, he started lecturing on health reform and gained a significant number of followers.²⁶⁶ Some of his best-known works include the *Lectures on the Science of Human Life*. (1839) and *Treatise on Bread and Bread-Making* (1837). The former had several editions both in the US and England.

²⁶³ "Key Facts, "The Vegan Society," accessed May 10, 2023, <https://www.vegansociety.com/about-us/further-information/key-facts>.

²⁶⁴ William Horsell and R.T. Trall, *Hydropathy for the People: With Plain Observations of Drugs, Diet, Water, Air and Exercise* (New York: Fowlers & Wells, 1850) 230–231.

²⁶⁵ Worthon, *Crusaders for Fitness*, 38-61.

²⁶⁶ *Encyclopaedia Britannica*, s.v. "Sylvester Graham," accessed 23 July 2023, <https://www.britannica.com/biography/Sylvester-Graham>.

In his lectures and printed works, he recommended a complete health regimen including hard mattresses, cold showers, and a vegetarian diet containing homemade bread, pure water, meals no more frequently than every six hours, physical exercise, cleanliness, avoidance of tight clothing and all stimulating food and the avoidance of all fats. He called bread making “the highest art of cooking”. He emphasized that “the more stimulating the diet, the more frequent and important hunger will be.”²⁶⁷

William Alcott (1798-1859) was a physician, educator, educational reformer, and vegetarian. Born in Wolcott, CT, he first became a teacher who promoted better heating and ventilation in schools. He was a prolific author. In 1838, he published the book *Vegetable Diet: As Sanctioned by Medical Men and by Experience of All Ages*. This became his best-known work, which is significant in medical literature about the vegetarian diet. Its second edition contained a cookbook and medical testimonies that supported a vegan diet. He was opposed to the use of alcohol, coffee, meat, spices, and tea. His other significant works include *The Use of Tobacco: Its Physical Intellectual and Moral Effects on the Human System* (1836), *Tea and Coffee* (1839), *Young Housekeeper* (1842), *The House I live in: Or the Human Body* (1837), *Lectures on Life and Health* (1853). Alcott was also the editor of the *Moral Reformer* (1835-1939) and was a founding member of the American Physiological Society in 1837, the first vegetarian organization in the USA.

One of the pioneers of hydrotherapy in the US was Joel Shew (1816-1855), born in Providence. His early death at 38 years of age with an enlarged liver and other internal lesions is thought to have resulted from the chemicals he used in his early career as a

²⁶⁷ Sylvester Graham, *Lectures on the Human Life* (New York: S.R.Wells, 1877) 511, 552.

photographer. He obtained his medical degree in 1843. He became interested in hydrotherapy and visited Grafenberg to study Vincenz Priessnitz's techniques. After returning to the US, he established the first water cure institution in New York City in 1845 called "New Lebanon Springs Water Cure Establishment." He promoted natural hygiene practices like bathing, exercise, massage, and elimination of alcohol and tobacco. Shew started *The Water-Cure Journal*, which soon had a subscription of 50,000. The journal was later renamed *The Herald of Health*. He wrote several works on hydrotherapy, tobacco, water, and the vegetarian diet. His Main work was *The Water-Cure Manual* (1847). In it, he dealt with bathing, the hygienic and curative effects of air, exercise, clothing, occupation, diet, water drinking, etc.²⁶⁸ His other works also focus on hydrotherapy and basic health principles. These include *Water and Vegetable Diet* (1850), *Tobacco: Its History, Nature, and Effects on the Human Body* (1849), and *Consumption: Its Prevention and Cure by the Water Treatment* (1851).

One of the most active members of the health reform movement was Russel Thatcher Trall (1812-1877). Born in Vernon, CT, he became a proponent of hydrotherapy, natural hygiene, and vegetarianism. He was. He decided to join the water cure movement and established his own water cure institution. Together with Joel Shew and Samuel Wells, he was a co-founder of the American Hydropathic Society. Trall and Wells also established the American Anti-Tobacco Society. His two volume *Hydropathic Encyclopedia* (1851) was one of the most professional works within the health reform movement. In 1853, he founded the "New York Hydropathic and Physiological School."

²⁶⁸ Its full title: Joel Shew, *The Water-Cure Manual: A Popular Work, Embracing Descriptions of the Various Modes of Bathing, the Hygienic and Curative Effects of Air, Exercise, ... Diet, Water-Drinking, etc.* (New York Cady and Bubgess, n.p., 1847).

He was also the editor of *The Water-Cure Journal*. He promoted what he called *hygeiotherapy*, a therapeutic approach combining hydrotherapy, vegetarian diet, exercise, fresh air, hygiene and massage. It is worthwhile to mention that Merritt Kellogg obtained his MD degree from this college. He taught a course at Battle Creek, and was a regular contributor of *The Health Reformer*. He wrote that “the hygienic agencies—absurdly called “non-naturals” in medical books—comprise the whole and ample material medica of the true hydropath. They are air, light, waters, food, temperature, exercise, sleep, clothing, and passions.”²⁶⁹ He also authored a other works focusing on issues of lifestyle, diet and water treatments. Among these works *Tobacco: Its History, Nature and Effects* (1854), *Water Cure for the Million* (1860), *Hand-Book of Hygienic Practice* (1864) stand out. He authored a plant-based (vegan) cookbook in 1874 called *The Hygeian Home Cook-Book*.

Dr. James C. Jackson (1811-1895) was a nutritionist and inventor of the first dry, whole-grain cereal, which he called “granula”. Born in Manlius, NY, he first worked as a farmer and was an active abolitionist. He was struggling with poor health, but he experienced recovery after taking water treatments. This experience made him a promoter of hydrotherapy for the rest of his life. In 1858, he took over the “Our Home Hygienic Institute” at Dansville, New York. Under his leadership, this institute became the biggest in the world and was renamed “Our Home on the Hillside.” He lost his faith in the efficacy of drugs and discontinued their use. He sought to reform medical practice. Besides water cures, Jackson also believed that diet was fundamental: he stopped using red meat, tea, coffee, alcohol, and tobacco. His main works include *How to Treat the Sick*

²⁶⁹ Russel T. Trall, *Hydropathic Encyclopedia* (New York: Fowlers and Wells, 1851), 295.

without Medicine (1871), *Christ as a Physician* (1875), and *Tobacco and its Effect upon the Health and Character of Those Who Use It* (1879).

He also realized the synergy of the various therapeutic agents: “Greater additional force could be gained by a skillful combination of various therapeutic agents.” He called this “the physico-hygienic method,” a treatment according to the laws of life and health. In his work, he adds new elements to the basic idea of “six-non naturals,” stating that “I have used in the treatment of my patients the following substances or instrumentalities: first, air; second, food; third, water; fourth, sunlight; fifth, dress; sixth, exercise; seventh, sleep; eighth, rest; ninth, social influences; tenth, mental and moral forces.”²⁷⁰

Health Reform Ideas in the Emerging Advent Movement

Considering that the Millerite movement started and reached its peak during the same time period when the health reform movements gained significant attention, it is not surprising that some of the Millerite preachers became interested in health and lifestyle issues.

Larkin B. Coles (1803-1856) was among the first Millerite ministers prompting temperance and health reform. He was born in New Hampshire and trained as a minister, and he later joined the Millerite movement. As an anti-tobacco activist and a vegetarian, in 1848, he joined the Boston Medical Society and the Massachusetts Medical Society. His main work, *The Philosophy of Health*, was published in 1848, and by 1851, it had the 26th edition. In it, Coles calls for a Christian health reform. In his work, he dealt with the

²⁷⁰ James C. Jackson, *How to Treat the Sick Without Medicine* (Dansville, NY: Austin and Co Publishers, 1870), 25-26.

issue of digestion, presenting the main digestive organs and some digestive rules: the time for eating, the time for digesting and time for exercise, and time for labor. He also discussed the issue of drinks, sleep, bathing, amusements, indulgences and mental affections and obligation to physical, moral, personal and social laws.

Joseph Bates (1792-1872) was among the first Adventists to recognize the value of health reform. His diet practices and his youthful vigor influenced other Adventists to follow the health reform.²⁷¹ Bates originally was a seaman and a revivalist minister, actively involved in the Millerite movement, and later one of the founders of the SDA Church. Born in Rochester, Massachusetts was imprisoned during the War of 1812. After his release, he continued his career and became a captain of a ship. There he noticed the intemperance of the sailors. As a result, in 1812, he gave up drinking of ardent spirits – the term used then for distilled alcoholic drinks-, the following year he stopped drinking wine, and then he gave up smoking, chewing tobacco and the use of profane language. Before 1838, he abandoned tea and coffee and by 1843 discontinued flesh food. Bates was actively involved in temperance work organizing the first temperance society in 1827. Schwartz suggests that some of his lifestyle changes might have come from his readings of Graham and Coles.²⁷²

However, the growing Advent movement did not accept health reform in the 1840s and 1850s, but they did accept temperance. Hard liquor was banned; however, “domestic wine” and homemade “beverages” with small alcohol content were allowed. In

²⁷¹ Schwarz, *Light Bearers to the Remnant*, 105-106.

²⁷² Schwarz, *Light Bearers to the Remnant*, 105-106.

the fall of 1848, Ellen White was shown the effects of tobacco, tea, and coffee. She also emphasized higher standards in cleanliness and not making a god of their bellies.²⁷³

In 1863, a diphtheria epidemic swept through across the US. Two sons of the Whites got sick, too. Someone called Ellen White's attention to an article by Dr. James C. Caleb presenting treatments for diphtheria. The author suggested hot baths, cooling packs, a moderate liquid diet, and plenty of water. The Whites decided to follow Jackson's prescription, which resulted in the recovery of their two sons. James White became interested in practices improving health and reprinted Jackson's article in the February and May 1863 issues of Review and Herald. Later he published other articles by Dio Lewis and W.W. Hall.²⁷⁴

Ellen White received her major health reform vision in June 1863 in Otsego, Michigan. The vision lasted about 45 minutes and dealt with subjects like abandoning liquor, temperance in working, eating, drinking pure soft water, the use of drugs, and diet. It is noteworthy that after the vision, she waited a year before writing about her ideas on health reform, which were published in the chapter "Health" in *Spiritual Gifts*.²⁷⁵

Schwartz observes that "as with the seventh-day Sabbath and the heavenly sanctuary, the health reform vision did not reveal an entirely new and unique viewpoint. Persons like Graham, Coles, and Trail had discovered all the major points emphasized. The vision conveyed to Seventh-day Adventists the divine approval of natural remedies over drugs and a balanced health program that included diet, exercise, fresh air, rest,

²⁷³ Schwarz, *Light Bearers to the Remnant*, 106-107.

²⁷⁴ Schwarz, *Light Bearers to the Remnant*, 107-108.

²⁷⁵ Ellen G. White, *Spiritual Gifts*, 4:120-150.

sunshine, and water's curative powers.”²⁷⁶ Only after this vision did James request up to 25 dollars’ worth of Jackson’s works.

In September 1864, the Whites decided to visit Jackson’s Our Home in Dansville, New York, to observe the reforms practiced there. They spent three weeks there without receiving treatment. Upon their return to Battle Creek, they prepared a series of six pamphlets, *Health or How to Live*, which contained extracts from the major health reformers of that age.²⁷⁷

Conclusion

At the end of this chapter, one can draw several conclusions. First, the concept of the laws of health was known before Ellen G. White's time. The idea of the laws of health, also called “non-naturals, ““the daily health regimen,” or “the code of health,” goes back to ancient times. These “laws” are presented in the Bible and dealt with by other ancient writers, especially in ancient Greece.

Second, it is remarkable how much the forerunners of the nineteenth-century health reformers already knew of the details of these laws and their applications. Examining various writings, treatises, lectures, etc., on the “six non-naturals,” one can be surprised by how well and clearly they understood certain health principles. As James Kennaway and Rina Knoeff note, “It is striking that the fundamental rules were sound; concepts like moderation and exercise seem very familiar today.”²⁷⁸

²⁷⁶ Schwartz, *Light Bearers to the Remnant*, 108.

²⁷⁷ These authors include many of the well-know reformers of her age: James C.Jackson, Harriet N. Austin, Larkin B. Coles, J.H. Hero, John C. Gunn, Sylveter Graham, Elza DeLaVergne, Dio Lewis, T.T. Trall, R.T. Trall,

²⁷⁸ Kennaway, “The Six Non-Naturals in the Long Eighteenth Century,” 4-5.

Third, physicians, teachers, and health reformers of various ages developed similar systems, differing in some details but identical in others and overall perspectives. If they borrowed some elements from each other in their thinking, that should not be a moral issue. Actually, it would be strange if they were not influenced by each other consciously or subconsciously. One can assume that many would likely have been ready to acknowledge the debt they owed to others.

Fourth, it is clear that the significant elements of Ellen G. White's visions did not reveal completely new ideas. Most of the major points of her health reform were already present at the time. However, she added new ideas and emphasis to this message and corrected many of the errors of contemporary health reforms.

CHAPTER 6

TAKING A CLOSE-UP VIEW OF THE STATEMENTS OF THE CONTEMPORARY HEALTH REFORMERS AND A COMPARISON WITH THE STATEMENTS OF ELLEN G. WHITE, ADDRESSING THE ISSUE OF BORROWING

Introduction

In the previous chapter, we examined health laws from a historical perspective. We saw how different principles were emphasized by various health educators starting from the ancient times to the modern period. We concluded that by the time of the rise of the Advent movement, all the major points of the health reform had been known by contemporary health reformers.

The purpose of this chapter is to make a more precise comparison between the teaching of those health reformers and those of Ellen G. White. This comparison will help to identify her unique contribution to these health laws and to deal with the issue of literary borrowing, a charge often brought up by the critics of Ellen G. White.

The Idea of Laws Governing Human Health

At least some health reformers knew the idea that there are certain principles regulating the human body. For example, they often used the terms “the laws of life,” “the laws of health,” or “the laws of life and health.”²⁷⁹ According to Graham, man lives “in continual abuses of his body, in the habitual violation of the laws of life.”²⁸⁰ Jackson,

²⁷⁹ In Graham’s *Lectures on the Science of Human Life* the term “the laws of life” appears 31 times, “the laws of life and health” 4 times, “the laws of health” once. Jackson also often used these terms adding “the laws of his being,” and “the laws of God written in the human constitution.”

²⁸⁰ Graham, *Lectures on the Science of Human Life*, 621.

in his work, described his treatment method as “psycho-hygenic,” adding that by this term, he meant “treatment according to the laws of life and health.”²⁸¹ Coles emphasized the obligation to law, pointing to its physical, moral, personal, and social aspects. He also stressed that “whosoever...violates the laws of life and health, sins against God as truly as though we break the ten commandments.” As for the personal aspects, he warned that “ignorance or inattention is gradual suicide.”²⁸² As we saw earlier in Chapter 1, Ellen G. White also used this concept.²⁸³

Diet

Diet was by far the most popular topic in the writings of the nineteenth-century health reformers. Graham dedicated his work mainly to this issue. Alcott and Trall also wrote extensively about this subject.

As for the ideal diet, most health reformers emphasized using a predominantly plant-based diet. However, they differed to some degree on how much and which animal food is still acceptable in such a diet. Graham wrote, "Fruits, nuts, farinaceous seeds, and roots, with perhaps some milk, and it may be honey...constituted the food of the first family and the first generations of mankind."²⁸⁴ He strongly opposed meat consumption,

²⁸¹ Jackson, *How to Treat the Sick Without Medicine*, 28.

²⁸² L.B Coles, *The Philosophy of Health* (Boston, MA: William, Ticknor, 1848), 133-146.

²⁸³ Ellen G. White, *Christian Temperance and Bible Hygiene*, 53. The concept of linking the moral laws of the Bible to the laws of health is also found in her other writings: White, *Ministry of Healing*, 113., or White, “Moral and Physical Law,” *Health Reformer*, October 1, 1872. Numbers tried to suggest that White borrowed this idea from Coles (Prophetess of Health, 127.). However, he failed to recognize the fact that this concept was widely used by other health reformers as well.

²⁸⁴ Graham, *Lectures on the Science of Human Life*, 316.

saying that it is “more stimulating” than vegetables.²⁸⁵ He reasoned that it increases “the energy of the more exclusively selfish propensities and the violence of the more turbulent, ferocious, and mischievous passions.” Thus, it also increases “the relative proportion of the lower and back part of the brain” and causes “the animal to predominate over the intellectual and moral man.”²⁸⁶

Just like Graham, Alcott was also a strong promoter of vegetarianism. In his *Vegetable Diet*, he argues for a predominantly plant-based diet, calling it the “vegetable system,” which “lies at the foundation of all reform in the matter of temperance.”²⁸⁷ He also called it a “simple diet,” adding that “the vegetable eater has a more quiet, happy, and perfect digestion than the flesh eater.”²⁸⁸ According to Alcott, “animal food is a root of all evil.”²⁸⁹ In his work, he gives several arguments for a vegetable diet. First, those who use it feel much better; second, it improves the senses; third, it favors beauty of form and features; fourth, it promotes and preserves the healthful state of mental faculties; fifth, it favors evenness and tranquility of temper.²⁹⁰

Coles also stated that the vegetable diet was the original diet designed by God; therefore, “living on vegetable food is undoubtedly the most natural and healthy method of subsistence.” Like Graham and Alcott, Coles seemed to have more radical views,

²⁸⁵ Graham, *Lectures on the Science of Human Life*, 360.

²⁸⁶ Graham, *Lectures on the Science of Human Life*, 487.

²⁸⁷ William Alcott, *Vegetable Diet: As Sanctioned by Medical Men and by Experience of All Ages* (New York: Fowlers and Wells, 1851) 248.

²⁸⁸ Alcott, *Vegetable Diet*, 240, 241.

²⁸⁹ Alcott, *Vegetable Diet*, 249.

²⁹⁰ Alcott, *Vegetable Diet*, 249-252.

stating that animal food generally “increases the proportion of our animality.”²⁹¹ In contrast, Shew had a somewhat more flexible approach as he did not condemn the use of animal food but stated that only “a little” is necessary and “only of the plain preparations of cream, milk, or buttermilk, with good farinaceous food and fruits.”

According to Trall, “the vegetable kingdom affords the purest ailments, as well as the greatest variety of alimentary principles.” He considered vegetable food as seeds, fruits, roots, buds, young shoots, leaves, flowers, stems of flowering plants and lichens, ferns, seaweeds, and mushrooms of flowerless plants.²⁹² Although Trall recommended a predominantly plant-based diet, he did not condemn the use of “animal food” if it is “derived from the herbivore” like beef or mutton.²⁹³ However, he warned that “those who use animal food should never eat more than once a day.”²⁹⁴

Jackson also stressed that the use of flesh should be avoided. His two main reasons include, first, the fattening process, which is done for market purposes, causes the waste matters to accumulate in their body, and second, the conditions in which domestic animals are kept (shutting them up in dark places) makes them “more likely to be unhealthy, therefore unfit for food than grains, fruits, and vegetables.”²⁹⁵ Even for the diet of children, he said that “farinaceous and fruit diet is the best fitted for children.”²⁹⁶

²⁹¹ Coles, *The Philosophy of Health*, 51-61.

²⁹² R. T. Trall, *Hydropathic Encyclopedia*, New York: Fowlers and Wells, 1851), 350.

²⁹³ Trall, *Hydropathic Encyclopedia*, 340.

²⁹⁴ R. T. Trall, *Hand-Book of Hygienic Practice* (New York: Miller and Wood Publishers, 1864), xix.

²⁹⁵ Caleb C. Jackson, *Consumption* (Boston: MA, B. Leverett Emerson, 1864), 106.

²⁹⁶ Jackson, *Consumption*, 153.

As for what a “vegetable diet” should contain specifically, there were things they equally emphasized and areas where they differed from each other. For example, they generally promoted the use of whole wheat. Graham strongly argued against the “superfine flower,” stating that it is “always far less wholesome...than that which is made of wheaten meal which contains all the natural properties of the grain.”²⁹⁷ He reasoned that “coarse wheaten bread serves to prevent and to remove the disorders and diseases of our bodies...affording the system an opportunity of recovering its healthy and vigorous action and condition.”²⁹⁸ Concerning bread making, Alcott had similar ideas to Graham, stating that “the true idea of bread is that of coarse or cracked and unbolted meal, formed into a mass of dough...and immediately baked.”²⁹⁹ He also warned against eating it in its new or hot state.³⁰⁰ Shew also recommended “coarse wheaten bread, cracked wheat mush...to regulate the bowels.”³⁰¹

Alcott did not condemn the use of milk, stating that it “approaches the nearest to the line of the vegetable kingdom.”³⁰² However, he recommended it mainly to people with chronic diseases and children. Here, he warned that the main problem with animal food is the possibility of transmitting disease to humans. For this reason, he does not recommend the use of butter or cheese.³⁰³ Eggs were acceptable for him if the poultry

²⁹⁷ Graham, *Lectures on the Science of Human Life*, 525.

²⁹⁸ Graham, *Lectures on the Science of Human Life*, 527.

²⁹⁹ Alcott, *Vegetable Diet*, 293.

³⁰⁰ Alcott, *Vegetable Diet*, 294.

³⁰¹ Joel Shew, *The Water-Cure Manual* (New York: NY, Cady and Bubgess, 1847), 150.

³⁰² Alcott, *Vegetable Diet*, 256.

³⁰³ Alcott, *Vegetable Diet*, 257.

was kept by the person who used the eggs.³⁰⁴ However, he warned against the use of puddings.³⁰⁵ Trall did not consider milk “a necessary” food, but he added that “the fresh crude milk is perfectly wholesome.”³⁰⁶ Eggs, when fresh and rarely boiled, are moderately nutritious and easy to digest.³⁰⁷

As for the issue of seasonings, the health reformers had similar ideas. Graham condemned the use of seasonings, “such as mustard, pepper, ginger,—in short all stimulating and heating spices”.³⁰⁸ Shew also warned against the use of seasonings like pepper, mustard, ginger, cloves.³⁰⁹ Trall extended Shew’s list adding cayenne, allspice, cinnamon, mace, nutmeg, horse radishes to his list, stating his principle: “the less the better.”³¹⁰

The issue of salt was another area where the health reformers differed to some extent. Graham opposed the use of salt, saying that it is “unfriendly to all the processes of assimilation, nutrition, and secretion, in the vital economy.” Shew and Jackson also warned against it. Alcott thought that the use of salt was objectionable, specifically for bread making. However, Trall did not condemn the moderate use of salt; his principle was “the less, the better.”³¹¹

³⁰⁴ Alcott, *Vegetable Diet*, 258.

³⁰⁵ Alcott, *Vegetable Diet*, 293.

³⁰⁶ Trall, *Hydropathic Encyclopedia*, 345.

³⁰⁷ Trall, *Hydropathic Encyclopedia*, 347.

³⁰⁸ Graham, *Lectures on the Science of Human Life*, 611.

³⁰⁹ Shew, *The Water-Cure Manual*, 147-148.

³¹⁰ Trall, *Hydropathic Encyclopedia*, 363.

³¹¹ Trall, *Hydropathic Encyclopedia*, 338.

Trall pointed to some general errors in diet, such as eating foods that are too concentrated, improperly combined, and in excessive quantity and imperfect quality.³¹² Shew also warned against greasy food and any rich or concentrated food like “superfine flower,”³¹³

As for the right diet schedule, Graham maintained that it is “incomparably better to eat but two meals a day.”³¹⁴ However, he did not condemn those who follow a three-meal-a-day if “keeping them at a proper distance from each other.”³¹⁵ As for the third meal, he emphasizes that it should not “come nearer to our sleeping hour than six o'clock.” It should always be “very light and simple, and the food should be mild and unexciting, . . . not to impair the perfect soundness and refreshing effect of sleep.”³¹⁶ Similarly, Coles promoted a three-meal-a-day plan, adding that persons with “weak stomachs and many persons of sedentary habits two meal a day, rightly distanced might be preferable.” He also suggested having at least five hours between meals.³¹⁷

Graham condemned the habit of snacking, reasoning that “such people almost invariably complain of ill health, and most of them are dyspeptic.”³¹⁸ Shew also warned against bad habits like eating too hot, eating too fast, eating irregularly, eating too often,

³¹² Trall, *Hydropathic Encyclopedia*. 442.

³¹³ Shew, *The Water-Cure Manual*, 147-148.

³¹⁴ Graham, *Lectures on the Science of Human Life*, 565.

³¹⁵ Graham, *Lectures on the Science of Human Life*, 566.

³¹⁶ Graham, *Lectures on the Science of Human Life*, 567.

³¹⁷ Coles, *The Philosophy of Health*, 33-41

³¹⁸ Graham, *Lectures on the Science of Human Life*, 569.

and eating too many kinds of food at a time.³¹⁹ On the same note, Trall thought that only a “few articles” should be “eaten at a single meal.”³²⁰

One more dietetic issue they also emphasized was habitual greed or excess eating, called *gluttony*. Shew condemned gluttony, saying it “killed more than rum, pestilence, or the sword.”³²¹ Jackson also spoke about it, saying that “gluttony is a very great cause of disease.”³²² Coles stressed simplicity stating that “living on simple plain food exceedingly important in securing good health.”³²³ Shew recommended fast, or as he calls it, “total abstinence” for indigestion.³²⁴

When we look at some of Ellen G. White's dietary recommendations, it is easy to recognize similarities between her thoughts and those of her contemporary health reformers. Both Ellen G. White and her contemporaries recommended a mainly plant-based diet with moderate use of milk or eggs.³²⁵ Like Graham or Coles, she also argued that “at least five or six hours should intervene between the meals, and most persons who give the plan a trial will find that two meals a day are better than three.”³²⁶ She also spoke against strong spices and condiments, stimulants, “mustard, pepper, spices, pickles,

³¹⁹ Shew, *The Water-Cure Manual*, 147.

³²⁰ Trall, *Hydropathic Encyclopedia*, 442.

³²¹ Shew, *The Water-Cure Manual*, 147.

³²² Jackson, *How to Treat the Sick without Medicine*, 32.

³²³ Coles, *The Philosophy of Health*, 34-35.

³²⁴ Shew, *The Water-Cure Manual*, 153.

³²⁵ See, White, *Ministry of Healing*, 295-324

³²⁶ White, *Ministry of Healing*, 304.

and other things of like character, irritate the stomach...”³²⁷ As we saw, she disagreed with some of the health reformers who eliminated the use of salt. However, she also warned that it should be used only in small quantities.³²⁸ White also emphasized regularity in eating, and she condemned snacking between meals. She also warned against eating just before bedtime, calling it a “pernicious habit.”³²⁹ According to White, for breadmaking, superfine white flour is “neither healthful nor economical” because it is “lacking in nutritive elements to be found in bread made from whole wheat.”³³⁰

However, one must see that many of these recommendations come purely from common sense, so one should not necessarily think that White must have borrowed these ideas from other reformers. Also, Ellen White stressed certain things that her contemporaries didn’t. For example, she stressed that “let the reform be progressive.”³³¹; she warned against rigid laws and setting a tight standard for others. She wrote, “I make myself a criterion for no one else.”³³² White also emphasized what others do not, that the diet “should be suited to the season, to the climate...to the occupation we follow.”³³³

³²⁷ White, *Ministry of Healing*, 300.

³²⁸ White, *Ministry of Healing*, 305.

³²⁹ White, *Ministry of Healing*, 303.

³³⁰ White, *Ministry of Healing*, 300.

³³¹ White, *Testimonies for the Churches*, 7:135

³³² Ellen G. White, *Letter 45*, 1903.

³³³ White, *Ministry of Healing*, 296-297.

Water

Most of the health reformers recommended water because of its beneficial effects on the system. As for its internal use, Graham stated pure water is the “natural drink for man.” He talked about its “perfect adaptation... to the vital properties of all the tissues of the body,” adding that “it is as necessary to the organic functions and effects of the system as the alimentary matter from which the annualized corpuscles of the blood are formed.”³³⁴

In Shew’s works, the issue of water is discussed extensively. In his main works like *The Water-Cure Manual*, he complained that “scarcely any man can be found nowadays who takes upon himself at all to think, but believes that water is the best possible drink, -the best to promote healthfulness of the body, vigor, cheerfulness, and contentment of the mind—the best to enable the system to endure heat, cold or protracted exertion of any of the faculties of man.”³³⁵ Shew also stressed that vital functions like respiration, circulation, secretion, nutrition, perspiration, and elimination could not take place without the presence of water.³³⁶

Like Graham and Shew, Trall also thought that “nature provided no other drink for man...than pure water.”³³⁷ Jackson pointed to both the preventive and curative quality of water, saying that “it is of great consequence in the maintenance of human health and of quite as great consequence in the restoration of it.”³³⁸

³³⁴ Graham, *Lectures on the Science of Human Life*, 587.

³³⁵ Shew, *The Water-Cure Manual*, 35.

³³⁶ Shew, *The Water-Cure Manual*, 41.

³³⁷ Trall, *Hydropathic Encyclopedia*, 307.

³³⁸ Jackson, *How to Treat the Sick without Medicine*, 35.

Interestingly, Alcott thought that drinking water was not necessary, stating that “the pure vegetable-eaters...seldom drink at all.” According to his reasoning, fruits and their juices and the occasional use of milk provide enough liquid for the body. Similarly, Coles did not emphasize the importance of drinking water; rather, he focused on what he calls “nourishing drinks.” For example, he considered cocoa a “healthy drink” and recommended it as a coffee substitute.³³⁹

Some of the health reformers gave practical and useful recommendations concerning the internal use of water. As for the quantity of water, Trall said, it “depends on all the habits of life, amount of exercise, quality of food, the employment of stimulants, condiments, etc.”³⁴⁰ He advised his followers that the best time for drinking is half an hour or an hour before meals.³⁴¹ According to Coles, all hot drinks are objectionable, and large quantities of drinks, even cold water, should be avoided. As for healthy dosing, he thought that two tea cups of any drink, “taken with our meals, is sufficient.”³⁴²

Many of the health reformers promoted the external use of water. Graham valued water treatments, reasoning that “the tepid bath is exceedingly refreshing” and “the vapor bath is highly grateful and salutary.”³⁴³ Trall also recommended the use of baths. In his *Water-Cure for the Million*, Trall gives a list of 30 treatments, including the wet sheet

³³⁹ Coles, *The Philosophy of Health*, 86.

³⁴⁰ Trall, *Hydropathic Encyclopedia*, 308.

³⁴¹ Trall, *Hydropathic Encyclopedia*, 308.

³⁴² Coles, *The Philosophy of Health*, 87.

³⁴³ Graham, *Lectures on the Science of Human Life*, 632-633.

pack, foot bath, hot and cold foot bath, fomentation, etc.³⁴⁴ He said the best time for bathing would be “on the first rising from bed in the morning.”³⁴⁵ He warned, “Never bathe soon after eating.”³⁴⁶ Jackson promoted the use of baths, saying that the best time to take them is when “the human body is in the highest degree of legitimate vigor.”³⁴⁷ Talking about diseases and their cures, Coles called water a “one important remedial agent,”³⁴⁸ which is both “a means of prevention and cure.” Coles says water can be used “in all feverish actions of the general system.”³⁴⁹

As we saw earlier, Ellen G. White also emphasized the preventive and curative properties of water, saying that “water is the best liquid possible to cleanse the tissues.”³⁵⁰ She wrote that “Pure water...invigorate(s) the vital organs” and help “overcome the bad conditions of the system.”³⁵¹ On hydrotherapy, she often emphasized its effect on circulation.” In her *Ministry of Healing*, she recommended specifically the use of cold or cool baths as an “excellent tonic” and warm baths for “elimination of impurities.”³⁵²

³⁴⁴ Trall, *Water-Cure for the Million*, 13-19. He repeats this list in his *Hand-Book of Hygienic Practice*, vii-xvi.

³⁴⁵ Trall, *Hydropathic Encyclopedia*, 378.

³⁴⁶ Trall, *Hand-Book of Hygienic Practice*, xiv.

³⁴⁷ Jackson, *How to Treat the Sick without Medicine*, 45.

³⁴⁸ Coles, *The Philosophy of Health*, 196.

³⁴⁹ Coles, *The Philosophy of Health*, 197.

³⁵⁰ White, “The Duty to Preserve Health,” *Review and Herald*, July 29, 1884, 481.

³⁵¹ White, “Disease and its Causes,” in *How to Live*, 55.

³⁵² White, *Ministry of Healing*, 237.

Air and Sunlight

Graham emphasized the importance of fresh and pure air: “It is of the utmost importance that the lungs should be constantly supplied with pure air, not only for the preservation of their own health, but for the preservation of the integrity of their function, the health of their blood, and the general welfare of the system.”³⁵³ He advised mothers to walk or ride in pure air, even for a short time and “new life and new spirit entering into her blood.”³⁵⁴

According to Shew, breathing impure air is “one of the greatest of all physical evils”, and likewise, breathing fresh, pure air is “one of the most important influences in the prevention and cure of disease.”³⁵⁵

In relation to air, Trall emphasized the “relation of an abundant supply of pure fresh air to the maintenance of health and the attainment of longevity”³⁵⁶ He warned against improper posture as it “affects respiration injuriously,”³⁵⁷ He also thought that pure air is much more important during our sleeping than our waking hours.³⁵⁸

Jackson promoted the curative power of air stating that “it is of very great importance in a large class of diseases that persons, in order to recover, should have pure air and plenty of it to breathe. Almost all the diseases which arise from the deterioration of

³⁵³ Graham, *Lectures on the Science of Human Life*, 636.

³⁵⁴ Graham, *Lectures on the Science of Human Life*, 636.

³⁵⁵ Shew, *The Water-Cure Manual*, 116.

³⁵⁶ Trall, *Hydropathic Encyclopedia*, 296

³⁵⁷ Trall, *Hydropathic Encyclopedia*, 301.

³⁵⁸ Trall, *Hydropathic Encyclopedia*, 302.

blood or from bad and imperfect circulation of it may be said in good measure to be caused by want of proper aeration of the blood.”³⁵⁹

Health reformers generally encouraged proper ventilation. According to Graham, houses should be “situated and so constructed as to admit of perfect ventilation in every part” and “bed-rooms should be large and airy”³⁶⁰ In reference to ventilation, Shew stressed the ventilation of sleeping apartments.³⁶¹ Trall also thought that imperfect ventilation in crowded assemblies, churches, school rooms etc. can be a source disease.³⁶²

Most health reformers knew about the healing and sanitizing properties of sunlight. For example, Graham warned that feather-beds should very frequently be laid out “in the open air and hot sun, that the impurities...may be fully driven off.”³⁶³

Trall warned that “the hygienic importance of light is not sufficiently understood by the people, nor its remedial influence sufficiently regarded by physicians.”³⁶⁴ According to him, sunlight is “urging to exercise and increasing the activity of both the bodily and mental powers.”³⁶⁵ Sunlight even affects the mental state, “as in bright solar light we feel more active, cheerful and happy.”³⁶⁶

³⁵⁹ Jackson, *How to Treat the Sick without Medicine*, 30.

³⁶⁰ Graham, *Lectures on the Science of Human Life*, 636.

³⁶¹ Shew, *The Water-Cure Manual*, 116.

³⁶² Trall, *Hydropathic Encyclopedia*, 296.

³⁶³ Graham, *Lectures on the Science of Human Life*, 629.

³⁶⁴ Trall, *Hydropathic Encyclopedia*, 304.

³⁶⁵ Trall, *Hydropathic Encyclopedia*, 305.

³⁶⁶ Trall, *Hydropathic Encyclopedia*, 306.

Shew linked the effect of air and sunlight, saying, "those who desire to enjoy good spirits and fine health must go much and often to the open air and light."

On the therapeutic properties of sunlight, Jackson wrote, "the influence of sunlight" on diseases is "regarded as quite effective. He adds that its curative effect has been known for a long time, but its curative power came to be regarded valuable "only within a few years." According to him, sunlight is effective in diseases caused by the disorders of circulation and of diseases of the nervous system."³⁶⁷

As we saw, White also wrote extensively on the importance of air, proper breathing, and sunlight. She stressed their health-preserving and curative properties. She said, "In order to have good blood, we must breathe well."³⁶⁸ She also emphasized the regular airing of houses and getting all possible sunlight. Even bed clothing should be exposed to sunlight.³⁶⁹ She stressed that aged persons need much sunlight.³⁷⁰

Exercise

As for the importance of the preventive and curative effects of exercise, Graham stressed that it "greatly promotes circulation, respiration...imparts vigor and activity to all the organs...gives strength and agility and elasticity, grace to the body, and energy and activity to the intellectual and moral faculties."³⁷¹ Graham also thought that exercise

³⁶⁷ Jackson, *How to Treat the Sick without Medicine*, 49.

³⁶⁸ White, *Ministry of Healing*, 272.

³⁶⁹ Ellen G. White, "Beware of the Spare Bed," *Review and Herald*, January 2, 1872, 23.

³⁷⁰ White, *Ministry of Healing*, 275.

³⁷¹ Graham, *Lectures on the Science of Human Life*, 641.

is very effective in the “treatment of chronic disease of every kinds, dyspeptic and other chronic invalids ought never to hope for health without exercise.”³⁷²

Shew also realized the significance of exercise in health preservation: “If we understand that the laws that govern the human system, it is indelibly written, as if by the finger of God, THAT MAN MUST EXERCISE IN THE OPEN AIR HABITUALLY OR HE CANNOT ENJOY HEALTH.”³⁷³

Talking about the human musculoskeletal system, Trall stressed that to “secure the full and perfect development of the body, nature has implanted among the mental propensities a special organ of motion.”³⁷⁴ Coles believed that exercise is closely connected to digestion and “bodily health cannot be secured without due attention to exercise.”³⁷⁵

Trall also valued exercise classifying the different forms of it into two groups: active and passive.³⁷⁶ Graham thought that the most natural form of it is “the cultivation of the soil.” He promoted dancing as “the most salutary kinds of social enjoyment, and was convinced that “the religious prejudice against dancing is altogether ill-founded.”³⁷⁷ Like Graham, Jackson also accepted and promoted dancing as a legitimate form of

³⁷² Graham, *Lectures on the Science of Human Life*, 644.

³⁷³ Shew, *The Water-Cure Manual*, 114, emphasis original.

³⁷⁴ Trall, *Hydropathic Encyclopedia*, 369.

³⁷⁵ Coles, *The Philosophy of Health*, 42-44.

³⁷⁶ Trall, *Hydropathic Encyclopedia*, 369. According to Trall, “the active exercises which may be beneficially resorted are walking, running, leaping, dancing.” Boxing and fencing are “to closely associated with... barbarism and brutalism.” Wrestling “is a dangerous method”. Singing, declaiming, reading aloud are “admirable methods of cultivating vocal powers.” As for hunting and fishing, he did not recommend them for Christian people. He classified riding in easy carriage, sailing, swinging, etc. as “passive exercise.” Trall, *Hydropathic Encyclopedia*, 369.

³⁷⁷ Graham, *Lectures on the Science of Human Life*, 643.

exercise.³⁷⁸ However, Jackson, comparing the different forms of exercise, stated that “none so health preventative, and therefore none so efficaciously curative as walking...”³⁷⁹ For children, he recommended daily bathing by swimming.

As for some practical recommendations, Graham advised that exercise “should be as much as possible in the pure air,” and the body and limbs should be perfectly free.³⁸⁰ Trall taught that heavy exercise “should never be performed on a full stomach, nor immediately before or after a meal; persons with sedentary occupations should choose such exercises as they can habitually and regularly attend to...best on first rising in the morning.”³⁸¹

As we saw, Ellen White also addressed the issue of exercise and recommended it as an important agent in health preservation. Among the different types of exercise, she pointed to walking as the most beneficial form. In relation to exercise, she stressed regularity, encouraging “to walk in the open air every day.” She thought that the best time to walk would be after meals, “holding the head erect, putting back the shoulders.” She also stressed moderation in exercise.³⁸²

³⁷⁸ That Jackson promoted dancing and playing card, is testified in one of the letters of Ellen G. White: “Dr. (Jackson) presents dancing and playing cards a class of amusements as healthful, but presents religion as deleterious to health.” Letter 8, 1867.

³⁷⁹ Jackson, *How to Treat the Sick without Medicine*, 90.

³⁸⁰ Graham, *Lectures on the Science of Human Life*, 641.

³⁸¹ Trall, *Hydropathic Encyclopedia*, 370.

³⁸² White, *Christian Temperance and Bible Hygiene*, 101.

Rest

On sleep, Graham wrote that a “bed of feathers and great abundance of warm clothing” called a “proper bed” will serve to “debilitate” the system.³⁸³ He also warned against “continued action of the mind on some particular subject,” which may produce “great cerebral exhaustion or weariness,” causing “irritation in the domain of organic life,” inducing dreams on the same subject.³⁸⁴ According to him, dreaming is always to be considered unfavorable to the welfare of the human system.³⁸⁵ He also wrote on the restorative effect of sleep, emphasizing regularity and getting “a considerable portion of their sleep before midnight.”³⁸⁶ Interestingly, he warned against “feather beds.”³⁸⁷ He suggested that “not a single article of clothing worn by day should be kept on during the night.”³⁸⁸ He also stressed the ventilation of the bedroom.³⁸⁹

Shew recommended do some exercising, and feed sparingly in order to have “natural and undisturbed” sleep. In contrast, one can expect “night-mares and horrors inexpressible” when going to bed with a full stomach.³⁹⁰ Trall connected sleep to

³⁸³ Graham, *Lectures on the Science of Human Life*, 622.

³⁸⁴ Graham, *Lectures on the Science of Human Life*, 622.

³⁸⁵ Graham, *Lectures on the Science of Human Life*, 623.

³⁸⁶ Graham, *Lectures on the Science of Human Life*, 625.

³⁸⁷ Graham, *Lectures on the Science of Human Life*, 626.

³⁸⁸ Graham, *Lectures on the Science of Human Life*, 629.

³⁸⁹ Graham, *Lectures on the Science of Human Life*, 629.

³⁹⁰ Shew, *The Water-Cure Manual*, 117.

longevity stating that “long sleepers, averaging probably at least eight hours” may expect a longer life.³⁹¹ As others, he also stressed the importance of ventilation during sleep.³⁹²

Jackson complained that people sleep too little.³⁹³ His advice is to sleep eight hours at least.³⁹⁴ Coles wrote that one should “retire to rest about nine or ten o’clock at night.” The recommended length of sleep would be seven or eight hours.³⁹⁵

On the same note, Ellen G. White called sleep “nature’s sweet restorer.”³⁹⁶ She warned that one should give himself “proper time to sleep,”³⁹⁷ and eating before bedtime may cause unpleasant dreams.³⁹⁸ She also said that sleep will be “sweet after healthful labor.” However, she had a much broader and deeper concept of rest. First, she emphasized that true rest is connected to the fourth commandment, which makes it a religious duty. This idea never appeared in the writings of other health reformers. Second, for her, rest includes what she called “recreation.” According to her, recreation, when properly practiced, “tends to strengthen and build up.”³⁹⁹ In contrast, “amusement” is “sought for the sake of pleasure and is often carried to excess.”⁴⁰⁰ Contrary to what some

³⁹¹ Trall, *Hydropathic Encyclopedia*, 871.

³⁹² Trall, *Hydropathic Encyclopedia*, 837.

³⁹³ Jackson, *How to Treat the Sick without Medicine*, 96.

³⁹⁴ Jackson, *How to Treat the Sick without Medicine*, 96.

³⁹⁵ Coles, *The Philosophy of Health*, 116-117.

³⁹⁶ White, *Spiritual Gifts*, 4b:137

³⁹⁷ White, Letter 116, 1898.

³⁹⁸ White, *Christian Temperance and Bible Hygiene*, 51.

³⁹⁹ White, *Education*, 207. Here she emphasized the true recreation is not complete inactivity but may include different forms of exercise. Thus, Ellen G. White made a strong connection between the principle and rest and exercise.

⁴⁰⁰ White, *Education*, 207.

of the contemporary reformers recommended, she thought that dancing, card playing, chess etc. “open the door for great evil.” Third, she regarded rest as a remedy especially for those who “make themselves sick by overwork.” Here, rest is connected to “freedom from care and a spare diet.”⁴⁰¹

Temperance and Trust

Most health reformers recognized the harmful effects of tobacco. Graham called it “one of the most loathsome poisons in the vegetable kingdom” and a “filthy weed.” According to him, the appetite for it is “extremely despotic in its power...and is more difficult to overcome than almost any other depravity of the human body.”⁴⁰² Among the harmful effects of tobacco, Shew highlights tremors of the nerves, hypochondriasis, hysteria, insanity, diseases of the gums and mouth, impairment of taste sensation, chronic throat disease, consumption, palpitation, difficulty of breathing, indigestion, constipation, reducing the flesh.⁴⁰³

Besides tobacco, health reformers often warned against certain popular drinks. Graham condemned the use of tea, coffee, opium, alcohol, and all other narcotic and intoxicating substances, stating that they are “poisonous to the human body, and cannot be employed by man as means of stimulation without decided detriment to his whole nature.”⁴⁰⁴ In his work, *Tea and Coffee*, Alcott called these beverages “worse than

⁴⁰¹ White, *Ministry of Healing*, 236.

⁴⁰² Graham, *Lectures on the Science of Human Life*, 615.

⁴⁰³ Joel Shew, *Tobacco: Its history, Nature and Effects on the Body and Mind* (New York: Fowlers and Wells, 1849), 48-64.

⁴⁰⁴ Graham, *Lectures on the Science of Human Life*, 618.

useless.”⁴⁰⁵ Here, he pointed out the harmful effects of tea as being “exciting,” causing them to “lose the powers of self-possession and self-command.”⁴⁰⁶ On the same note, Trall criticized the use of tea and coffee because both of them possess “strong nerve and moderate narcotic properties.”⁴⁰⁷ Trall called “ardent spirits, malt liquors, wine, and cider “poisons.”⁴⁰⁸ Coles also warned against “stimulating drinks” such as alcohol, coffee, and tea. However, he classified cocoa as „a healthy drink.”⁴⁰⁹ Unfermented root, hop, ginger beer, and soda drinks were acceptable “if not taken too largely.”⁴¹⁰

Ellen G. White also pointed to the harmful effect of the use of tobacco, calling it a “slow poison...benumbing the sensibility.”⁴¹¹ Like other health reformers, she condemned caffeinated tea and coffee as “stimulants” having “similar effects to those of tobacco.”⁴¹² However, Ellen G. White emphasized something that others did not, that is the fact that true temperance has two essential aspects: first, avoiding all “injurious” or “hurtful” substances such as alcohol, tobacco, and coffee, and second, using “judiciously” what is healthful.⁴¹³

⁴⁰⁵ W. Alcott, *Tea and Coffee* (Boston, MA: George W. Light, 1839), 8.

⁴⁰⁶ Alcott, *Tea and Coffee*, 19-20.

⁴⁰⁷ Trall, *Hydropathic Encyclopedia*, 310, 312.

⁴⁰⁸ Trall, *Hydropathic Encyclopedia*, 310.

⁴⁰⁹ Coles, *The Philosophy of Health*, 86.

⁴¹⁰ Coles, *The Philosophy of Health*, 87.

⁴¹¹ White, *Spiritual Gifts*, 4:126.

⁴¹² White, *Spiritual Gifts*, 4:128.

⁴¹³ Ellen G. White, “The Primal Cause of Intemperance,” *Health Reformer*, April 1877, 107. White, *Patriarchs and Prophets* (Battle Creek, MI: Review and Herald, 1890), 562.

As for the issue of divine trust as a health law or healing agent, none of the contemporary health reformers seemed to recognize it. Reading their works, one will have the impression that they valued religion and the Bible and emphasized basic Christian virtues.⁴¹⁴ At least some of them, like Coles, knew about the tremendous effects of “mental affections” like cheerfulness, melancholy, benevolence, and malevolence.⁴¹⁵

However, Ellen G. White seems to be the only author to add divine trust to the list of the most critical health principles. As shown earlier, she stressed that “faith in God is essential for health.”⁴¹⁶ She presented “the religion of Christ” as one of the “most effectual remedies.”⁴¹⁷

Cleanliness and Dress

According to Graham, the skin is “a breathing organ that is continually discharging impurities from the body,” and it is “a medium through which a large portion of ... worn-out matter of the system passes off.”⁴¹⁸ To remove impurities, he recommends “mild soap,” which is capable “of making every part of the body perfectly clean.”⁴¹⁹ He suggested that every house should be “furnished with a good bathing room and apparatus.”⁴²⁰ He strongly opposed the shaving of the beard, calling it “one of the

⁴¹⁴ For example, Graham used the word “God” 179 times in his *Lectures on the Science of Human Life*, Coles in his *Philosophy of Health* also wrote openly about his personal faith in the Creator.

⁴¹⁵ Coles, *The Philosophy of Health*, 127-132.

⁴¹⁶ Ellen G. White, “Our Talents,” *Review and Herald*, April 9, 1901, 225.

⁴¹⁷ White, *Testimonies for the Church*, 5:444.

⁴¹⁸ Graham, *Lectures on the Science of Human Life*, 634.

⁴¹⁹ Graham, *Lectures on the Science of Human Life*, 634.

⁴²⁰ Graham, *Lectures on the Science of Human Life*, 633.

evils.” Coles, when writing on bathing, said that “cleanliness is a very important law of health.”⁴²¹

As for dress, Graham wrote that “no kind of clothing is strictly natural to man.”⁴²² He added that “strictly speaking...all clothing is, in itself considered, in some measure an evil.” Surprisingly, he reasoned that “by nudity, morality would be greatly improved.”⁴²³ He spoke against the use of corsets, garters, and every kind of ligature of compression and all kinds of tight dress, emphasizing their harmful effects.⁴²⁴

Regarding cleanliness and healthful clothing, Ellen G. White often linked the two issues, saying that our dress should be clean. For her, uncleanliness in dress is “defiling to the body and to the soul.”⁴²⁵ In contrast to what Graham said, she emphasized the physiologic effect of the dress, warning that “special attention should be given to the extremities, that they may be as thoroughly clothed as the chest and region over the heart.”⁴²⁶

The Critics of Ellen White and Reviewing Some Answers to Their Criticism

After comparing the writings of contemporary health reformers with Ellen G. White's statements, this study detected some similarities and some differences. The apparent similarities raised questions in both Adventist and non-Adventist circles. As a

⁴²¹ Coles, *The Philosophy of Health*, 118-121.

⁴²² Graham, *Lectures on the Science of Human Life*, 637.

⁴²³ Graham, *Lectures on the Science of Human Life*, 638.

⁴²⁴ Graham, *Lectures on the Science of Human Life*, 639.

⁴²⁵ White, *Ministry of Healing*, 288.

⁴²⁶ White, *Christian Temperance and Bible Hygiene*, 142-143.

result, Ellen White was often criticized as a plagiarist, borrowing from other writers without giving credit.

One article published in the *Review and Herald* suggests that this type of criticism began as early as the late 1860s. Here, she wrote to answer those who pointed out the similarities between her writings and those of other health reformers.

You speak very nearly the opinions taught in the *Laws of Life*, and other publications, by Drs. Trall, Jackson, and others. Have you read that paper and those works? My reply was that I had not, neither should I read them till I had fully written out my views, lest it should be said that I had received my light upon the subject of health from physicians, and not from the Lord. And after I had written my six articles for *How to Live*, I then searched the various works on Hygiene and was surprised to find them so nearly in harmony with what the Lord had revealed to me. And to show this harmony, and to set before my brethren and sisters the subject as brought out by able writers, I determined to publish *How to Live*, in which I largely extracted from the works referred to.⁴²⁷

Thus, Ellen White made it clear that at first, she did not read the writings of Trall, Jackson, and others until she put down her views concerning the subject. Second, she became familiar with these articles after publishing her own views. After reading the articles from other authors, she was surprised that their ideas were “in harmony” with hers. This statement also implies that she valued the works of other health reformers as she used some of them in her publication.

Among the twentieth-century critics, one of the most noted ones was Roald L. Numbers. In his work, *The Prophetess of Health: A Study of Ellen G. White*, he argued that most Adventist ideas concerning health reform came from outside sources, not divine inspiration. He followed a naturalistic approach to inspiration, the same idea used by

⁴²⁷ *Review and Herald*, October 8, 1867.

biblical historical criticism. According to Numbers, Ellen White's main health concepts may have originated from the writings of other health reformers like L. Coles or James C. Jackson. He specifically pointed to Jackson's article, *Diphtheria, Its Causes, Treatment and Cure*, as the basis of her chapter, *Health*, in the book *Spiritual Gifts*.⁴²⁸ Numbers argued that by February 1863, the Whites had accepted the basic tenets of health reform, or at least hydrotherapy, as a "system of medicine", four months before the vision of June 6, 1863.

Referring to Numbers' work, the historian J.C. Wothon also questions the originality of Ellen White's thoughts on health. He suggests, "White was not just familiar with standard health reform works by the time of her most important vision, but that some of her writings borrowed prodigally, but without acknowledgment to L. Coles." Wothon calls Numbers' argument "convincing," adding that the issue of vision is more of a question for theologians than historians.⁴²⁹ On the same note, R.J. Davis said, "Her pronouncements bore a striking resemblance to those of Graham, Alcott, and other like-minded promoters." Referring to Numbers he adds that "she appeared to borrow especially heavily from Coles..."⁴³⁰

Answering these criticisms, one must realize that some of the health knowledge presented by Ellen White shares with the knowledge that was relatively widespread and

⁴²⁸ Ronald Numbers, *The Prophetess of health: A Study of Ellen G. White*, 130-131. The article referred here was published under the title: James C. Jackson, "Diphtheria, Its Causes, Treatment and Cure," *Review and Herald*, February 17, 1863, 89-91.

⁴²⁹ James C. Wothon, *Crusaders for Fitness* (New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 1982) 201-202.

⁴³⁰ R. J. Davis, *The Healthy Sceptic-Cutting through the Hype about your Health* (Berkeley, et al.: University of California Press, 2008) 19.

easily accessible. However, there is no evidence that she would preach or write on that subject prior to her 1863 vision.⁴³¹ The charge that she used Coles' work to write out her ideas is far from having a solid foundation. First, careful study showed the absence of Coles' phraseology in the "Health" chapter in *Spiritual Gifts*, Vol 4. Second, the similarities can be easily explained by the fact that both authors lived in the same era and culture; therefore, they used the same language patterns and discussed the same subject.⁴³²

McMahon's thorough analysis showed that it is hard to support the idea that her vision was influenced by Jackson's diphtheria article. McMahon found that "of the 17 *whats* proposed by Jackson, only 3 appear—warning against alcohol, warning against overeating and the recommendation of the use of soft water—in the 12 *whats* used by Ellen G. White." Analyzing other health-related articles published in *Review and Herald* before June 6, 1863, showed similar results. Thus, her 1863 vision by no means can be seen as a summary of what was found in the early issues of *Review and Herald*.⁴³³

Further research showed that Ellen White's possible selection from Jackson in writing the *Spiritual Gifts* chapter has a 1 in 20,000,000 chance of doing it by random selection. How could one explain the fact Ellen White, if she borrowed ideas from Jackson, she never picked some his unverified recommendations? Ideas like "marital sexual activity is dangerous", "phrenology is scientific", "one should not use salt or

⁴³¹ *A Critique of the Prophetess of Health*, 51.

⁴³² *A Critique of the Prophetess of Health*, 53.

⁴³³ Don S. McMahon, *Acquired or Inspired-Exploring the Origins of the Adventists Lifestyle* (Victoria, Australia: Signs Publishing Company, 2005) 56, 58.

soap”, “eating sugar is good”, “drink little water” etc. never appear in her works.⁴³⁴ One can agree with McMahon’s conclusion, “no matter how she is analyzed, there is no evidence Ellen White used the writings of others in a random fashion to produce her works. If she did select, she did it with extreme bias based on some kind of knowledge.”⁴³⁵

As for her *Ministry of Healing*, her possible selection from combined works of Graham, Alcott, and Coles Jackson was suggested. However, when looking at the unverified advice of those writers, there is a dramatic decrease in the possibility of random borrowing, which is 1 in 1.4 by 1025, to do it by chance. “This is so small that is impossible for Ellen White to achieve these results without knowledge.” In addition, there is a dramatic decrease when considering verified recommendations. “The lifestyle habits presented by Ellen White demonstrated very good knowledge that corresponds closely to modern medical views of a good lifestyle. Yet the work of Graham, Alcott, Coles, Jackson, and Kellogg showed that there was insufficient knowledge at the time to account for the results. Also, one should take into account the fact that Ellen White had very limited education in health to explain these results.”⁴³⁶ Finally, one can raise the question: if she did borrow some expressions or ideas, would that refute divine inspiration? The critics seem to have a fatal misconception as to how inspiration works. As Douglass concludes,

The uniqueness of Ellen White’s contribution lies not in the total originality of thought but in her divinely rendered insights and the results of her own reading and

⁴³⁴ Brand, *The Prophet and Her Critics*, 76. For the issue of phrenology see also *A Critique of the Book Prophetess of Health*, 46-47.

⁴³⁵ McMahon, *Acquired or Inspired-Exploring the Origins of the Adventists Lifestyle*, 137.

⁴³⁶ McMahon, *Acquired or Inspired-Exploring the Origins of the Adventists Lifestyle*, 134.

observations. While selecting expressions from her contemporaries that helped her to depict more fully the broad principles of truth that were revealed to her, she avoided notions from the same authors that were not consonant with the principles... Was her distinctive formulation of health principles developed in a mind hermeneutically sealed from the world around her and penetrated by the Spirit alone? No, this is not how God works. Her understanding of the Great Controversy Theme provided a mental grid whereby she was able to recognize in the area of health and disease the fundamental and enduring wisdom of her age, and to reject that would soon prove worthless.⁴³⁷

If there was an influence from authors like Graham, Shew, Alcott, Trall, Jackson, Coles, etc., why should one worry if it was a good influence? After all, none of these authors placed healthful living into the context of the Third Angel's Message, preparing God's people for the second coming of Christ. For them, health reform was primarily about health preservation for this life; for Ellen White, it was a tool for character formation and for the proclamation of the Gospel.⁴³⁸

Conclusion

First, it is striking how much the nineteenth-century health reformers knew about health preservation and how much they were in harmony with each other. It is obvious that by the 1860s, these people created a significant, easily accessible knowledge base. Ellen G. White, as a prophet, valued, promoted, and openly used their works.

Second, the fact that some elements of the laws of health were present decades or centuries before she presented them does not mean that her more complete and accurate picture of the details does not come from divine inspiration. It is important to note that we do not find all the elements in the works of other writers. Though the individual

⁴³⁷ Herbert E. Douglass, *Messenger of the Lord* (Nampa ID, Oshawa, Ont.: Pacific Press, 2005), 256, 278.

⁴³⁸ Douglass, *Messenger of the Lord*, 284-85, 288-98.

elements are not devised by her, the total picture of health presented as a system is an amplified view of health without question. This is especially true to her emphasis on the “trust” element. While others mention some other health principles like water, sunlight, and exercise, “trust in divine power” was never mentioned in connection with the other concepts. For Ellen White, the elements of nature will not bring such a great result if not used with faith in the Great Physician.

Third, the issue of revelation from God about healthful living and treatments (when there is already an abundance of ideas) leads to a more general question: how do revelation and inspiration on any topic, not just health, relate to ideas on that topic in the world at large? Should one expect a revelation to be totally different from the world on a topic that is of importance to reasonable people? Suppose the topic is being investigated carefully by the world and publicized. Should one expect the prophet receiving the revelation to be like a hermit, unaware of this valuable understanding and practice developing in the world? If the answer to these questions is negative, then one should expect the writings of Ellen G. White to reflect what is reasonable and valuable in the world around her. The value of revelation is not that it rejects everything in the world but rather that it rejects what is worthless and keeps what is valuable. Revelation as a message from heaven will communicate only truth. It may communicate new truths, but even if it does the service of selecting the truth from the falsehood in the world and church, that is a precious service. If there is a system of correct understanding in the world or church, revelation might have only the function of approval to give us the certainty of what to believe.

Fourth, revelation would not usually be expected to negate the methods used by careful thinkers to arrive at truth—the methods of logic and experience. But it will put the truth arrived at by those who are not prophets into a broader picture, a perspective that makes that truth of even more value, giving more emphasis to them than it had before the revelation God gave through the prophet.

Fifth, one of the signs of divine inspiration behind her concept is the integration of seemingly unrelated ideas like water, air, abstemiousness, and trust. If someone starts implementing all of the health principles in Ellen White's writing, it will be certain for him that they are truly called "remedies." Practicing these laws will bring one back to creation, as close as possible to an ideal life.

CHAPTER 7

THE LAWS OF HEALTH FROM A MODERN SCIENTIFIC PERSPECTIVE

Introduction

The closing chapter of this study deals with the question: what is the relevance of the health laws promoted by Ellen G. White and other health reformers?

As it was observed earlier, these laws have their roots in the Bible, and some of them were even recognized by the Greek-Roman culture. This ancient knowledge was revived in the health movements of the nineteenth century, whose doctors and reformers popularized and used these laws, pointing to their preventive and curative power.

Following that tradition, lifestyle centers and clinics in the 20th century continued to apply this concept in their health work and started to use the term “eight laws of health,” signifying their unique method to prevent and cure diseases. This method has become known worldwide through the NEWSTART program of the Weimar Institute in California. It is not an exaggeration that this lifestyle program has proved to be the most successful and affordable health promotion system available today.

This chapter first will take a look at the state of public health globally and in the US, and then it will search for correlations between lifestyle and diseases in general. After that, this chapter will examine each of these eight elements from a scientific perspective to see the rationale behind the success of this system.

Public Health Issues in the Twentieth Century

Looking at the statistics, the number of deaths by non-communicable diseases (NCDs) is astonishing.⁴³⁹ According to the WHO, “cancer, cardiovascular disease, diabetes, and chronic respiratory diseases killed approximately 33.2 million people worldwide in 2019, a 28% increase compared to 2000... NCDs continued to be the leading causes of ill health worldwide and were responsible for seven of 10 premature deaths in 2019.”⁴⁴⁰ Among the NCDs, “cardiovascular diseases (CVDs) are the leading cause of death globally, and an estimated 17.9 million people died from CVDs in 2019, representing 32% of all global deaths. Of these deaths, 85% were due to heart attack and stroke.”⁴⁴¹ Cancer is another leading cause of death worldwide, accounting for nearly 10 million deaths in 2020, or nearly one in six deaths. The most common cancers are breast, lung, colon, rectum, and prostate cancers.⁴⁴²

Overweight and obesity, the main risk factors for NCDs, are also increasing significantly. According to estimates, the prevalence of obesity in children and adolescents aged 5–19 years has increased in all WHO regions since 2000. Still, it has remained the highest in the Americas, reaching 14.4% in 2016. Among adults aged 18

⁴³⁹ The main four NCDs are cardiovascular diseases, cancers, chronic respiratory diseases, and diabetes.

⁴⁴⁰ World Health Organization, *World Health Statistics 2022: Monitoring Health for the SDGs, sustainable development goals* (Geneva: World Health Organization, 2022) 37, accessed March 11, 2023, <https://www.who.int/publications/i/item/9789240051157>.

⁴⁴¹ World Health Organization, “Cardiovascular Diseases (CVDs),” last modified 11 June 2021, accessed March 11, 2023, [https://www.who.int/news-room/fact-sheets/detail/cardiovascular-diseases-\(cvds\)](https://www.who.int/news-room/fact-sheets/detail/cardiovascular-diseases-(cvds)).

⁴⁴² World Health Organization, “Cancer,” last modified February 3, 2022, accessed March 11, 2023, <https://www.who.int/news-room/fact-sheets/detail/cancer>.

years and older, the prevalence of obesity also increased between 2000 and 2016 across all WHO regions.⁴⁴³

According to the CDC, the life expectancy in the USA was 77.0 years for the total population, which is a decrease of 1.8 years from 78.8 in 2019. In the USA, the two main leading causes of death are heart disease and cancer.⁴⁴⁴ According to a 2011 survey, the obesity rate in some parts of the USA is 39% and rising by 5% per year.⁴⁴⁵

The NCDs continue to be a burden on the world economy. According to the Pan American Health Organization (PAHO), “Over the period 2011-2030, NCDs will cost the global economy more than US\$ 30 trillion, representing 48% of global GDP in 2010, and pushing millions of people below the poverty line.”⁴⁴⁶

The Correlation between Lifestyle and Life Expectancy

In the past 50 years, several studies have been conducted trying to find the link between lifestyle and life expectancy. Nedra Belloc and Lester Breslow were among the first scientists to come up with plausible evidence to show which factors are responsible for longevity. In their classic study conducted in Alameda County, CA, with 7000 participants, they identified seven distinctive health factors. These factors, commonly referred to as the “Alameda 7,” are, (1) having never smoked, (2) drinking moderately or

⁴⁴³ *World health statistics 2022*, 44. <https://www.who.int/publications/i/item/9789240051157>.

⁴⁴⁴ Sherry L., et al., “Mortality in the United States,” *NCHS Data Brief*, no. 427, (December 2021), accessed March 11, 2023, <https://www.cdc.gov/nchs/data/databriefs/db427.pdf>.

⁴⁴⁵ Dan Witters, “More than 15% Obese in Nearly all U.S. Metro Areas,” Gallup, last modified March 12, 2012, accessed March 11, 2023, <https://news.gallup.com/poll/153143/obese-nearly-metro-areas.aspx>.

⁴⁴⁶ Pan American Health Organization, “Economics of NCDs,” accessed April 14, 2023, <https://www.paho.org/en/topics/economics-ncds>.

not at all (defined as drinking no more than five drinks at one sitting), (3) sleeping 7-8 hours a night, (4) exercising regularly, (5) maintaining desirable weight for height, (6) avoiding snacks, and (7) eating breakfast regularly. These lifestyle habits influence in a remarkable way how long one may live. In the nine years of the study, those practicing all seven habits experienced a death rate of 5% in contrast to those practicing three or fewer habits, whose death rate was 12.3 to 20%.⁴⁴⁷

The initial results of the Belloc and Breslow study were confirmed by other studies like the National Health Interview Survey (1977, 1983, and 1985). These further studies collected data from the total adult US population according to the Alameda 7.⁴⁴⁸ Some of the Alameda 7 can be seen among the recommendations of the American Heart Association. Their Life's Essential 8 contains the following list of health habits: a healthy diet, quitting tobacco, healthy sleep, weight management, controlling cholesterol levels, and managing blood sugar and blood pressure.⁴⁴⁹

The project called Adventist Health Studies (AHS) was another big step toward establishing a correlation between lifestyle and longevity. AHS 1, conducted between 1974–1988, involved approximately 34,000 Californian Adventists over 25. Its primary purpose was to identify the main elements of the Adventist lifestyle, protecting against disease. This study found that Adventist men live 7.3 years longer and Adventist women live 4.4 years longer than other Californians. Five simple health habits (not smoking,

⁴⁴⁷ Lester Breslow, James E. Enstrom, "Persistence of Health Habits and Their Relationship to Mortality," *Preventive Medicine* 9, no. 4, (July 1980): 469-83.

⁴⁴⁸ C. A. Schoenborn, "Health Habits of U.S. Adults, 1985: the Alameda 7 Revisited," *Public Health Reports* 101, no.6 (1986 Nov-Dec):571–80.

⁴⁴⁹ American Heart Association, "Life's Essential 8," accessed April 14, 2023, <https://www.heart.org/en/healthy-living/healthy-lifestyle/lifes-essential-8>.

eating a plant-based diet, eating nuts several times per week, regular exercise, and maintaining normal body weight) increase life span up to 10 years. AHS 2 is an ongoing study that started in 2002 with the goal of involving 125,000 Adventists. Some of their findings became available and will be referenced later in this chapter.

The study of the “blue zones” also pointed out certain health habits as commonly practiced by ethnic or religious groups around the world in which life expectancy is higher than average.⁴⁵⁰ Even though the concept of blue zones has been criticized, it is remarkable that the comparison of the lifestyle habits of the groups living in those zones shows some similarity with the “Alameda 7” and the elements of the NEWSTART program.⁴⁵¹ Dan Buettner lists nine lessons that we can learn from those living in the blue zones. These lessons include stress reduction, moderate caloric intake, plant-based diet, moderate alcohol intake, especially wine, engagement in spirituality or religion, engagement in family life, and engagement in social life.⁴⁵²

In 2012, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention followed eight thousand Americans for six years. According to their findings, three lifestyle habits have a significant impact on mortality: not smoking, eating a healthier diet, and being engaged

⁴⁵⁰ The concept of “blue zones” grew out of demographic work done by Gianni Pes and Michel Poulain, published in 2004 by the journal *Experimental Gerontology*. Michel Poulain; Giovanni Mario Pes; Claude Grasland; Ciriaco Carru; Luigi Ferrucci; Giovannella Baggio; Claudio Franceschi; Luca Deiana. See “Identification of a Geographic Area Characterized by Extreme Longevity in the Sardinia Island: The AKEA Study,” *Experimental Gerontology*. 39 (9): 1423-29. The authors identified Sardinia's Nuoro province as the region with the highest concentration of male centenarians. As a result, they began referring to the area as the “blue zone”. Building on this demographic work, Dan Buettner pinpointed four additional locations: Okinawa, Nicoya, Icaria, and Loma Linda.

⁴⁵¹ Michel Poulain, “Exceptional Longevity in Okinawa: A Plea for In-depth Validation,” *Demographic Research*, 25, no. (Jul 21, 2011): 245–84.

⁴⁵² See Dan Buettner, *The Blue Zones, Second Edition: 9 Lessons for Living Longer from the People Who've Lived the Longest* (Washington DC: National Geographic, 2012).

in physical activity. They also found that those who practiced at least one of these habits lowered the risk by 40% of dying within six years. Those who practiced two out of the three dropped their risk by 50%, while those who scored all of them reduced their risk by 82%.⁴⁵³

Based on the findings, one can safely conclude that there is a very close relationship between lifestyle and life expectancy. While certain risk factors, like obesity, the use of alcohol and tobacco, and stress, contribute to chronic diseases, lifestyle habits can also help prevent these health problems. These include a plant-based diet, moderate exercise, rest, eating breakfast, and engaging in religion.

Diet

As it was observed earlier, some of the nineteenth-century health reformers, including Ellen G. White, promoted a diet that is plant-based. These reformers had slightly different ideas as to how much animal product is still acceptable. While some of them would be considered today as strict vegans, others followed a broader ovo-lacto vegetarian diet. As we saw, E.G. White did not reject eggs and dairy products as inherently bad in her time. However, she also pointed out to an upcoming period when no animal products will be safe to eat.

Interestingly, recent nutritional research has shown that a whole-food, plant-based diet helps prevent and reverse many diseases that cause premature death, such as obesity, cardiovascular disease, cancer, diabetes, rheumatoid arthritis, etc. We will now examine some of these diseases in relation to diet.

⁴⁵³ Earl S. Ford, et al., "Healthy Lifestyle Behaviors and All-cause Mortality among Adults in the United States," *Preventive Medicine* 55, no. (July 2012):23-7.

The Adventist Health Study 2 found that “The 5-unit BMI difference between vegans and non-vegetarians indicates a substantial potential of vegetarianism to protect against obesity. Increased conformity to vegetarian diets protected against the risk of type 2 diabetes after lifestyle characteristics and BMI were taken into account. Pesco- and semi-vegetarian diets afforded intermediate protection.”⁴⁵⁴ This study also found that “a vegetarian dietary pattern is associated with a more favorable profile of MRFs [Multiple Risk Factors] and a lower risk of MetS [Metabolic Syndrome].”⁴⁵⁵

In 1990, Dean Ornish was the first to provide high-quality evidence that eating mainly plant foods could reverse coronary heart disease. In his notable Lifestyle Heart Trial, he followed up patients with severe atherosclerosis. They were put on a high-carb, low-fat (HCLF) diet, in which 10% of the total calorie intake came from fat, 15-20% from proteins, and 70-75% from complex carbohydrates. The cholesterol intake was limited to 5 mg/day. In the control group, the calorie intake was 25% fat, 18% proteins, and 52% carbohydrates. While the control group saw a 53% increase in arteriosclerosis, the group on a high-carb, low-fat diet experienced a remarkable 82% regression. Five years later, the extent of coronary stenosis decreased from 37,8% to 34,7% in the HCLF group; conversely, in the control group, it increased from 46,1% to 57,9%.⁴⁵⁶

⁴⁵⁴ Serena Tonstad, et al., “Type of Vegetarian Diet, Body Weight, and Prevalence of Type 2 Diabetes”. *Diabetes Care* 32, no. 5 (2009): 791–6, accessed May 11, 2023, <https://doi.org/10.2337/dc08-1886>.

⁴⁵⁵ Nico S. Rizzo, et al., “Vegetarian Dietary Patterns Are Associated With a Lower Risk of Metabolic Syndrome: The Adventist Health Study 2,” *Diabetes Care* 34, no. 5, (2011):1225–27

⁴⁵⁶ Dean Ornish, et al., “Intensive Lifestyle Changes for Reversal of Coronary Heart Disease,” *JAMA* 280, no. 23 (1998), 2001–7, accessed Jun 15, 2023. <https://doi.org/10.1001/jama.280.23.2001>.

Other studies showed similar results. The famous Framingham Heart Study also suggested a whole food, plant-based diet to prevent ischemic heart disease.⁴⁵⁷ In the early 2000s, Dr. Caldwell Esselstyn demonstrated the most significant reversal of heart disease, recommending a plant-based diet.

Unfortunately, our national health and medical organizations continue to recommend a cholesterol threshold of 200 mg/dL (=5,17 mmol/l) and a diet containing up to 30% fat, despite clear evidence that this threshold is too high to prevent or cure heart disease. It is true that these recommendations have the potential to reduce the incidence of heart disease, but only by a moderate amount. Unfortunately, when it comes to lowering cholesterol, moderation kills. With lower lipid levels, coronary artery disease need never exist. When it does exist, it need never progress.⁴⁵⁸

One of the biggest studies ever done on the relationship between diet and cancer was The China–Cornell–Oxford Project, or *The China Study* in short. This study was conducted in 65 Chinese counties throughout the 1980s with partnership between Cornell University, the University of Oxford, and the government of China. The study compared diet patterns in various parts of China. T. Colin Campbell, who led the two major studies, published the results in the book *The China Study* coauthored with Thomas M. Campbell II. According to their findings, there is a link between the consumption of animal products (including dairy products) and chronic illnesses, especially cancer. The authors suggest that, “eating foods that contain any cholesterol above 0 mg is unhealthy.”⁴⁵⁹

⁴⁵⁷ William P. Castelli Lipids, Risk Factors and Ischemic Heart Disease, *Therapeutic Strategy in Dyslipidemia: Present and Future* 124, (July 1996) supplement, S1-S9.

⁴⁵⁸ Caldwell B. Esselstyn, MD, “In Cholesterol Lowering, Moderation Kills,” *Cleveland Clinic Journal of Medicine* 67, no. 8 (August 2000): 560-64.

⁴⁵⁹ T. Colin Campbell; Thomas M. Campbell II, *The China Study: The Most Comprehensive Study of Nutrition Ever Conducted and the Startling Implications for Diet, Weight Loss and Long-term Health*. (Dallas, TX: BenBella Books, 2005), 132.

Although this study was criticized extensively, its results have been confirmed by other studies.

For example, the AHS 2 also found that “Men with higher intake of dairy foods, but not nondairy calcium, had a higher risk of prostate cancer compared with men having lower intakes.”⁴⁶⁰ It is also noteworthy that in 2015 the WHO’s International Agency for Research on Cancer (IARC) classified red meat as a Group 2A carcinogen (probably carcinogen to humans). As for processed meat, it was classified as a classified Group 1 (carcinogenic to humans). Surprisingly, process meat was put in the same category as tobacco smoking and asbestos.⁴⁶¹

During the Covid-19 pandemic, it was found that those eating a diet based on plant sources (vegetarians, pesco-vegetarians and those following a Mediterranean diet) experienced 59-73% smaller chance to develop severe symptoms of COVID-19 infections. They also found that a diet containing low level of carbohydrates and a high level of protein posed a greater risk of developing a more severe form of COVID-19.⁴⁶²

The research reviewed so far suggests that an ideal diet would be composed of grains, fruits, vegetables, legumes, nuts. If one decides to use eggs and dairy products, it

⁴⁶⁰ Michael J.Orlich, et al., “Dairy Foods, Calcium Intakes, and Risk of Incident Prostate Cancer in Adventist Health Study-2,” *The American Journal of Clinical Nutrition* 116, no. 2 (July 8, 2022): 314-24

⁴⁶¹ The WHO adds that “processed meat has been classified in the same category as causes of cancer such as tobacco smoking and asbestos (IARC Group 1, carcinogenic to humans), but this does NOT mean that they are all equally dangerous. The IARC classifications describe the strength of the scientific evidence about an agent being a cause of cancer, rather than assessing the level of risk.” In: “Cancer: Carcinogenicity of the Consumption of Red Meat and Processed Meat,” World Health Organization, accessed May 11, 2023, <https://www.who.int/news-room/questions-and-answers/item/cancer-carcinogenicity-of-the-consumption-of-red-meat-and-processed-meat>.

⁴⁶² Hyunju Kim, et al., “Plant-based Diets, Pescatarian Diets and COVID-19 Severity: a Population-based Case-control Study in Six Countries,” *British Medical Journal, Nutrition, Prevention & Health* 4, no. 1 (2021): 257-66, accessed July 10, <https://doi: 10.1136/bmjnph-2021-000272>.

is better to use them sparingly. Here we must examine some issues that people often bring up against plant-based diet.

First, many believe that humans need to consume animal protein. However, it has been proven that consuming plant proteins provides better overall health figures. In light of current science, the idea of protein deficiency in vegetarians and vegans should be considered as a myth.⁴⁶³ Some studies even showed that plant based proteins have more ideal amino acid combination compared proteins of animal sources.⁴⁶⁴

Second, vitamin B-12 is another issue with a plant-based diet. Vitamin B-12 is a water soluble water which is found mainly in animal sources of food. The deficiency of this vitamin causes anemia perniciosa and neurological problems. A study done in 2014 found that certain types of nori sheets contain a significant amount of vitamin B-12.⁴⁶⁵ However, because this type of food is not available everywhere, B-12 supplements are recommended to those being on plant based diet.

Third, it was found that vegetarians following a balanced diet are not exposed to a greater risk of iron deficiency compared to non-vegetarians.⁴⁶⁶

⁴⁶³ Vesanto Melina, Winston Craig, Susan Levin, “Position of the Academy of Nutrition and Dietetics: Vegetarian Diets,” *Journal of the Academy of Nutrition and Dietetics* vol. 116, 12 (2016): 1970-80, accessed May 11, 2024, <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jand.2016.09.025>; François Mariotti and Christopher D. Gardner, “Dietary Protein and Amino Acids in Vegetarian Diets—A Review” *Nutrients* 11, no. 11 (2019): 2661, accessed May 11, 2023, <https://doi.org/10.3390/nu11112661>.

⁴⁶⁴ Neil Nedley, *Proof Positive: How to Reliably Combat Disease and Achieve Optimal Health Through Nutrition and Lifestyle* (Ardmore, OK: Neil Nedley. M.D., 1998), 149.

⁴⁶⁵ Watanabe, F.: Vitamin B12 sources and bioavailability. *Experimental biology and medicine*, 232, no.10 (2007) 1266–74, accessed, May 11, 2023, <https://doi.org/10.3181/0703-MR-67>.

⁴⁶⁶ Angela V. Saunders, et al., “Iron and Vegetarian Diets,” *The Medical Journal of Australia* 199, S4 (2013), S11–S16, accessed May 12, 2023. <https://doi.org/10.5694/mja11.11494>.

Water

Only 3% of the Earth's water supply is fit for consumption; most of it is found in ice. Water is threatened by pollution (fertilizers, chemicals, and wastewater), climate change (drought), and overuse. For example, to produce 1kg of grain requires from 500 to 4,000 liters of water, in contrast to 1kg of meat that requires between 5,000 and 20,000 liters of water.⁴⁶⁷

In living organisms, water acts as an essential solvent and means of transport. It has a role in body metabolism, and it is employed as an adhesive material in the cell architecture. It was found that the body's proteins and enzymes function more effectively in the presence of water.⁴⁶⁸

Consumption of sufficient water seems to have several preventive and therapeutic effects. First, water acts as a natural blood thinner, preventing stroke and heart diseases. In dehydration, the blood becomes thicker, which means a raised hematocrit level. If the red blood cells are dehydrated, it may lead to clot formation.⁴⁶⁹ Studies found that drinking five or more glasses of water a day may reduce heart disease by 50%.⁴⁷⁰ Second, water provides efficient lubrication and cushioning of joints. Thus, it may prevent low

⁴⁶⁷ "How Much Water is Needed to Produce Food and How Much Do We Waste?" The Guardian, accessed April 22, 2023. <https://www.theguardian.com/news/datablog/2013/jan/10/how-much-water-food-production-waste>

⁴⁶⁸ F. Bathmanghelidj, M.D., *Your Body's Many Cries for Water* (Falls Church, VA: Global Health Solutions, Inc. 1995), 18-19.

⁴⁶⁹ J. Stuart, J.C. Ellory, "Rheological Consequences of Erythrocyte Dehydration," *British Journal of Haematology* 69, no.1 (May 1988):1-4, accessed May 12, 2023. <https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1365-2141.1988.tb07593.x>.

⁴⁷⁰ "Religion and Health Study Progress," *Adventist Health Studies Report*, Vol. V. (2008): 5, accessed May 12, 2023, <https://adventisthealthstudy.org/sites/adventisthealthstudy.org/files/docs/sph-ahs-2008-newsletter.pdf>.

back pain, and neck pain.⁴⁷¹ Third, water is required for the production of saliva and digestive juices. Therefore, it contributes to the health of the digestive system. It was found that drinking plenty of water is an effective treatment of dyspepsia and ulceration.⁴⁷² Fourth, water helps with kidney function, preventing kidney stone formation and urinary tract infections.⁴⁷³ Fifth, water has a bile thinning effect, thus reducing bile stone formation.⁴⁷⁴ Sixth, research suggests that drinking enough water may contribute to mental health, helping with depression and anxiety.⁴⁷⁵

Health educators say the human body needs about one milliliter of water for every calorie burnt. It may be nearly four liters of water for a very active person (who burns 4000 calories). For a very inactive person, it can be 1 liter. They also recommend drinking enough water to make the urine colorless. It is best to drink water that is neither very hot nor very cold. The best time to drink water is between meals. Drinking water during meals dilutes digestive enzymes and slows down the digestive process. Therefore,

⁴⁷¹ F. Bathmanghelidj, MD, *Your Body's Many Cries for Water* (Falls Church, VA: Global Health Solutions, Inc., 1995), 41-51.

⁴⁷² Bathmanghelidj, *Your Body's Many Cries for Water*, 25-40.

⁴⁷³ Nedley, *Proof Positive*, 497.

⁴⁷⁴ T. Yamamura , et al., "Gallbladder Dynamics and Plasma Cholecystokinin Responses After Meals, Oral Water, or Sham Feeding in Healthy Subjects," *The American Journal of the Medical Sciences* 295, no. 2 (February 1988):102-7, accessed May 12, 2023, <https://doi.org/10.1097/00000441-198802000-00003>; V. M. Math, "Drinking Water to Prevent Gallstone Formation," *Gastroenterology* 82, no. 4 (April 1982):822-23, Mahantayya V. Math, "Water ingestion and its role in bile secretion," *American Journal of Clinical Pathology* 78, no. 2 (August 1982): 258-59, accessed May 12, 2023, <https://doi.org/10.1093/ajcp/78.2.258a>.

⁴⁷⁵ Fahimeh Haghghatdoost, et al., "Drinking Plain Water is Associated with Decreased Risk of Depression and Anxiety in Adults: Results from a Large Cross-sectional Study," *World Journal of Psychiatry* 8, no. 3 (September 2018): 88-96, accessed May 13, 2023, <https://doi.org/10.5498/wjp.v8.i3.88>.

avoid drinking less than half an hour before a meal and within an hour or two after a meal.⁴⁷⁶

Here, it is worthwhile to mention the external use of water (hydrotherapy). Hydrotherapy can be defined as the use of water in three forms (liquid water, ice, and steam) to treat ailments. Most hydrotherapy procedures have an invigorating effect on the body. Hydrotherapy is used in many institutes around the world, such as thermal spas, wellness centers, and lifestyle centers. The treatments include cold, neutral, and hot baths, wet sheet packs, heating compresses, etc. Some beneficial effects of hot baths include relieving muscle spasms, increasing tissue elasticity, and improving blood flow and oxygenation.⁴⁷⁷

Sunshine

Sunlight contains UVA, UVB, UVC, and infrared radiation that are largely absorbed by the ozone layer. The visible light, ranging from 400-800nm, is wholly transmitted by the atmosphere. Sunlight is essential for life: plants store energy from it during photosynthesis, in which water and carbon dioxide are used to produce sugar in the presence of sunlight.⁴⁷⁸

⁴⁷⁶ Agatha Thrash, *Nature's Healing Practices: A Natural Remedies Encyclopedia* (Teach Services, Inc., 2015) 515-16, Thrash, *Nutrition for Vegetarians*, 87-88.

⁴⁷⁷ J.F. Lehmann, B.J. De Lateur, "Diathermy and Superficial Heat, Laser, and Cold Therapy," in Frederic J. Kottke, Justus F. Lehmann, *Krusen's Handbook of Physical Medicine and Rehabilitation* (Philadelphia, PA: Saunders, 1990), 285-288. For an in depth study on hydrotherapy, see Agatha Moody Thrash, MD and Calvin L. Thrash, Jr., MD, *Home Remedies: Hydrotherapy, Massage, Charcoal, and Other Simple Treatments* (Seale, AL: Thrash Publications, 1981).

⁴⁷⁸ *Encyclopedia Britannica*, s.v. "sunlight," accessed October May, 2023, <https://www.britannica.com/science/sunlight-solar-radiation>

Sunlight has many known preventive and therapeutic effects. First, it stimulates blood circulation and increases cardiac output. Second, in the presence of sunlight, vitamin D is produced from cholesterol in the skin.⁴⁷⁹ Third, it has a significant antihypertensive and cholesterol-lowering effect. Fourth, moderate sun exposure stabilizes blood sugar levels and has a good effect on the immune system, increasing the white blood cell count. Fifth, it is antiseptic, promoting wound healing. Sixth, sunbathing has a beneficial impact on mental health: it improves the sense of well-being, is a natural anti-depressant, a stress reliever, and regulates sleep rhythm.⁴⁸⁰

It has been found that the ozone shield, which filters out harmful UV radiation, is reduced in thickness and, in some places, even perforated, and a high dose of sun exposure may cause skin cancer.⁴⁸¹ Therefore, health educators warn that sun exposure should be limited between 11-16 hours.

However, it was also found that moderate sunbathing is healthy and may prevent cancer. A study showed that colon cancer is less prevalent in the southern states of the

⁴⁷⁹ L. M. Salamone, et al., “Contributions of vitamin D intake and Seasonal Sunlight Exposure to Plasma 25-hydroxyvitamin D Concentration in Elderly Women,” *American Journal of Clinical Nutrition*, 59, no. 1 (January 1994) :80-86, accessed May 15, 2023, <https://doi.org/10.1093/ajcn/59.1.80>.

⁴⁸⁰ Vernon W. Foster, *New Start* (Santa Barbara CA: 1988), 31; Richard B. Weller, “Sunlight Has Cardiovascular Benefits Independently of Vitamin D,” *Blood Purification* 41, no. 1-3 (2016):130-4, accessed May 15, 2023, <https://doi.org/10.1159/000441266>; M. L. Rao, et al., “The Influence of Phototherapy on Serotonin and Melatonin in Mon-seasonal Depression,” *Pharmacopsychiatry* 23, no. 3 (May 1990):155–158, accessed May 15, 2023, <https://doi.org/10.1055/s-2007-1014499>; M. L. Laakso, et al., “Twenty-four-hour Patterns of Pineal Melatonin and Pituitary and Plasma Prolactin in Male Rats under ‘Natural’ and Artificial Lighting Conditions,” *Neuroendocrinology* 48, no. 3 (September 1988): 308–13, accessed May 16, 2023, <https://doi.org/10.1159/000125027>; D. R. Wagner, “Sleep Disorders; Disorders of the Circadian Sleep-wake Cycle,” *Neurologic Clinics* 14, no. 3 (August 1996): 651, accessed May 16, 2023, [https://doi:10.1016/s0733-8619\(05\)70278-4](https://doi:10.1016/s0733-8619(05)70278-4); Mary Ann McNeilus, MD, *God’s Healing Way* (Lanesboro, MN: Mercy Valley Farm, 2007), 17-18.

⁴⁸¹ Alfred O. Berg, “US Preventive Services Task Force. Screening for Skin Cancer—Including counseling to Prevent Skin Cancer,” in U. S. Preventive Services Task Force, *Guide to Clinical Preventive Services—2nd edition* (Baltimore, MD: Williams and Wilkins, 1996), 141-52.

US. People living in Michigan, Connecticut, and Washington have a 50-80 % higher prevalence of colon cancer compared to people living in southern states.⁴⁸² H.G. Ainsleigh also pointed out that sun exposure may reduce the prevalence of several diseases. He said that statistically, 2000 deaths are caused by sun exposure, while 138,000 deaths caused by other types of cancer are prevented. An additional 30,000 lives could be saved by regular sunbathing.⁴⁸³ As Richard B. Weller puts it, “All-cause mortality should be the primary determinant of public health messages. Sunlight is a risk factor for skin cancer, but sun avoidance may carry more of a cost than benefit for overall good health.”⁴⁸⁴

Experts recommend sunbathing at least 15 minutes daily and having the bare skin exposed to direct sunlight. Windows, clothing, and various lotions block the beneficial rays.⁴⁸⁵ If we expect a more significant dose of sunlight (e.g., when preparing for a vacation or an outing), we should gradually get more and more sun exposure than the previous days. Every morning one should open the windows letting the sunlight into the room.⁴⁸⁶

⁴⁸² J.C. Emerson, N.S. Weiss, “Colorectal Cancer and Solar Radiation,” *Cancer Causes and Control* 3, no. 1 (1992): 95-99.

⁴⁸³ H.G. Ainsleigh, Beneficial Effects of Sun Exposure on Cancer Mortality, *Preventive Medicine* 22, no. 1 (1993): 132-140, accessed May 15, 2023, <https://doi.org/10.1006/pmed.1993.1010>.

⁴⁸⁴ Richard B. Weller, “Sunlight Has Cardiovascular Benefits Independently of Vitamin D,” *Blood Purification* 41, nos. 1-3 (2016): 130-4, accessed May 15, 2023, <https://doi.org/10.1159/000441266>.

⁴⁸⁵ Zoltan Rona, MD, *Vitamin D: The Sunshine Vitamin* (Summertown, TN: Books Alive, 2010), 7-8.

⁴⁸⁶ Aileen Ludington MD, Hans Diel DrHSc, MPH, *Lifestyle Capsules-A Concise, Reliable Blueprint for Better Health in Easy Doses* (Santa Barbara, CA: Woodbridge Press, 1991), 160.

Air

The Earth's atmosphere contains 20,9 % of oxygen and 78% nitrogen, which are the main elements in air. This composition is best suited to supporting life. Without oxygen humans can live for a few minutes at most. An average person breathes in and out 10-15 times a minute without any conscious effort.⁴⁸⁷

Symptoms of oxygen deficiency include headaches, fatigue, insomnia, memory problems, depression, weakened immune system, insufficient circulation, digestive problems, muscle aches. Air has numerous benefits as it promotes healthy circulation of blood, soothes the nerves, gives peace of mind and serenity, good sleep, clear thinking, mental efficiency, stimulates appetite, aids digestion.⁴⁸⁸

Here it is worthwhile to clarify what makes air fresh. Experts found a high negative ion concentrations around waterfalls and beaches, especially near green trees, plants, and after a rainstorm.⁴⁸⁹ According to some experts, the negative ion concentration in clean country air is 2,000 ions/cm³. Near waterfalls, it can go up to 100,000 ions/cm³. In confined places like rooms, this property is lost: in a closed room the concentration of negative ions is only around 100 ions/cm³.

Negative ions have a number of benefits including a sense of well-being; they protects lungs, promote calmness, decrease resting pulse, decrease the number of bacteria and virus in the air, help with learning in mammals, and heal stomach ulcers.⁴⁹⁰ One

⁴⁸⁷ *Encyclopaedia Britannica*, s.v. "air," accessed October May, 2023, <https://www.britannica.com/science/atmosphere>

⁴⁸⁸ Mary Ann McNeilus, MD, *God's Healing Way* (Lanesboro, MN: Mercy Valley Farm, 2007), 24-25.

⁴⁸⁹ Nedley, *Proof Positive*, 500-1.

⁴⁹⁰ B.E. Baldwin, "Why is Fresh Air Fresh?" *The Journal of Health and Healing* 11, no. 4:26-27; R.A. Duffee, R.H. Koontz, "Behavioral Effects of Ionized Air on Rats," *Psychophysiology* 1, no. 4 (April

study showed that in children it increased brain function.⁴⁹¹ On the other hand, positive ions may cause anxiety, migraine headache, nausea, vomiting, diarrhea, vision problems, irritability, lung congestion etc.

Some experts recommend reforming our breathing emphasizing the benefits of deep, slow exhalations. Both the abdomen and chest should rise when inhaling. Correct posture (sitting and standing in upright position) is also helpful. Avoid tight clothing; it is not good for the lungs or circulation. Reading out loud, singing or intense outdoor exercise improves lung efficiency.⁴⁹²

Exercise

First, it is necessary to define, what is considered exercise. According to an NIH (National Institutes of Health) Consensus conference held in 1996, exercise is a “planned, structured and repetitive bodily movement produced by skeletal muscles that requires energy expenditure.”⁴⁹³

As it was shown earlier, some studies (for example the Belloc and Breslow or AHS1-2) point out to regular exercise as one of the major factors in longevity and

1965): 347-359; J. Jordan, B. Sokoloff, “Air Ionization, Age and Maze Learning of Rats,” *Journal of Gerontology* 14 (1959): 344-48; T. Reilly, I.C. Stevenson, “An Investigation of the Effects of Negative Air Ions on Responses to Submaximal Exercise at Different Times of Day,” *Journal of Human Ergology* 22, no.1 (June 1993):1-9; B.W. Mitchell, D.J. King, “Effect of Negative Air Ionization on Airborne Transmission of Newcastle Disease Virus,” *Avian Diseases* 38, no. 41 (October-December 1994):725-32; A.J. Giannini, B.T. Jones, R.H. Loiselle, “Reversibility of Serotonin Irritation Syndrome with Atmospheric Anions,” *The Journal of Clinical Psychiatry* 47, no. 3 (March 1986): 141-143.

⁴⁹¹ L.L. Morton, J.R. Kershner, “Differential Negative Air Ion Effects on Learning Disabled and Normal-achieving Children,” *International Journal of Biometeorology* 34, no. 1 (1990 May): 35-41, accessed May 15, 2023, <https://doi.org/10.1007/BF01045818>.

⁴⁹² McNeilus, *God’s Healing Way*, 24-25.

⁴⁹³ NIH Consensus Conference “Physical Activity and Cardiovascular Health,” *JAMA* 276, no. 33 (July 17, 1996): 241-246.

prevention. In an experiment, it was found that if exercise used up more than 500 Cal, mortality decreased in proportion.⁴⁹⁴ Even if one used up 750 Cal per week by exercise, still there was a great benefit.⁴⁹⁵

Unfortunately, physical inactivity can be considered another worldwide pandemic, resulting in a great number of deaths. According to estimates, inactivity may be responsible for the one third of the deaths caused by the three major health problems in the US: coronary heart disease, colon cancer and diabetes.⁴⁹⁶

The main general functions of exercise include strengthening the bones and muscles, lungs, and cardiovascular system, helping with digestion, strengthening the immune system, and improving our mental health.⁴⁹⁷

The benefits of endurance training include increased HDL after 12 weeks of training, improved insulin sensitivity and fibrinolysis, decreased blood pressure and platelet function, decreased risk of certain cancer and lowered hematocrit and fibrinogen

⁴⁹⁴ R. S. Paffenbarger Jr, et al., "The Association of Changes in Physical-activity Level and Other Lifestyle Characteristics with Mortality Among Men," *The New England Journal of Medicine* 328, no. 8 (Feb 25, 1993):538-45, accessed May 15, 2023, <https://doi.org/10.1056/NEJM199302253280804>.

⁴⁹⁵ R. S. Paffenbarger Jr, et al., "The Association of Changes in Physical-activity Level and Other Lifestyle Characteristics with Mortality Among Men," *The New England Journal of Medicine* 328, no. 8 (Feb 25, 1993):538-45, accessed May 15, 2023, <https://doi.org/10.1056/NEJM199302253280804>.

⁴⁹⁶ K. E. Powell, S.N. Blair, "The Public Health Burdens of Sedentary Living: Theoretical but Realistic Estimates," *Medicine and Science in Sports and Exercise* 26 no. 7 (July 1994): 851-56.

⁴⁹⁷ McNeilus, *God's Healing Way*, 12-13; W. M. Kohrt, et al., "Additive Effects of Weight-bearing Exercise and Estrogen on Bone Mineral Density in Older Women," *Journal of Bone and Mineral Research* 10, no. 9 (September 1995):1303-11, accessed May 17, 2023, <https://doi.org/10.1002/jbmr.5650100906>.

levels.⁴⁹⁸ Vigorous physical activity was found to be very beneficial for preventing and controlling metabolic syndrome.⁴⁹⁹

Exercise is a good therapy to treat depression and anxiety and it is an effective way to cope with stress. Even the symptoms of Alzheimer’s disease showed some improvement as a result of exercise.⁵⁰⁰ It was also found that exercise decreases fatigue and increases mental and physical fitness.⁵⁰¹ One systematic review found that 16 studies already reported a significant relationship between cardiorespiratory fitness, or training load and telomere length.⁵⁰²

On the other hand, physical inactivity has numerous health risks which include coronary heart disease and myocardial infarction, high blood pressure and stroke, diabetes mellitus, anxiety and depression, certain cancers.⁵⁰³

Most studies recommend 30 minutes of moderate exercise 3 times a week, and it is even better if done daily. Some of the recommended examples include volleyball, brisk

⁴⁹⁸ JAMA, “Physical Activity and Cardiovascular Health, NIH Consensus Development Panel on Physical Activity and Cardiovascular Health” *JAMA* 276, no. 3 (July 17, 1996): 241-246.

⁴⁹⁹ Ian Janssen, Robert Ross, “Vigorous Intensity Physical Activity is Related to the Metabolic Syndrome Independent of the Physical Activity Dose.” *International Journal of Epidemiology* 41, no. 4 (2012): 1132-40, accessed May 17, <https://doi.org/10.1093/ije/dys038>.

⁵⁰⁰ “NIH consensus conference. Physical Activity and Cardiovascular Health,” *JAMA* 276, no. 3 (July 17, 1996): 241-246; “Surgeon General’s Report on Physical Activity of Health,” *JAMA* 276, no. 7 (August 21, 1996): 522.

⁵⁰¹ University of California at Berkeley, School of Public Health, “The Energizer,” *University of California at Berkeley Wellness Letter* 11(August 11,1995): 4.

⁵⁰² Adilson Marques, et al., “Cardiorespiratory Fitness and Telomere Length: a Systematic Review,” *Journal of Sports Sciences* 38, no.14 (2020):1690-97, accessed May 17, 2023, <https://doi.org/10.1080/02640414.2020.1754739>.

⁵⁰³ “Risks of Physical Inactivity”, John Hopkins Medicine, accessed April 23, 2023, <https://www.hopkinsmedicine.org/health/conditions-and-diseases/risks-of-physical-inactivity>.

walking, raking leaves, active gardening, swimming laps, playing basketball, and running.⁵⁰⁴

Rest

Rest is one of the basic laws of nature: plants and animals need to rest regularly, and humans have a fundamental need to do so. Rest is generally considered a time of physical and mental renewal after a period of activity. It is obvious that humans require various types of rest. These types include daily rest (sleep), weekly rest, relaxation, and meditation.⁵⁰⁵

The human sleeping pattern follows the daily changes in nature. Without sleep humans can live for a maximum of 8-9 days.⁵⁰⁶ During sleep, our physical and mental functions are restored. Studies have shown that if a person loses their hours of sleep, the effectiveness of the immune system decreases by 50%.⁵⁰⁷ Sleep deprivation causes a significant change in immune function: antibody production is decreased, interleukin 1 and 2 do not reach the level that is observed in the time of deep sleep.⁵⁰⁸ Chronic

⁵⁰⁴ “Surgeon General’s Report on Physical Activity of Health,” *JAMA* 276, no. 7 (August 21, 1996): 522.

⁵⁰⁵ Neil Nedley suggests that there are four types of rest calling them R-vitamins. These are: daily rest, sleep (R1 vitamin), weekly rest (R2 vitamin), relaxation (R3 vitamin), meditation (R4 vitamin). See Nedley, *Proof Positive*, 485.

⁵⁰⁶ Dr Gáspár Róber, *Az egészség nyolc alapelve*, (Budapest: Olvasók Háza Kiadó és Reklámügynökség, 2012), 29.

⁵⁰⁷ J. Perl, *Sleep Right in Five Nights: A Clear and Effective Guide for Conquering Insomnia* (New York, NY: William Morrow and Company, Inc., 1993), 32.

⁵⁰⁸ H. Moldofsky, et al., “The Relationship of Interleukin-1 and Immune Functions to Sleep in Humans,” *Psychosomatic Medicine* 48, no. 5: (May-June 1986): 309-18, accessed May 17, 2023, <https://doi.org/10.1097/00006842-198605000-00001>.

fatigue, which often comes as a result, will increase the risk of heart disease, and stomach and intestinal complaints.⁵⁰⁹

There is a general agreement that 7-8 hours of sleep is needed for an average adult. Health educators have taught for a long time that the best time to sleep is before midnight. It was found that this is the time when the pineal gland produces the highest levels of melatonin (pineal gland function is regulated by light).⁵¹⁰ Studies also showed that sleep is closely connected to longevity.⁵¹¹ The consequences of inadequate sleep include irritability, memory loss, depression, lack of concentration, and a weakened immune system. In the US, 3.3 million people go to see a doctor because of insomnia.⁵¹²

For restful sleep, health educators suggest first finding an ideal place for restful daily sleep, which is a quiet, dark, well-ventilated bedroom. Second, it is better to go to bed with an empty stomach or at least 3 hours after eating. Third, sleep will be more helpful if someone goes to bed with a clear conscience, knowing that all the tasks planned have been completed and conflicts were resolved. Fourth, moderate physical activity before bedtime can also be helpful.⁵¹³ Avoiding mental stimulation before bedtime (TV programs, videos, internet, etc.) may also contribute to quality sleep.⁵¹⁴

⁵⁰⁹ J.M. Harrington, "Shift Work and Health—a Critical Review of the Literature on Working Hours," *Annals of the Academy of Medicine of Singapore* 23, no. 5 (Sep 1994): 699-705.

⁵¹⁰ Nedley, *Proof Positive*, 195.

⁵¹¹ Lester Breslow, James E. Enstrom, "Persistence of Health Habits and Their Relationship to Mortality," *Preventive Medicine* 9, no. 4 (July 1980): 469-483.

⁵¹² S. E. Radecki, S. A. Brunton, "Management of Insomnia in Office-based Practice. National Prevalence and Therapeutic Patterns," *Archives of family medicine* 2, no.11 (November 1993):1129-34, accessed may 17, 2023, <https://doi.org/10.1001/archfami.2.11.112>

⁵¹³ McNeilus, *God's Healing Way*, 26.

⁵¹⁴ J. Perl, *Sleep right in five nights*, 50-54, 105-266.

The weekly 6+1 time division used around the world is known to have Biblical origins. However, according to some experts, this rhythm is also built into our physiology.”⁵¹⁵ Though there were efforts to change this weekly cycle, especially during the French Revolution, these attempts never succeeded. One result was that mental hospitals became crowded.⁵¹⁶ According to Baldwin, the Sabbath is of special importance in this weekly cycle.⁵¹⁷

In one study, it was found that the relaxation response led to increased nitric oxide (NO) levels throughout the body. NO has been shown to have positive benefits on the body’s antibacterial, antiviral, and stress responses; it is also a potent vasodilator (which leads to dilation/expansion of blood vessels).⁵¹⁸ Other studies demonstrating the benefits of the relaxation response found in relation to genetic activity show that producing the relaxation response through various strategies will change the body’s gene activity/expression.⁵¹⁹

Temperance/Self-control

It seems like temperance/self-control has the broadest scope among the health laws, as it is applicable to all areas of life. One must be temperate in eating, exercise, sun-exposure, water intake, sleep. Either too much or too little of these things can lead to

⁵¹⁵ Véase Bernell Baldwin, “Seven-Day Rhythms,” *The Journal of Health and Healing* 9, no. 4 (1984): 3, 14.

⁵¹⁶ Nedley, *Proof Positive*, 54.

⁵¹⁷ Nedley, *Proof Positive*, 54.

⁵¹⁸ Jeffery A. et al., “Association Between Oxygen Consumption and Nitric Oxide Production During the Relaxation Response,” *Medical Science Monitor* 12, no. 1 (January 2006): CR1–CR10.

⁵¹⁹ H. Benson, W. Proctor, *Relaxation Revolution: The Science and Genetics of Mind Body Healing* (New York: Scribner, 2010), 55.

health problems. In addition, temperance is needed in activities like work, spending money, the use of social media, talking, sex etc.

Self-control is closely related to temperance. The lack of self-control leads to intemperance, which is the underlying cause of most addictions. Many of the NCDs, like obesity, cardiovascular diseases, diabetes, and cancer, seem to be closely associated with some form of intemperance.

Exercising restraint or control over one's emotions, desires, and passions is challenging. This is especially true in a world filled with constant stimulation to do the opposite. Our age is the „age of propaganda,” in which millions of people make their living by persuading others to buy a certain product or service.⁵²⁰

According to modern science, all passions trigger the same mechanism in the central nervous system, regardless of the type of passion (alcohol, drugs, tobacco, compulsive shopping, or gambling). In all cases, in a certain area of the brain called the “reward center” (nucleus accumbens), dopamine and endogenous opiates are released. The result is improved mood and satisfaction. However, this state lasts only for a short time. Next time, the same effect can be achieved only with a higher dose.⁵²¹

The use of caffeinated drinks is one of the most widespread addictions. Its harmful effects include anxiety, insomnia, digestive issues, muscle breakdown, high blood pressure, and fatigue.⁵²² Research showed that caffeine may be responsible for

⁵²⁰ Pratkanis and Aronson, *Age of Propaganda, The Everyday Use and Abuse of Persuasion* (New York and Oxford: W.H. Freeman and Company, 1992), 10.

⁵²¹ Dr. Gáspár Róber, *Az egészség nyolc alapelve*, 74.

⁵²² S. Ferré, “An Update on the Mechanisms of the Psychostimulant Effects of Caffeine,” *Journal of Neurochemistry* 105, no. 4 (May 2008): 1067-79, accessed May 17, <https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1471-4159.2007.05196.x>; E.J. Watson, et al., “Caffeine Consumption and Sleep Quality in Australian Adults,” *Nutrients* 4, no. 8 (August 2016):479, accessed May 11, 2023, <https://doi: 10.3390/nu8080479>; P.J.

different types of cancer: tumors of the kidneys, breast, pancreatic, ovarian, bladder, and colon.⁵²³ Theobromine found in chocolate and tea, even in small amounts, may double the risk of prostate cancer.

Drinking alcohol is among the major health risks causing mental and behavioral disorders, major NCDs like liver cirrhosis, some cancers, and cardiovascular disease.⁵²⁴

Total abstinence is recommended by WHO.⁵²⁵ Tobacco use is one of the main risk factors for cardiovascular and respiratory disease. Tobacco is also a risk factor for over 20 types of cancer. In 2022, approximately 22.3% of the global population aged 15 years and older use some form of tobacco.⁵²⁶

Boekema, M. Samsom, G.P. van Berge Henegouwen, A.J. Smout, "Coffee and Gastrointestinal Function: Facts and Fiction. A Review," *Scandinavian Journal of Gastroenterology. Supplement* 230 (1999): 35-9, accessed May 17, 2023, <https://doi.org/10.1080/00365529975002552>; P.S. Iyer R. et al., "A Remarkable Case of Rhabdomyolysis Associated with Ingestion of Energy Drink 'Neon Volt'", *Journal of Community Hospital Internal Medicine Perspectives* 26, no. 6 (October 2016):32528, accessed May 17, 2023, <https://doi.org/10.3402/jchimp.v6.32528>; N.P. Riksen, G.A. Rongen, P. Smits, "Acute and Long-term Cardiovascular Effects of Coffee: Implications for Coronary Heart Disease," *Pharmacology & Therapeutics* 121, no. 2 (February 2009):185-91. Accessed May 11, <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.pharmthera.2008.10.006>; W.W. Ishak, et al., "Energy Drinks: Psychological Effects and Impact on Well-being and Quality of Life-A Literature Review," *Innovations in Clinical Neuroscience*, 9, no. 1 (January 2012): 25-34.

⁵²³ W.J. Craig, "Caffeine Update: What's Brewing," in *Nutrition for the Nineties* (Eau Claire, MI: Golden Harvest Books, 1992) 286; B. MacMahon, et al., "Coffee and cancer of the pancreas," *The New England Journal of Medicine*, 304, no.11 (March 12, 1981):630-33, accessed May 11, <https://doi.org/10.1056/NEJM198103123041102>; D.A. Snowdon, R.L. Phillips, "Coffee Consumption and Risk of Fatal Cancers," *American Journal of Public Health* 74, no. 8 (August 1984):820-823, accessed May 11, 2023, <https://doi.org/10.2105/ajph.74.8.820>; J. E. Vena, et al., "Coffee, Cigarette Smoking, and Bladder Cancer in Western New York," *Annals of Epidemiology* 3, no. 6 (November 1993): 586-91, accessed May 11, 2023, [https://doi.org/10.1016/1047-2797\(93\)90079-j](https://doi.org/10.1016/1047-2797(93)90079-j); D.A. Snowdon, R.L. Phillips, "Coffee Consumption and Risk of Fatal Cancers," *American Journal of Public Health* 74, no. 8 (August 1984): 820-23, accessed May 11, 2023, <https://doi.org/10.2105/ajph.74.8.820>.

⁵²⁴ World Health Organization, *World Health Statistics 2022: Monitoring Health for the SDGs* (Geneva: World Health Organization, 2022) 48, accessed May 10, 2023, <https://www.who.int/data/gho/publications/world-health-statistics>.

⁵²⁵ H. Emblad, "Moderate drinking: serious warning by WHO specialists," *World Health Organization Press Release* (November 1, 1994).

⁵²⁶ World Health Organization, *World Health Statistics 2022*, 49.

Other forms of addictions, often called behavioral addictions include gambling, video game playing, eating disorders, sports and physical exercise, media use, sex addiction, pathological working, and compulsive criminal behavior.⁵²⁷

According to Elden M. Chalmers, to change bad habits includes the following steps: first, acting decisively by saying an emphatic no or a positive “I will do it!”; second, nipping the old impulse in the bud while it is still in the making, third, breaking the rhythm of a bad habit deliberately planning to substitute activities for those times when the old habit is most likely to gain victory, fourth replacing it with a new habit.⁵²⁸ Dr. Roy Baumeister found that self-control may be like a muscle: “Any regular act of self-control will gradually exercise your ‘muscle’ and make you stronger.”⁵²⁹

Faith and Trust

While the health laws discussed so far are concerned mainly with physical health, faith and trust point to mental health and social relationships. Faith is usually defined as belief and complete trust in and loyalty to God. Related terms include trust, religion, and spirituality.

⁵²⁷ Seyyed Salman Alavi, et al., “Behavioral Addiction versus Substance Addiction: Correspondence of Psychiatric and Psychological Views,” *International Journal of Preventive Medicine* 3, no. 4 (2012): 290-294.

⁵²⁸ Elden M. Chalmers, *Healing the Broken Brain* (Remnant Publications, 1998), 37-39. According to Encyclopedia Britannica “the Five methods are commonly used to break unwanted habits: the replacement of the old response with a new response—e.g., eating fruit instead of candy to satisfy a craving for sweetness; the repetition of the behaviour until fatigue or another unpleasant response takes over—e.g., being forced to smoke cigarettes until nauseated so that a repulsion for cigarettes replaces the desire to smoke; the change of environment to separate the individual from the stimulus that is prompting the response; the gradual introduction of the stimulus that is provoking the behaviour—e.g., overcoming a child’s fear of adult dogs by giving him a puppy; and punishment, which is probably the least effective method.” *Encyclopedia Britannica*, s.v. “habit,” accessed July 24, 2021, <https://www.britannica.com/topic/habit-behaviour>.

⁵²⁹ “Breaking Bad Habits Why It’s So Hard to Change,” National Institutes of Health, last modified January 2012, accessed April 23, 2023, <https://newsinhealth.nih.gov/2012/01/breaking-bad-habits>.

In our modern age, one must face several risk factors that affect one's mental state. First, it is obvious that modern man is exposed to too much stress. Second, the accelerated and often contaminated flow of information is also a negative factor contributing to depression, alienation, relationship problems, etc. In these areas, faith seems to have special therapeutic properties.

For a long time, it has been known that faith has numerous beneficial effects. First, faith is generally considered “a sign of emotional health since infancy.” It promotes positive emotions like happiness, hope, optimism, meaning and purpose, self-esteem, and positive character traits. Second, the moral guidance provided by religion is helpful in everyday problems. Third, faith can protect individuals from psychosomatic disorders acting as an effective stress reliever. Those involved in religion seem to have a better chance to cope with stress by exercising their faith through prayer. Fourth, it offers stability and vigor to those physically ill. Fifth, the extensive network of relationships existing in most religious groups may also provide protection.⁵³⁰

Scientific data suggest that religion improves mental health. Especially people with deeper religiosity/spirituality were found to have fewer cases of anxiety, depression, abuse, suicide attempts, and substance use. On the other hand they seem to have a better quality of life, better recovery from depression and improved psychiatric outcomes. Interestingly WHO considers religion and spirituality as very important indicators of “quality of life.”⁵³¹ Depression has been widely studied in relation to faith. A number of

⁵³⁰ Eleonora Papaleontiou - Louca, “Effects of Religion and Faith on Mental Health,” *New Ideas in Psychology*, 60 (2021): 100833, accessed May 19, 2023, <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.newideapsych.2020.100833>.

⁵³¹ L. Culliford, “Spirituality and Clinical Care. Spiritual Values and Skills are Increasingly Recognised as Necessary Aspects of Clinical Care,” *British Medical Journal* 325, (2002):1434-35.

studies examining the relationship with faith found negative association. In one meta-analysis, it was found that the out of 444 studies they reviewed, 61% showed negative association of faith with depression, and only 6% showed positive relationship, i.e. stronger faith went with less depression.⁵³²

Faith affects mental health through different mechanisms. First, it provides resources for coping with stress that may increase the frequency of positive emotions. For example, religion “provides an optimistic worldview that involves the existence of a personal transcendental force.” Second, religion usually sets rules and regulations about how to live life and how to relate to others. For example, religion may reduce the likelihood of divorce or separation. Third, most religions emphasize love, compassion, and altruistic acts. These behaviors also have the capability to relieve stress.⁵³³

Faith and religion seem to influence decisions about health and lifestyle. This influence is most evident in the effects of cigarette smoking. Studies found a convincing inverse relationship between smoking and religion.⁵³⁴ The level of exercise was found to

⁵³² H.G.Koenig, “Religion, Spirituality, and Health: The Research and Clinical Implications,” *ISRN Psychiatry* 2012 (Dec 16, 2012): 278730, accessed May 19, 2023, <https://doi.org/10.5402/2012/278730>.

⁵³³ Koenig, “Religion, spirituality, and health: the research and clinical implications,” 278730.

⁵³⁴ H. G. Koenig, et al., “The Relationship Between Religious Activities and Cigarette Smoking in Older Adults,” *Journals of Gerontology*, 53, no. 6, (November 1998): M426–M434, accessed July 10, 2023, <https://doi.org/10.1093/gerona/53A.6.M426>; T. N. Brown, et al., “Are Risk and Protective Factors for Substance Use Consistent Across Historical Time? National Data From the High School Classes of 1976 through 1997,” *Prevention Science*, 2, no. 1, (March 2001): 29-43, accessed July 10, <https://doi.org/10.1023/A:1010034912070>; M. A. Whooley, et al., “Religious Involvement and Cigarette Smoking in Young Adults: the CARDIA study,” *Archives of Internal Medicine*, 162, no. 14 (July 2002):1604–10; J. M. Nonnemaker, C. A. McNeely, R. W. Blum, “Public and Private Domains of Religiosity and Adolescent Health Risk Behaviors: Evidence from the National Longitudinal Study of Adolescent Health,” *Social Science and Medicine* 57, no. 11 (December 2003): 2049-54, accessed July 10, 2023, [https://doi.org/10.1016/s0277-9536\(03\)00096-0](https://doi.org/10.1016/s0277-9536(03)00096-0).

be higher in groups practicing religion.⁵³⁵ Research showed that those involved in religion tend to follow a healthier diet with an increased intake of fiber, green vegetables, fruit, and fish, low intake of snacks, processed food, and fat, regular vitamin intake, and frequent eating of breakfast.⁵³⁶ Several studies found significantly lower cholesterol levels among those being involved in religion.⁵³⁷

Evidence shows that “stress and negative emotions (depression, anxiety) have (1) adverse effects on psychological systems, (2) increased susceptibility to or worse outcomes from a wide range of physical illnesses, and (3) may shorten the lifespan.”⁵³⁸ It was found that those practicing religion have a lower risk of developing most of the

⁵³⁵ W. J. Strawbridge, et al., “Frequent Attendance at Religious Services and Mortality over 28 Years,” *American Journal of Public Health*, 87, no. 6 (June 1997): 957–961; A. Kraut, S. Melamed, D. Gofer, and P. Froom, “Effect of school age sports on leisure time physical activity in adults: the CORDIS study,” *Medicine and Science in Sports and Exercise*, 35, no. 12 (December 2003): 2038–2042, accessed July 10, 2023, <https://doi.org/10.1249/01.MSS.0000099087.96549.96>; R. F. Gillum, “Frequency of attendance at religious services and leisure-time physical activity in American women and men: the Third National Health and Nutrition Examination Survey,” *Annals of Behavioral Medicine*, 31, no. 1 (2006): 30–35.

⁵³⁶ J. M. Wallace and T. A. Forman, “Religion’s Role in Promoting Health and Reducing Risk Among American Youth,” *Health Education and Behavior* 25, no. 6 (December 1998): 721–741, accessed July 10, 2023, <https://doi:10.1177/109019819802500604>; C. L. Holt, et al., “The Role of Religiosity in Dietary Beliefs and Behaviors Among Urban African American Women,” *Cancer Control* 12, supplement 2 (2005) 84–90; T. Obisesan, et al., “Frequency of Attendance at Religious Services, Cardiovascular Disease, Metabolic Risk Factors and Dietary Intake in Americans: An Age-stratified Exploratory Analysis,” *International Journal of Psychiatry in Medicine* 36, no. 4 (2006): 435–48, accessed July 10, 2023, <https://doi.org/10.2190/9W22-00H1-362K-0279>; A. Hart Jr, et al., “The Relationship between the Social Environment within Religious Organizations and Intake of Fat Versus Fruits and Vegetables,” *Health Education and Behavior* 34, no. 3, (June 2007): 503–16, accessed July 10, <https://doi.org/10.1177/1090198106295916>.

⁵³⁷ Y. Friedlander, J. D. Kark, and Y. Stein, “Religious Observance and Plasma Lipids and Lipoproteins among 17-year-old Jewish Residents of Jerusalem,” *Preventive Medicine* 16, no. 1 (January 1987): 70–79, accessed July 10, 2023, [https://doi.org/10.1016/0091-7435\(87\)90007-7](https://doi.org/10.1016/0091-7435(87)90007-7); M. S. Beeri, et al., “Religious Education and Midlife Observance are Associated with Dementia Three Decades Later in Israeli Men,” *Journal of Clinical Epidemiology* 61, no. 11 (November 2008): 1161–68, Accessed July 10, 2023, <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jclinepi.2007.09.011>; M. Feinstein, et al., “Burden of Cardiovascular Risk Factors, Subclinical Atherosclerosis, and Incident Cardiovascular Events Across Dimensions of Religiosity: The Multi-ethnic Study of Atherosclerosis,” *Circulation*, 121, no. 5 (January 2010): 659–66, accessed July 10, 2023, <https://doi.org/10.1161/CIRCULATIONAHA.109.879973>.

⁵³⁸ Koenig, “Religion, Spirituality, and Health: The Research and Clinical Implications,” 278730.

NCDs like coronary heart disease, hypertension, dementia, and cancer. These people were also shown to have better immune and endocrine function.⁵³⁹ As for the correlation between religiosity and mortality, Koenig found that “considering the 63 methodologically most rigorous studies..., 47 (75%) found R/S (religion/spirituality) predicting greater longevity.”⁵⁴⁰

Conclusion

Reviewing the main health laws scientifically, one can draw several conclusions.

First, science has confirmed the relationship between lifestyle and general health. Various studies have shown how most NCDs are related to certain lifestyle factors, such as diet and exercise.

Second, we saw that the various lists of lifestyle factors, like “Alameda 7” and “Life Essential 8,” lifestyle habits promoted by AHS1, or habits of the “blue zones,” typically include diet, moderate exercise, rest, eating breakfast, and engagement in religion. When these factors are compared to the elements of health laws promoted by Ellen G. White and other contemporary health reformers, the similarities are striking.

At the end of this section, the question should be raised concerning Ellen G. White and her peers: From what source did they obtain their knowledge? If not from inspiration, from what else? Was it just a fluke? It is certain that in light of modern science, the laws of health should by no means be called outdated or old-fashioned.

⁵³⁹ Koenig, “Religion, Spirituality, and Health: The Research and Clinical Implications,” 278730.

⁵⁴⁰ Koenig, “Religion, Spirituality, and Health: The Research and Clinical Implications,” 278730.

CHAPTER 8

SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS

Seventh-day Adventists always put a special emphasis on health. Based on the Bible and the writings of Ellen G. White, they realized the importance of health preservation and the use of natural remedies. The Adventist philosophy on health can be narrowed down to a few simple laws or principles. The origin and nature of these health laws have been subjects of debate in the past 150 years, as some critics claimed that Ellen G. White borrowed most of her ideas on health. This study attempted to show what knowledge was available before the time of Ellen G. White and what her special contribution to that knowledge was.

Summary

Chapter 1 aimed to define the expression “the laws of health.” The term seems to be the major expression used by Ellen G. White. She used other expressions like “the laws of life,” “the laws of nature,” “natural law,” “physical law,” “health principles.” These terms indicate that health or sickness results from obedience or disobedience to these laws. She also clarified that violating the laws of nature is a sin against God—the author of the laws of nature. Therefore, these laws are as important as the Ten Commandments. It was also stated that she clearly differentiated between distinct habits as sin and certain habits with negative long-term effect.

The double nature of the health laws includes their preventive and curative properties. Obedience to these laws brings about their preventive qualities. These health laws act as God's physicians, doctors, or remedies when the disease is present. She identified some items related to these laws in her earliest writings, such as the use of tobacco, caffeinated tea, coffee, diet, flesh food, pure air, and light. In her various lists, she mentioned at least 13 different items that can be classified as health laws: pure air, sunlight, abstemiousness, rest, exercise, proper diet, the use of water, trust in divine power, cleanliness, clean premises, purity in life, proper dress, a clear conscience, beautiful surroundings of nature. The most remarkable list appears in the book *Ministry of Healing*, which contains eight elements.

Chapter 2 examined what Ellen G. White had to say about the individual laws/remedies. Here, the focus was on the importance, the effects, and possible results of violation, as well as some practical aspects. It was found that she did not stress all of these laws to the same extent. She put special emphasis on diet, temperance, cleanliness, and water. As a health principle, trust is also discussed extensively in her writings.

She recommended a plant-based, whole-food diet consisting of grains, fruits, nuts, and vegetables. She did not condemn dairy products and eggs as inherently bad. She stressed simplicity, natural preparation methods, fasting, and gradual changes. As for water, she stressed both its internal and external use. She called it "a beverage provided by God," which invigorates the vital organs. When used externally, it regulates circulation, eliminates impurities, and soothes the nerves. Air and sunlight often appear at the beginning of her lists of health laws. She called air "food for lungs." As for exercise and rest, she stressed that action is a law of the human body. According to her, rest

should not be complete inactivity. Temperance has two aspects: first, abstaining entirely from what is injurious; second, using judiciously that which is healthful. She presented trust in divine power as a key theological tenet in which true religion and health are closely connected. Thus, all healing power comes from God. Cleanliness and dress have two aspects, physical and spiritual, and they are also linked to orderliness.

Chapter 3 discusses what the Bible says about health, healing, and health laws. The Bible presents God as the ultimate source of health and wholeness. As for the origin of diseases, one can make several points: first, God created a perfect world without diseases; second, sickness came as a result of the Fall; third, Satan is the originator of all diseases; fourth, humans have their responsibility; fifth, sickness can be a disciplinary measure.

The Bible clearly states that health depends on obedience to certain laws. God laid down several health laws, some of which are found in the Book of Genesis. God created the atmosphere, the hydrosphere, and the solar system and gave regulations regarding the ideal diet, rest, and exercise.

In the Bible, temperance seems to be a central health law. The OT and NT contain numerous biographies in which temperance was a vital issue. The Pauline letters use specific terms to denote temperance, showing its different aspects: self-denial, self-control, and sobriety. In relation to that, the Bible puts a special emphasis on the issue of how alcohol affects moral discernment. Although it is primarily a theological issue, trust in God is shown to be a healing agent, a tool to live by that opens the way to God's wonder-working power. Both the OT and NT emphasize cleanliness and purity, pointing out its physical, moral, and spiritual aspects.

Chapter 4 focused on the development of different concepts of health in history. I found that in ancient times, different civilizations had ways to prevent diseases. Hippocrates, Aristotle, and Galen came up with ideas on how to avoid disease. Galen seems to be the first one coming up with different categories of health. In medieval times, Galen's concept was developed into the formulation of "non-naturals," which remained the basis of medical thinking until the early modern period. In the early modern period, names like Luigi Cornaro, Paracelsus, Joseph Hahn, and Theodore de Bordeau stood out. In nineteenth-century Europe, Sir John Sinclair, Joseph Ritson, Vicenz Pressnitz, and Sebastian Kneipp contributed to popularizing health laws and natural remedies.

In nineteenth-century USA, the unhealthy lifestyle practices and the decline in public health called for reforms. Several reform movements emerged whose main figures promoting health reforms included Benjamin Waterhouse, R. Duglison, Sylvester Graham, William Alcott, Joel Shew, R. T. Trall, and Caleb C. Jackson as key figures. The first health reformers in the Advent Movement included L. Coles, Joseph Bates, James and Ellen White. It was found that the visions of Ellen G. White did not present an entirely new light; rather, they served to give divine approval of health reform and to provide a clear source for truth in matters of health and lifestyle.

Chapter 5 presented a precise comparison between the writings of contemporary health reformers and the works of Ellen G. White. It was found that they generally agreed with each other and used similar terminology like "the laws of life" and "the law of health." However, there were cases when Ellen G. White disagreed with some of their ideas or emphasized something others did not. These health reformers generally recommended a predominantly plant-based diet, but they differed on the issue of how

much animal product is still acceptable. They also promoted the use of whole wheat. Ellen G. White generally agreed with their ideas but opposed them regarding the salt issue.

Health reformers generally encouraged the use of water, including its internal and external uses. They also emphasized breathing, pure air, and exercise, recommending walking or other forms of exercise and dancing. Ellen G. White agreed, except she never promoted dancing. Both the contemporary health reformers and Ellen G. White promoted sleep as the primary form of rest, encouraging one to get a considerable portion of sleep before midnight. They recognized that sleep was closely connected to longevity. In the writings of Ellen G. White, rest has a broader aspect, and it is closely related to the 4th commandment. As for temperance, both the health reformers and Ellen G. White generally opposed the use of tobacco, tea, coffee, opium, and alcohol. Many emphasized the issues of cleanliness, dress, purity, and the use of soap. According to Graham, the use of clothing was unnatural.

Chapter 5 also dealt with the critics of Ellen G. White. One must acknowledge that when comparing the writings of Ellen G. White with those of other contemporary health reformers, some similarities are apparent. However, the critics seem to ignore the striking differences in some areas. She maintained she did not use the writings of others before putting down her views. Later, she not only read some of their writings but even published the writings of others. R. Numbers, J.C. Worthon, and R.J. Davis criticized Ellen G. White stating that she borrowed most of her ideas without credit. However, McMahon's analysis showed that her 1863 vision cannot be the summary of what she

read previously. A great knowledge base and inspiration were needed to put down her original ideas and select valid and true ones.

Chapter 6 focuses on the relevance of health laws in light of modern science. As one looks at the public health figures, it is clear that the situation is serious. Many people die as a result of lifestyle-related diseases. The link between lifestyle and life expectancy was first researched extensively by N. Belloc and L Breslow. Their findings became well-known as Alameda 7, consisting of 7 factors. These include avoiding smoking, drinking moderately, sleeping 7-8 hours, exercising regularly, maintaining normal weight, avoiding snacks, and eating breakfast. Later, the American Heart Association came up with similar suggestions. These findings were also confirmed by the Adventist Health Study 1.

Reviewing specific health laws, recent nutritional research revealed that a whole-food, plant-based diet helps prevent and reverse many diseases. Water acts like a natural blood thinner, reducing the risk of heart attack, stroke, and kidney and bile stones. In addition, it helps to prevent joint degeneration. Sunshine has many preventive and curative effects, including a significant antihypertensive and cholesterol-lowering effect. Air has numerous benefits. Exercise strengthens the bones and muscles and promotes cardiovascular health. Rest helps with the renewal of the body and soul. It is suggested that one should sleep at least 7-8 hours. It was shown that NCDs are connected to some form of intemperance. This study also found that faith and trust were shown to have beneficial effects like improving positive emotions, providing moral guidance, and promoting mental health.

Conclusions

This section presents the conclusions of this study with some suggestions for further research in various areas.

1. The concept of the laws of health can be viewed as fundamental in Ellen G. White's health-related writings. They also provided the backbone of what is today called the Adventist health message.

The 13 laws this study identified have a broad scope covering most areas of spiritual and physical life. However, individual laws differ from each other in terms of their nature, scope, and magnitude. When one compares her system of health laws with different lists, none of them has this comprehensive approach. Faith/trust was especially a new element. In Adventism, the expression “the eight laws of health” became popular, focusing on diet, water, sunlight, air, exercise, rest, temperance, and trust. However, a good health program should also emphasize cleanliness, proper dress, and the beautiful surroundings of nature.

One can also note that for Ellen G. White, these health laws mean more than suggestions or recommendations. For her, these laws are strongly connected to the moral law. Thus, obedience to these health laws is not only a health question but also a serious moral issue. This is something that should be emphasized within and outside the Adventist church.

Her health visions and writings provided a pure source in matters of health and lifestyle for the developing Seventh-day Adventist movement. She remarkably emphasized the far-reaching effects of nutrition, even promoting a predominantly plant-based diet. She linked some of these laws, emphasizing their combined effects, thus

providing a unique systemic view in which each element is essential. Therefore, she also highlighted a synergistic relationship between them.

2. Health and healing are among the main theological concepts in the Bible. The health laws presented by Ellen G. White and other health reformers have their source in the Bible. Sadly, the issue of health has been largely neglected or overlooked in classical theology. Researching the philosophy of health as presented in the Bible would be desirable.

The Biblical promise of the final restoration of health and resurrection has the potential to provide comfort for many people with depression or other mental problems. This promise, together with its conditions, would also deserve a greater emphasis in theology.

3. It is remarkable how many people throughout history dealt with the laws of health. Although they had some errors in their thinking, the basic ideas seemed to be sound and balanced. Their lives and works are far from being well-known in the modern world. For many people, lifestyle, fitness, and health preservation appear to be modern terms, whereas these concepts were known at least to some throughout history. Books on lifestyle medicine often forget about the pioneers of lifestyle promotion like Graham, Alcott, Shew, Trall, etc. Thus, more extensive research on the history and background of nineteenth-century health movements should be encouraged.

4. The comparison of the writings of the nineteenth century health reformers with those of Ellen G. White shows many similarities which serve as a basis to criticize and discredit her as a prophet. This thesis has attempted to provide some explanations and counterarguments.

First, the critics forget that these similarities can be explained by the fact that they all lived in the same age and used the same terminology.

Second, the comparison suggested that these reformers often borrowed ideas from each other without credit. None of them wanted to monopolize the knowledge base that was created throughout centuries. If Ellen G. White had borrowed any ideas from this existing knowledge base, it is remarkable that she had never used any of the erroneous ideas that were present. If nothing else, this required a great deal of inspiration.

Third, the fact that some of her ideas were present decades or centuries before she presented them does not necessarily mean they did not come from divine inspiration. In the Bible, we see many examples of prophets using the ideas of previous prophets or even non-inspired sources. Inspiration often uses existing sources or common sense of the people to produce a new and error-free guideline for God's people to prepare for a higher life.

Fourth, critics forget that for Ellen G. White, health was not a goal itself. It instead served as a tool for character formation and the mission of the church.

5. Rather than seeing nineteenth-century health reformers as having invented their ideas and trying to sort out carefully which idea belonged to which reformer and then who borrowed from whom, the whole history can be seen with a slightly different perspective. The entire program of ideal health is a reality that exists independently of any individual human. It is a system that has existed since the time of creation. It can be discovered by man but not invented. Only God can be considered to have invented this system. Unlike the laws of physics, this system was so important for man to know that

was communicated to him at the time of his creation. It is because of this that it can be called “truth.”

With this background, one can see the progressive understanding of health practices as a discovery by man of a system already present in antiquity. It was lost somewhat by man’s living by impulses rather than clear thinking and careful preservation of truth. Humans recovered this understanding through discovery and revelation from God. The names of the humans involved in this recovery are of interest—when detailed points appeared accompanied by interchange of ideas and practices.

One should try to have that history accurate. However, to see each point discovered as a possession of the first to have written about it is a misguided attitude, though often present in egoistical or egocentric humans. Instead, the 1800s were alive with the excitement of discovery, and this reality of human health was promoted and restored. Like a conference in science, there are ideas in the air, some of which are seen by most or all involved. Different individuals would see far-reaching ideas and details, but all would sense that there is a whole system that they were gradually discovering and sharing.

One would expect that if there were any direct revelation from God, it would give a broader view of the whole system and how it relates to all of human life and God's plan for man. This is what Adventists find in the health writings of Ellen G. White.

6. Scientific data suggest that the health principles promoted by Ellen G. White and other health reformers are surprisingly sound and accurate. Modern health science is in the process of rediscovering these old ideas. Research has clearly shown that many of the modern NCDs are lifestyle-related problems.

It is good news that the use of these health laws for prevention or cure has become a medical specialty under the name “lifestyle medicine.” This “new” method uses lifestyle intervention to treat NCDs. Today, more and more lifestyle medicine-certified doctors are available for those interested in this healing method.⁵⁴¹

The findings of this thesis suggest that the health laws, often called “the eight laws of health or the NEWSTART program, did not lose any relevance. This approach is more relevant than ever and can potentially save the lives of millions. There is no question that its proclamation in written or spoken form should be listed among the first duties of all Seventh-day Adventists worldwide.

⁵⁴¹ For more information see the website of *The American College of Lifestyle Medicine*, <https://lifestylemedicine.org/>

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