



FOLLOWERS OF CHRIST WILL BE MISSIONARIES

Ellen G. White

Those who love Christ will be imbued with the Holy Spirit, and whether they be at home or afar off, they will do missionary work. It is essential to devise plans, to advance money for the progress of the cause of God, but even more than this is required. Personal effort must be put forth to interest souls in the church, to attract the children and the youth. Missionaries must visit families, and become acquainted with every member of the home circle, so working that they will awaken an interest in everyone to love the truth. This kind of work will not be in vain but will leave results that will be as lasting as eternity. This is true home missionary work.

At present there is not the interest that should be manifested toward those for whom Christ died. The youth are passed by, and because no one seems to have an interest in them, they become reckless and irreligious. Those who love God ought to feed both the sheep and the lambs. They are God's agents to do

this very work. With busy hands, with sensitive hearts, with tongues that are as the pen of a ready writer, they are to win the unconcerned and unbelieving, and inspire their brethren and sisters with a missionary spirit. They are not to say "go on," but "come on." As yet not one hundredth part of the efforts that should be made have been made in our large cities to diffuse the light of truth, yet the Lord holds the church accountable for the souls of those who are in darkness, who have not yet heard the warning message.

There is altogether too much self-indulgence, too much investing of money in houses, in adornments, in buying unnecessary things for display; and souls are perishing out of Christ. Men, women, and youth, according to their capacity, should be engaged in some part of the Lord's vineyard. Now is our time and opportunity; we are now in the midst of our God-given probation, in which we are to develop character after Christ's order.

A mere profession of faith does not make us Christians. The vital question is, Have we the mind of Christ? Our Heavenly Father gave Christ to our world as a sin-bearer, in order that he who would believe in Him should not perish, but have everlasting life. Having made so priceless a donation to men, will He not with Christ freely give us all things? In the gift

of His Son, all heaven was opened up, that its priceless treasures might enrich men and women of faith. The love of God has been revealed to the hearts of believers, that they should diffuse the light of heaven, and not spend their time and money in lands and their cultivation, and in taking pleasure in the things which their imaginations might picture as being desirable, as did the inhabitants of the Noachic world.

Let every believer act his faith, and thus give a testimony to the unbelieving world that he does believe that the end of all things is at hand. "Ye are My witnesses, saith the Lord." Isaiah 32:10. Self is not to figure so largely in the plans of those who claim to believe the truth. The truth for this time is a testing truth, which should stimulate the mind, purify the soul, and sanctify the desires. Its reality should be demonstrated in saving those who are perishing out of Christ. God's work is to be done in His way and His Spirit. In various places, small companies are to consecrate themselves to God, body, soul, and spirit; and laying hold of the throne of God by faith they are to work zealously, keeping their souls in the love of God. The vital current of His love will make itself felt, and will be recognized as from heaven in the good works of His people. Those little companies who know the truth, with one voice should bid their minister go to the lost sheep of the house of Israel. Each one should seek to do individual work for another. Not one who has tasted the goodness, the mercy, and the love of God, can be excused from working for the souls of others.

What a large amount of the talents that God has given to His people are now bound up and buried in the earth; but



let every slothful man, woman, or youth who is not employing his talents by putting them out to the exchangers, remember that he will lose the precious treasure, God's gift to him. Talents that are not improved by men will be taken from them, and given to those who will make use of the heaven-entrusted capability. The people of God should realize the fact that God has not given them talents for the purpose of enriching themselves with earthly goods, but in order that they may lay up in store a good foundation against the time to come, even for eternal life.

Let the churches say to those who preach the word: "Go into the cities and villages, and preach the warning. You are God's watchmen on the walls of Zion, and however much we should be gratified to have your labors, we shall not hold you with us. We shall draw for ourselves from the treasure house of heaven by living faith. We shall not take



upon ourselves the work of sermonizing, but we will fear God and serve Him, and speak often one to another. Not one of us shall be guilty of seeking the supremacy, or of cherishing a burning zeal for speechifying; but in humility of mind, we shall speak often one to another of our individual experiences in our daily life, and shall present the precious things we have found in the word of God by digging for it as for hidden treasure. We shall work in simplicity, and shall pray much, that as sharp sickles our prayers may follow God's delegated sowers and reapers as they go forth into the harvest field."

In this kind of work the church will flourish in the Lord. They will have a growing experience in learning how to work, and how to honor God with their self-denial, gifts, and offerings. They will learn how to help those who

are weak, and lame, and deficient. By being witnesses for Christ, by their example in the faithful discharge of every duty, making manifest the fact that they are good servants, serving the Lord in singleness of heart, they will reveal to all that they are living out the truth which they profess to believe. In letting their light shine in the home missionary work, they will accomplish great results. Their earnest zeal will encourage the messenger for God as he labors for the conversion of sinners, proclaiming to the unbelieving men, women, youth, and children to escape from the wrath of God that is coming upon all who do not love and obey the truth. Will not the large and small churches awake to their God-given responsibilities? Will they not love God in deed and in truth and their fellowmen as themselves? Will not they open the door of their hearts

to Jesus, that He may come in and abide with them, and as a heavenly guest accompany them wherever they shall go, that they may introduce Him to others? Shall not the people of God show forth the praises of Him who has called them out of darkness into His marvelous light! To

be a child of God means to be perfectly obedient to His words, to learn of Christ, and to teach others that which you have been taught. To be a child of God means to be constantly receiving grace, and constantly imparting it to others. You will then understand what these words mean, "grace for grace..."

The Lord is coming in a little while, and are we performing the duties that result from righteousness? Love is the basis of godliness. No man has love to God, no matter what his profession may be, unless he has unselfish love for his brother. As we love God because He first loved us, we shall love all for whom Christ died. We shall not feel like letting the soul who is in the greatest peril and in the greatest need, go unlabored for and uncared for. —Review and Herald, January 8, 1895.

EVENTS

NORTHEASTERN FIELD MINI-CONFERENCE

Friday, May 10,
to Sunday, May 12, 2024
Boston, Massachusetts

SOUTHEASTERN FIELD CONFERENCE

Friday, June 28,
to Sunday, June 30, 2024
Norman Park, Georgia

AMERICAN UNION YOUTH CONFERENCE

Monday, July 1,
to Sunday, July 7, 2024
Norman Park, Georgia

NORTHEASTERN FIELD CONFERENCE

Friday, August 30,
to Monday, September 2, 2024
Location to be determined

AMERICAN UNION WORKERS' SEMINAR

Tuesday, October 22,
to Sunday, October 27, 2024
Norman Park, Georgia

AMERICAN UNION CONFERENCE

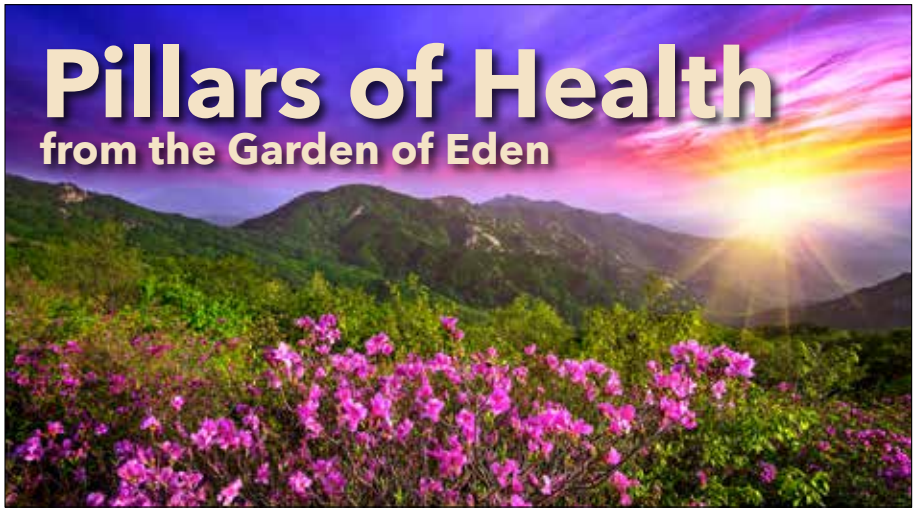
Friday, December 20,
to Monday, December 23, 2024
Norman Park, Georgia

AMERICAN UNION DELEGATES' MEETINGS

Tuesday, December 24, 2024,
to Wednesday, December 25, 2024
Norman Park, Georgia

Pillars of Health

from the Garden of Eden



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A search for Biblical counsel concerning good health begins with Genesis 1:29. God spoke the following words Himself, explaining what He created for mankind's well-being: "Behold, I have given you every herb bearing seed, which is upon the face of all the earth, and every tree, in the which is the fruit of a tree yielding seed; to you it shall be for meat." In addition to food, He erected four pillars for optimal health: (1) a personal relationship between Him and every person, (2) mutual care for one another; (3) appropriate physical labor or activity; and (4) proper rest. Let us look at these four pillars and then consider good food at the end as number 5.

1. Man's relationship with God

Before the fall, Adam and Eve enjoyed direct communion with God. After they sinned, they tried to hide, because they knew that God was coming to see them. "And they heard the voice of the Lord God walking in the garden in the cool of the day: and Adam and his wife hid



themselves from the presence of the Lord God amongst the trees of the garden." Genesis 3:8. God came, as they expected. He had to take the initiative and did more than just look for them; He called Adam by name and gave him the opportunity to respond, for He respected man's free will. The consequence for the first pair was banishment from the garden. They lost the face-to-face interaction with their Creator. The plan of salvation, which was already in place, was now needed to reconcile the human race with God the Creator.

You may wonder how a relationship with God affects a person's health. In stories about Christians who were imprisoned for their faith in different places and at various times, we read that their faith in God was what kept them alive and helped them to survive. In everyday circumstances, men and women of faith have experienced more favorable outcomes when they suffered trauma or illness. Faith and the relationship with God are strengthened by daily devotion and prayer. Trusting God and being at peace in whatever circumstances we may find ourselves go a long way to recover and preserve sound health.

"What? know ye not that your body is the temple of the Holy Ghost which is in you, which ye have of God, and ye are not your own? For ye are bought with a price: therefore glorify God in your body, and in your spirit, which are God's." 1 Corinthians 6:19, 20.

2. Human connections—am I my brother's keeper?

Yes, you are. In the very first command that God gave, He "blessed them, and ... said unto them, Be fruitful, and multi-

ply, and replenish the earth,..." Genesis 1:28. God did not create just one couple; He created a potential community, a society. Researchers who study health habits and longevity among different groups all over the world observe the beneficial effects of strong social connections. Being socially well connected inspires us to guard our own health and help those around us who have health challenges. Christians have the added bonus of fellowship with one another, grounded in a common belief system to bring glory to their Creator. Jesus is said to have spent more time healing than preaching. Why did He do this? It was not only for physical healing, but also for spiritual healing. The Saviour supplies an eternal perspective in all things. Early Christians followed His example and from the beginning were engaged in caring for the abandoned, sick, and disenfranchised, often at great risk to themselves, long before Christi-



anity was legal. Then they established hospitals, orphanages, and other charitable institutions as soon as Christianity became a legal religion in the fourth century after Christ.

"And the King shall answer and say unto them, Verily I say unto you, Inasmuch as ye have done it unto one of the least of these My brethren, ye have done it unto Me." Matthew 25:40.

3. Work and activity

At the beginning, human beings were expected to learn to access the seeds of different kinds of fruit and vegetables and to cultivate them. Man was given the responsibility to exercise good stewardship over all the earthly provisions—to cultivate not only the soil, but also a charitable spirit.

"And God blessed them, and God said unto them, Be fruitful, and multiply, and replenish the earth, and subdue it: and have dominion over the fish of the sea, and over the fowl of the air, and over every living thing that moveth upon the earth." "And the Lord God took the

man, and put him into the garden of Eden to dress it and to keep it." Genesis 1:28; 2:15.

Created in the image of God, man was given the privilege of procreation, to fill the earth with people who were to care for the earth as the Creator's representatives. Immediately after he was created, the first man had a God-given purpose. He was placed in the Garden of Eden with a job to do, with a mission to work. Paradise would be maintained in cooperation with its Creator. Logically, God did not need to structure the world in this way. He could have created a world that was fully self-sustaining. He



could have made human beings simply to live in luxury and enjoy the creation without ever having to contribute anything. But that was not God's design even before sin entered the world.

Prior to the fall, Adam's work was quite simple and straightforward. By contrast, after the fall, man had to work "by the sweat of his brow," to take care of a fallen earth. But God did not abandon him. Then, as well as now, those who had fellowship with God through faith in Christ enjoyed purposeful work for the benefit of their families and the heavenly kingdom.

The apostle Paul wrote in Ephesians 2:10, "For we are His workmanship, created in Christ Jesus unto good works, which God hath before ordained that we should walk in them."

4. Sleep and rest

At the beginning of the creation week, God separated light from darkness. The account of each day of the creation ended with the phrase, "And there was evening and there was morning." Genesis 1:3, *Revised Standard Version*. While one does not find that God specifically instructed the first couple to go to rest early and to get a good night's sleep, there was already a definite concept of sleep when God created Eve. "And the Lord God caused a deep sleep to fall



upon Adam." Genesis 2:21. Research shows overwhelmingly that a regular bedtime benefits all aspects of personal health, and the hours before midnight are the most important.

In addition, God created the Sabbath as a day of rest and refreshment. The seventh day was set apart from all of the other days of the week as holy, as a memorial—a constant reminder to enjoy God's work of creation with grateful hearts. How wonderful it is to be blessed by the regular cycle of rest from labor; the Sabbath is truly a priceless gift. Although many ancient cultures observed rest days, only the Bible records a weekly holy Sabbath day.

5. Good food

As mentioned in the beginning paragraph, at the time of creation, God provided the first parents with a plant-based diet. Today, many nutrition "experts" promote a wide variety of diets, often with conflicting information. Sadly, modern agricultural practices cause the nutritional value of food to



be greatly reduced. These include the soil being depleted and also contaminated by chemicals all over the world; food being transported over long distances as a part of international trade; and produce being harvested before it becomes ripe and then chemically treated to keep it from spoiling quickly. As much as possible, it is important to eat whole organic, unprocessed food; to avoid excessive sugar, salt, and hydrogenated oils; and to have one's own homegrown garden.

Conclusion

The first two of the pillars of health mentioned at the beginning (one's personal relationship with God and others) correspond to the two commandments that Jesus stated when He was challenged by a lawyer who asked what the greatest commandment was. "Master, which is the great commandment in the law? Jesus said unto him, Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind. This is the first and great commandment. And the second is like unto it, Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself. On these two commandments hang all the law and the prophets." Matthew 22:36-40.

Like the first two pillars, the last three pillars of health (work, rest, and nutrition) are under constant attack by the modern way of life. Time constraints and advertising tempt everyone to eat quick, cheap, easy, highly processed food. Especially in the cities, people lead such sedentary lives that it becomes necessary to schedule physical activity that is important for sound health. And then, day-and-night artificial light and technology lead to poor sleep hygiene and deprivation. Good health requires discipline. In the best way that we possibly can, let us try to incorporate the five pillars of health into our everyday lives.

Let us make an honest assessment of how we are living by the basic principles that were created for everyone at the beginning to preserve and improve health. We will thus for the gracious God who gave those principles. He is helping everyone. The pillars of health are everlasting, as can be seen in Revelation 22:1, 2. "And he shewed me a pure river of water of life, clear as crystal, proceeding out of the throne of God and of the Lamb. In the midst of the street of it, and on either side of the river, was there the tree of life, which bare twelve manner of fruits, and yielded her fruit every month: and the leaves of the tree were for the healing of the nations."

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