

## Ellen G. White 1870 Manuscripts

### Ms 2, 1870

#### Activity a Blessing

[First part missing.] ... The do-nothing system is a dangerous one in any case. The idea that those who have overtaxed their mental and physical powers, or who have broken down in body and mind, must suspend activity in order to regain health, is a great error. There are cases where entire rest for a time will ward off serious illness; but in the case of confirmed invalids it is seldom necessary.

Those who have broken down by intense mental labor should have rest from wearing thought. Yet to teach them that it is wrong, or even dangerous, for them to exercise their mental powers at all, leads them to think their condition worse than it really is. They are nervous, and are in danger of becoming a burden to themselves, as well as to those who care for them. In this state of mind, their recovery is doubtful indeed.

Those who have overtaxed their physical powers should not be advised to forego manual labor entirely. To shut them away from all exercise would in many cases be a positive injury.

When invalids have nothing to occupy their time and attention, their thoughts become centered upon themselves, and they grow morbid and irritable. Many times they dwell upon their bad feelings until they think themselves much worse than they really are and utterly unable to do anything. There are some of these invalids whose minds and imaginations have become diseased through immoral habits.

In all these cases, well-directed physical exercise, using the strength, but not abusing it, would prove an effective remedial agent, and in some it is indispensable to the recovery of health. The will goes with the labor of the hands; and what these invalids need is to have the will aroused. When the will power is dormant, the imagination becomes dormant, and it is impossible to resist disease.

Inactivity is the greatest curse that could come upon most invalids. This is especially true of those whose troubles have been caused or aggravated by impure practices. Light employment in the direction of useful labor, while it does not tax mind or body, has a happy influence upon both. It strengthens the muscles, improves the circulation, and gives the invalid the satisfaction of knowing that he is not wholly useless in this busy world. He may be able to do but little at first, but he will soon find his strength increasing, and the amount of work done can be increased accordingly.

Physicians often advise their patients to take an ocean voyage, to go to some mineral spring, or to visit different places for change of climate in order to regain health, when in nine cases out of ten, if they would eat temperately, and take cheerful, healthful exercise, they would become well, and would save time and money.

Exercise aids the dyspeptic by giving the digestive organs a healthy tone. To engage in deep study or violent physical exercise immediately after eating, hinders the digestive process, for the vital force, which is needed to carry on the work of digestion, is called away to other parts. But a short walk after a meal, with the head erect and the shoulders back, exercising moderately, is a great benefit. The mind is diverted from self to the beauties of nature. The less the attention is called to the stomach the better. If you are in constant fear that your food will hurt you, it most assuredly will. Forget your troubles; think of something cheerful.

More people die for want of exercise than from overwork; very many more rust out than wear out. Exercise quickens and equalizes the circulation. In idleness the blood does not circulate freely and the changes in the vital fluid, so necessary to health and life, do not take place. The little mouths in the skin, through which the body breathes, become clogged, thus making it impossible to eliminate impurities through that channel. This throws a double burden upon the other excretory organs, and disease is soon produced. Those who accustom themselves to working in the open air generally have a vigorous circulation. Men or women, young or old, who desire health and would enjoy life, should remember that they cannot have these blessings without a good circulation. Whatever their business or inclinations, they should feel it a religious duty to take as much exercise in the open air as possible.

Many have suffered from severe mental taxation, unrelieved by physical exercise. Ministers, teachers, students, and other brain workers do not become as intelligent as they should in regard to this matter. Often they neglect to take fresh air and exercise, forgetting that in order to have healthy bodies they must not allow any of the physical organs to rust from disuse.

When the mind is continually taxed with study, and the body is allowed to be inactive, the nerves of emotion are excited, while those of motion are not called into exercise. The mental organs are enfeebled through overwork, and the muscles through lack of employment. There is no inclination to exercise; exertion seems to be irksome. And God is presented with a lame offering, for the mind can do only a limited amount of work, compared with what it would be capable of doing, were every part of the living machinery in good working order. What these persons need is a more active life. Physical exercise, a diversion from mental effort, would draw the blood from the brain. Strictly temperate habits, combined with proper exercise, would insure both mental and physical vigor, and give power of endurance to all brain workers.

It is not the aged alone who neglect exercise; men young in years fall into the same state of physical inactivity. Some grow corpulent, because the system is clogged. Others become thin and feeble because their vital powers are exhausted in throwing off the excess of food. The liver is burdened in its efforts to cleanse the blood of impurities, and sickness is the result.

Those whose habits are sedentary, should, when the weather will permit, walk out in the open air every day, summer or winter. The clothing should be suitable, and the feet well protected. Walking is often more beneficial to health than all the medicine that can be prescribed. For those who can endure it, walking is preferable to ... [Remainder missing.]