

## FOOD FOR THE MIND

“The mind controls the whole man.... All the physical organs are the servants of the mind, and the nerves are the messengers that transmit its orders to every part of the body, guiding the motions of the living machinery.” {FE 426}

As christians, we're called to be especially mindful of our minds; to protect them from evil, and nourish them by living in obedience with the eight laws of health. For “it is the mind that worships God and allies us to heavenly beings.” {FE 426} Indeed, the health of our minds lies in our hands; the good foods we eat, the rest we take, the positive thoughts we encourage, and the exercise we perform each correspond to positive brain health, with impacts reaching as far as the minds of our children and grandchildren.

“The brain is the organ and instrument of the mind”. Sister White repeatedly associates brain health with the purity of the blood. She states: “if by correct habits of eating and drinking the blood is kept pure, the brain will be properly nourished”. {CH 586-587} With this in mind, an unhealthy diet becomes a most critical concern. Are we not to protect the only channel by which we're to maintain our vital connection with the Creator?

Interestingly, Sister White points to indulgence of appetite as “the greatest cause of physical and mental debility” and that which “lies at the foundation of the feebleness which is apparent everywhere.” {3T 497} For by failing to properly feed our minds ourselves, Satan instead, “through appetite...controls the mind and the whole being.” And thus, “thousands who might have lived have passed into the grave, physical, mental, and moral wrecks, because they sacrificed all their powers to the indulgence of appetite.” {CD 167}

Even worldly professors acknowledge the distinct correlation between food and brain function. Professor Fernando Gómez-Pinilla, from UCLA writes:



“Diet, exercise and sleep have the potential to alter our brain health and mental function. This raises the exciting possibility that changes in diet are a viable strategy for enhancing cognitive abilities, protecting the brain from damage and counteracting the effects of ageing.”

One of the most crucial nutrients for brain health, as Gómez-Pinilla brings out in his study, are Omega 3 fatty acids. These acids - found in flax seeds, chia seeds, hemp seeds, winter squash, leafy greens, and cabbages - “support synaptic plasticity and seem to positively affect the expression of several molecules related to learning and memory that are found on synapses.”

Deficiencies in Omega 3 are linked with memory loss, as well as a multitude of mental illnesses. Yet like Sister White, Gómez-Pinilla also notes the negative impact of over-eating on the brain. He refers to one study conducted on 300 Swedish families whose birth, death and health records were chartered for over 100 years. The study revealed that if one's grandparents grew up with an abundance of food, rather than suffering from a food shortage, their risk of diabetes and early death increased. Thus, Gómez-Pinilla concludes that “what you eat can affect your grandchildren's brain molecules and synapses”.

To this end, let us remember that we are not our own, but were bought with our price. Even our children are “an inheritance of the Lord”, and we are called to protect them as a gift from God. Psalm 127:3. Therefore, with a knowledge of the impact of food on the mind, let us “glorify God in [the] body, and in [the] spirit, which are God's”. 1 Corinthians 6:20. Amen.

Fernando Gómez-Pinilla, “Brain foods: the effects of nutrients on brain function.” *Nature Reviews Neuroscience* 9, 568-578 (July 2008). doi:10.1038/nrn2421.