

Thoughts on Ministry of Healing

(18) Mind Cure (pages 241-258)

Summary:

The concept of human wholeness implies that there is an intimate relationship between the mind and the body. The condition of the mind has a powerful effect on the health of the body. Grief, anxiety, discontent and remorse all break down the life forces and invite decay and death. Courage, hope, faith, love, gratitude, and praise promote health and prolong life. Rightly used, mental influence is one of the most effective agencies for combating disease.

Thoughts:

One of the best chapters in all of Ellen White's writings, with profound implications for emotional and psychological health. There are a multitude of quotable quotes in the chapter.

In spite of her strong support for attention to mental health, Ellen White is very negative about one of the major therapies of her day, hypnotism, where one person's mind is brought under the control of another's. She asserts instead that no one is to yield their mind and will to the control of another. Human freedom to think and to do was one of the strongest themes throughout her writing. (242-244)

Those whose diseases have been caused by the mind are best helped through the exercise of tender sympathy and tact. (244-246)

Bible principles of "mind cure" include directing patients to Christ, encouraging a positive frame of mind, reciting the promises of the Bible, living in the present (not borrowing problems from an imagined future or wallowing in regret over the past). Above all else, the greatest healing agency is a spirit of gratitude and praise. (246-258) See quotes and tweets for many of the details in this powerful chapter. The best portion of all can be found on pages 251-253.

This chapter is about more than just positive thinking. Positive thinking is valuable in current psychological thinking, but people do even better when they are both authentic and positive (there is a dishonest sort of positive thinking). There is a trend in recent mental care to more and more foster positive mental health, not just deal with disorders. Ellen White seems to put the focus there as well.

Quotable Quotes:

"The relation that exists between the mind and the body is very intimate. When one is affected, the other sympathizes. The condition of the mind affects the health to a far greater degree than many realize. 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.

"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. Many imagine that every slight exposure will cause illness, and the evil effect is produced because it is expected. Many die from disease the cause of which is wholly imaginary.

"Courage, hope, faith, sympathy, love, promote health and prolong life. A contented mind, a cheerful spirit, is health to the body and strength to the soul. 'A merry [rejoicing] heart

doeth good like a medicine.' Proverbs 17:22." (241)

"We are in a world of suffering. Difficulty, trial, and sorrow await us all along the way to the heavenly home. But there are many who make life's burdens doubly heavy by continually anticipating trouble. . . . Life itself becomes a burden to them. But it need not be thus. It will cost a determined effort to change the current of their thought. But the change can be made. Their happiness, both for this life and for the life to come, depends upon their fixing their minds upon cheerful things. Let them look away from the dark picture, which is imaginary, to the benefits which God has strewn in their pathway." (247-248)

"It is not wise to look to ourselves and study our emotions. If we do this, the enemy will present difficulties and temptations that weaken faith and destroy courage. Closely to study our emotions and give way to our feelings is to entertain doubt and entangle ourselves in perplexity. We are to look away from self to Jesus. . . . When temptations assail you, when care, perplexity, and darkness seem to surround your soul, look to the place where you last saw the light." (249-250)

"Nothing tends more to promote health of body and of soul than does a spirit of gratitude and praise. It is a positive duty to resist melancholy, discontented thoughts and feelings--as much a duty as it is to pray. If we are heaven-bound, how can we go as a band of mourners, groaning and complaining all along the way to our Father's house?" (251)

"Those professed Christians who are constantly complaining, and who seem to think cheerfulness and happiness a sin, have not genuine religion. Those who take a mournful pleasure in all that is melancholy in the natural world, who choose to look upon dead leaves rather than to gather the beautiful living flowers, who see no beauty in grand mountain heights and in valleys clothed with living green, who close their senses to the joyful voice which speaks to them in nature, and which is sweet and musical to the listening ear--these are not in Christ. They are gathering to themselves gloom and darkness, when they might have brightness, even the Sun of Righteousness arising in their hearts with healing in His beams." (251)

"It is a law of nature that our thoughts and feelings are encouraged and strengthened as we give them utterance. While words express thoughts, it is also true that thoughts follow words. If we would give more expression to our faith, rejoice more in the blessings that we know we have,--the great mercy and love of God,--we should have more faith and greater joy. No tongue can express, no finite mind can conceive, the blessing that results from appreciating the goodness and love of God." (251-253)

"Let the fresh blessings of each new day awaken praise in our hearts for these tokens of His loving care. When you open your eyes in the morning, thank God that He has kept you through the night. Thank Him for His peace in your heart. Morning, noon, and night, let gratitude as a sweet perfume ascend to heaven." (253)

"One of the surest hindrances to the recovery of the sick is the centering of attention upon themselves. Many invalids feel that everyone should give them sympathy and help, when what they need is to have their attention turned away from themselves, to think of and care for others." (256)

"Good deeds are twice a blessing, benefiting both the giver and the receiver of the kindness. The consciousness of right-doing is one of the best medicines for diseased bodies and minds. When the mind is free and happy from a sense of duty well done and the satisfaction of giving happiness to others, the cheering, uplifting influence brings new life to the whole being." (257)

Tweets of Healing:

The relation between the mind and the body is very intimate. When one is affected, the other sympathizes. (241)

The condition of the mind affects the health to a far greater degree than many realize. (241)

Many of the diseases from which men suffer are the result of mental depression. (241)

Grief, anxiety, discontent, remorse, guilt, distrust, all tend to break down the life forces and to invite decay and death. (241)

The One who made our minds knows what they need. (243)

There are many who make life's burdens doubly heavy by continually anticipating trouble. (247)

When care, perplexity, and darkness seem to surround your soul, look to the place where you last saw the light. (250)

Nothing tends to promote health of body and of soul than does a spirit of gratitude and praise. (251)

Those professed Christians, who seem to think that cheerfulness and happiness is a sin, do not have genuine religion. (251)

Those who take mournful pleasure in all that is melancholy in the natural world, these are not in Christ. (251)

Our thoughts and feelings are encouraged and strengthened as we give them utterance. (251)

While words express thoughts, it is also true that thoughts follow words. (252)

We can educate our hearts and lips to speak the praise of God for His matchless love. (253)

We are not to dwell on the great power of Satan. Let us talk about the great power of God instead. (253)

When tempted, instead of giving utterance to our feelings, let us by faith lift up a song of thanksgiving to God. (254)

Song is a weapon that we can always use against discouragement. (254)

One of the surest hindrances to the recovery of the sick is the centering of attention upon themselves. (256)

God answers prayer for those who place themselves in the channel of His blessings. (256)

Good deeds are twice a blessing, benefitting both the giver and the receiver of the kindness. (257)