

Thoughts on Ministry of Healing

(6) Saved to Serve (pages 95-107)

Summary:

Everyone who has benefitted from the saving ministry of Jesus is to share that experience with others. In this way we continue the teaching and healing ministry of Jesus in today's world.

Thoughts:

This chapter was by far the richest treasure trove of quotable quotes so far. See the collection below. This theme must have been particularly meaningful to Ellen White herself. She seems to have been melancholy as a person and one way she kept her spirits up was in sharing the good things she had experienced with God with others by both pen and voice.

God's primary means of revealing Christ to the world is our testimony of God's faithfulness in our own lives. This is even more effective than teaching drawn directly from biblical sources. When people see the working of God's power in our lives, it has particular effect. Each person is unique and my witness to God's unique impact on my life can touch people that most others could not. When life and testimony are in harmony, there is a power present that impacts the salvation of others. (100) This same power also impacts our own lives, drawing us nearer to Jesus in our own experience. (103)

We are not to limit ministry to those who will honor us in their acceptance of it. The benefits of the gospel are to be shared freely with all. And this will be the natural tendency of those with a deep experience in spiritual things. (102)

To the degree that we are people of privilege, whether that involves education, training, financial security, nobility of character, or religious experience, we owe a debt to those who are less favored in these things. Like the angels, who serve where they are most needed, we owe the most to those who are outcast, downtrodden, inferior in education and character. Privilege calls us to minister in contexts the selfish heart would consider humiliating. In this we follow also the example of Jesus, who was rich and chose to become poor that we might be enriched through His poverty. (105)

Ellen White seems to believe that unselfish ministry of the love of Christ to others will have greater impact on social issues than the efforts of law courts and political (or military) action. (106) How do we balance moral advocacy (social action) and personal concern for others?

Reading this chapter makes it clear that the community Ellen White was encouraging was not a gnostic-type community, a repository of secret knowledge. She urged that what the community knew and experience be shared freely with all. In fact she felt that our confession of God's faithfulness to us personally is critical to our healing ministry to others (see quote from page 100 below). And each of these testimonies is uniquely marked by our own individuality. So there is no cookie-cutter approach to witness, witness arises out of our experience. In other words, everyone can do what Ellen White recommends here, it doesn't require extensive training.

How does the Holy Spirit become real in the context of today's world? Through the acts of words of God's people, others see Jesus in simple gestures of kindness and caring concern. Expressions of kindness have a bigger impact than we realize.

The chapter makes frequent use of the word "missionary." This term had much more

positive implications in the Nineteenth Century than it does now. Today it sounds colonial and condescending to many people. So we may want to come up with different language to describe some of Ellen White's vision for service today.

Quotable Quotes:

"The gospel is to be presented, not as a lifeless theory, but as a living force to change the life." (99)

"Even those whose course has been most offensive to Him He freely accepts." (99)

"Our confession of His faithfulness is Heaven's chosen agency for revealing Christ to the world. We are to acknowledge His grace as made known through the holy men of old; but that which will be most effectual is the testimony of our own experience. . . . God desires that our praise shall ascend to Him, marked with our own individuality. These precious acknowledgments to the praise of the glory of His grace, when supported by a Christlike life, have an irresistible power that works for the salvation of souls." (100)

"It is for our own benefit to keep every gift of God fresh in our memory. By this means faith is strengthened to claim and to receive more and more. There is greater encouragement for us in the least blessing we ourselves receive from God than in all the accounts we can read of the faith and experience of others. The soul that responds to the grace of God shall be like a watered garden." (100)

"The gospel invitation is not to be narrowed down and presented only to a select few, who, we suppose, will do us honor if they accept it. The message is to be given to all. When God blesses His children, it is not alone for their own sake, but for the world's sake." (102)

"He who drinks of the living water becomes a fountain of life. The receiver becomes a giver." (102)

"It is in working to spread the good news of salvation that we are brought near to the Saviour." (103)

"That we might become members of the heavenly family, He became a member of the earthly family." (104)

"By all that has given us advantage over another,--be it education and refinement, nobility of character, Christian training, religious experience,--we are in debt to those less favored; and, so far as lies in our power, we are to minister unto them. If we are strong, we are to stay up the hands of the weak." (105)

"He who was rich in heaven's priceless treasure became poor, that through His poverty we might be rich. We are to follow in the path He trod." (105)

"Many feel that it would be a great privilege to visit the scenes of Christ's life on earth, to walk where He trod, to look upon the lake beside which He loved to teach, and the hills and valleys on which His eyes so often rested. But we need not go to Nazareth, to Capernaum, or to Bethany, in order to walk in the steps of Jesus. We shall find His footprints beside the sickbed, in the hovels of poverty, in the crowded alleys of the great cities, and in every place where there are human hearts in need of consolation." (105-106)

"The love of Christ, manifested in unselfish ministry, will be more effective in reforming the evildoer than will the sword or the court of justice." (106)