

## Thoughts on Ministry of Healing

### (28) Ministry of the Home (pages 349-355)

#### Summary:

The home is the greatest single influence for good in the world. The future of youth is largely decided there for good or evil. Besides the upbringing of children the home is to be a blessing to outcasts, strangers, and youth who would otherwise go down to ruin.

#### Thoughts:

The thesis of this chapter is that society is whatever the leaders of the home make it. Through the upbringing of children, parents have more to do with the outcomes of community, church and nation than any other influence. The outcomes in Jesus' life are a good illustration of the importance of home training. (349-351)

Great efforts are put forth to reform the victims of evil habits. But such reform is much more difficult to obtain in the settled lives of adults than it is with children and youth. Training of parents treats these problems more effectively, dealing with "the stream" at its source. (351-352)

In addition to training the children, the mission of the home extends beyond the family to the poor, the stranger, church workers and particularly troubled youth who don't have the kind of adult influences in their lives that they need. Parents can accomplish this work through a kindly, self-sacrificing spirit and a steadfast purpose. (352-355)

This chapter and the following address the norm for the home in the late 19<sup>th</sup> Century. The norm then was two parent families raising children in proximity with aunts, uncles and grandparents. One could call this the extended nuclear family. Today's extended families are split apart geographically and often even the nuclear family is divided by work or "unreconcilable differences." Implementing her counsel in detail in most cases would be radically more difficult than a hundred years ago. It is extremely difficult and stressful to raise children well in two-income families that are separated from their extended family.

Interestingly, Ellen White herself had what we might call a "stressful home." Personal letters indicate that there was considerable tension during many periods of their marriage between her and her husband. Her work often separated her from her children and at least two of her sons had serious "teen-age" issues. What she writes about here is an ideal, one that she herself was struggling to reach. Knowing this can mitigate the tension for self-judgment and discouragement that afflicts many who read these lines.

Every generation has tended to decry the decline of the family in its time. Yet do we really want to go back to a time when there was no internet, no automobile, no cell phones, no air travel, etc.? Is that even possible? Perhaps we need to adapt the principles of this chapter and find new ways to accomplish them in the context of life today. The basic principle of the chapter seems to be something like, "spend time with children." Through Skype, Facetime and Facebook, for example, extended families and even separated nuclear families can maintain much closer contact than was possible even ten years ago. Church communities can learn how to function as "aunties and uncles" and surrogate grandparents to new generations who desperately need them. Radical principles sometimes require radical solutions.

### **Quotable Quotes:**

“The restoration and uplifting of humanity begins in the home. The work of parents underlies every other. Society is composed of families, and is what the heads of families make it. Out of the heart are "the issues of life" (Proverbs 4:23); and the heart of the community, of the church, and of the nation is the household. The well-being of society, the success of the church, the prosperity of the nation, depend upon home influences.” (349)

“The Saviour's early years are more than an example to the youth. They are a lesson, and should be an encouragement, to every parent. . . . No work entrusted to human beings involves greater or more far-reaching results than does the work of fathers and mothers.” (350-351)

“It is by the youth and children of today that the future of society is to be determined, and what these youth and children shall be depends upon the home. To the lack of right home training may be traced the larger share of the disease and misery and crime that curse humanity. If the home life were pure and true, if the children who went forth from its care were prepared to meet life's responsibilities and dangers, what a change would be seen in the world!” (351)

“Parents may lay for their children the foundation for a healthy, happy life. They may send them forth from their homes with moral stamina to resist temptation, and courage and strength to wrestle successfully with life's problems. They may inspire in them the purpose and develop the power to make their lives an honor to God and a blessing to the world. They may make straight paths for their feet, through sunshine and shadow, to the glorious heights above.” (352)

“If we would show an interest in the youth, invite them to our homes, and surround them with cheering, helpful influences, there are many who would gladly turn their steps into the upward path.” (354-355)

“The work to which we are called does not require wealth or social position or great ability. It requires a kindly, self-sacrificing spirit and a steadfast purpose. . . . If we will open our hearts and homes to the divine principles of life we shall become channels for currents of life-giving power. From our homes will flow streams of healing, bringing life and beauty and fruitfulness where now are barrenness and dearth.” (355)

### **Tweets of Healing:**

The restoration and uplifting of humanity begins in the home. (349)

The well-being of society, the success of the church, the prosperity of the nation, depend upon home influences. (349)

Society is composed of families, and is what the heads of families make it. (349)

No work entrusted to human beings involves more far-reaching results than does the work of fathers and mothers. (351)

The lack of right home training causes the larger share of the disease and misery and crime that curse humanity. (351)

Far more powerful than any sermon is the influence of a true home upon human hearts and lives. (352)

If we will open our hearts and homes to the divine principles of life, streams of healing will flow from our homes. (355)

The home is the greatest single influence for good in the world.