

Thoughts on Ministry of Healing

(31) The Mother (pages 371-378)

Summary:

The basic principle affirmed in this chapter is: “What the parents are, that, to a great extent, the children will be.” While the primary focus of the chapter is on the mother, there are some comments also on the father’s role, particularly during pregnancy.

Thoughts:

The parents’ physical conditions, their dispositions and appetites, and their mental and moral tendencies are, to a greater or lesser degree reproduced in their children. In cultivating the best in themselves, parents exert also a positive influence upon future generations. Parents need to do all they can to help children overcome temptation and make constructive choices as they grow up. (371)

Ellen White places special responsibility upon the mother. The time of pregnancy is of particular concern as the child is not only nourished by the mother physically, but also mentally, emotionally and spiritually. Mothers, therefore, need to guard their habits and include the well-being of the children, born and unborn, in their life choices. Particular care needs to be taken during pregnancy. (372)

Along with avoiding dietary items that would diminish physical or mental strength, mothers should avoid overwork. Here is where fathers can help or hinder in particular. Fathers should do all they can to lessen the mother’s burdens, so she can concentrate on the health and character development of the children. (373-374)

Both mothers and fathers need to maintain a cheerful and contented disposition. This will strengthen the vital force in the children as well as the parents. (374-375)

Parenting may seem trivial and unrewarding, at times, but it is a great privilege and responsibility. No other work is of equal importance. Parents stand in the place of God to their children. (375-378)

A helpful corollary to the emphases of this chapter could be “Parenting Isn’t Easy!” It is good to be pointed in the right direction and motivated to comply, but it is also easy to become discouraged when we fail. To some degree all parents fail, so the gospel needs to be kept before us as we explore this topic.

It is interesting that Ellen White says relatively little about the role of fathers, and most of what she does say is more about husbands than fathers! This seems to reflect the era in which she writes, which was focused more on nurture than on genetics. Were she writing today, one wonders if she would also have more to say about the influence of culture and the how government regulations can help or hinder the health of the family.

The quote from page 378 listed below is one of the most lyrical in all of her writings. Enjoy!

Quotable Quotes:

“What the parents are, that, to a great extent, the children will be. The physical conditions of the parents, their dispositions and appetites, their mental and moral tendencies, are, to a

greater or less degree, reproduced in their children. The nobler the aims, the higher the mental and spiritual endowments, and the better developed the physical powers of the parents, the better will be the life equipment they give their children. In cultivating that which is best in themselves, parents are exerting an influence to mold society and to uplift future generations.” (371)

“The well-being of the child will be affected by the habits of the mother. Her appetites and passions are to be controlled by principle.” (372)

“If the mother unswervingly adheres to right principles, if she is temperate and self-denying, if she is kind, gentle, and unselfish, she may give her child these same precious traits of character.” (373)

“But at this time above all others she should avoid, in diet and in every other line, whatever would lessen physical or mental strength. By the command of God Himself she is placed under the most solemn obligation to exercise self-control.” (373)

“In life’s toilsome way let the husband and father ‘lead on softly,’ as the companion of his journey is able to endure. Amidst the world’s eager rush for wealth and power, let him learn to stay his steps, to comfort and support the one who is called to walk by his side.” (374)

“The mother should cultivate a cheerful, contented, happy disposition. Every effort in this direction will be abundantly repaid in both the physical well-being and the moral character of her children. A cheerful spirit will promote the happiness of her family and in a very great degree improve her own health.” (374)

“Great is the honor and the responsibility placed upon fathers and mothers, in that they are to stand in the place of God to their children. Their character, their daily life, their methods of training, will interpret His words to the little ones. Their influence will win or repel the child’s confidence in the Lord’s assurances.” (375)

“No other work can equal (the faithful mother’s) in importance. She has not, like the artist, to paint a form of beauty upon canvas, nor, like the sculptor, to chisel it from marble. She has not, like the author, to embody a noble thought in words of power, nor, like the musician, to express a beautiful sentiment in melody. It is hers, with the help of God, to develop in a human soul the likeness of the divine.” (378)

Tweets of Healing:

What the parents are, that, to a great extent, the children will be. (371)

In cultivating the best in themselves, parents exert also a positive influence upon future generations. (371)

The well-being of the child will be affected by the habits of the mother. (372)

If the mother is temperate, self-denying, kind, and unselfish, she may give her child these same precious traits of character. (373)

During pregnancy, the mother should avoid whatever would lessen physical or mental strength. (373)

The mother should cultivate a cheerful, contented, happy disposition. (374)

A cheerful spirit will promote the happiness of the mothers family and in a very great degree improve her own health. (374)

Fathers and mothers stand in the place of God to their children. (375)

No other work can equal, in importance, the work of a faithful mother. (378)