

Thoughts on Ministry of Healing

(35) A True Knowledge of God (pages 409-426)

Summary:

Our knowledge of God is partial and imperfect, yet a true knowledge of God is essential to true education and character development. While God can be experienced through the works of His creation, the clearest revelation of God is found in Jesus Christ, especially at the cross.

Thoughts:

Although not directly stated, the focus of this chapter seems most appropriate to college-level education.

A true knowledge of God is the foundation of all true education and service. It is the essential preparation both for this life and for the life to come. We are to become like Him in character and then by a life of service reveal Him to the world. But in order to become like Him, we need to know what He is like. (409)

Through nature, marred though it is, we receive glimpses of God's goodness and His love of beauty. Nature itself is not God, but it testifies to His character and power. Above all else in creation, humanity was intended to express God's thoughts and reveal His glory. (410-418)

Although all knowledge of God is partial and imperfect, the greatest revelation of God is to be found in Jesus Christ. God's personality and character are most clearly revealed there. At the cross, the revelation of God's love to human beings is made known. (418-426)

This chapter offers strong encouragement to learn all you can in as many fields as possible, in other words, get a broad education. There is strong support here for the study of science and the appreciation of beauty in all of its God-given forms. Not only so, the chapter makes the strong point that every legitimate job is sacred and every field of learning is potentially sacred.

The chapter also highlights the two main sources of knowledge, nature and Scripture, or as they are called by scholars, general and special revelation. There is much about God that can be learned from nature, but there are also limitations in that knowledge that are filled in by Scripture. In the words of Niebuhr, as paraphrased to us by Richard Rice, "Special revelation completes the incompleteness, clarifies the obscurities, and corrects the falsifications of general revelation."

A reading knowledge of Ellen White highlights the importance of a right knowledge of God and of God's character. In order to become like God we must know Him aright (409).

Quotable Quotes:

"We are here to become like God in character, and by a life of service to reveal Him to the world. In order to be co-workers with God, in order to become like Him and to reveal His character, we must know Him aright." (409)

"A knowledge of God is the foundation of all true education and of all true service. It is the only real safeguard against temptation. It is this alone that can make us like God in character. This is the knowledge needed by all who are working for the uplifting of their fellow men. Transformation of character, purity of life, efficiency in service, adherence to correct principles, all depend upon a right knowledge of God. This knowledge is the essential preparation both for

this life and for the life to come.” (409)

“The things of nature that we now behold give us but a faint conception of Eden's glory. Sin has marred earth's beauty; on all things may be seen traces of the work of evil. Yet much that is beautiful remains. Nature testifies that One infinite in power, great in goodness, mercy, and love, created the earth, and filled it with life and gladness. Even in their blighted state, all things reveal the handiwork of the great Master Artist. Wherever we turn, we may hear the voice of God, and see evidences of His goodness.” (411)

“God's handiwork in nature is not God Himself in nature. The things of nature are an expression of God's character and power; but we are not to regard nature as God. The artistic skill of human beings produces very beautiful workmanship, things that delight the eye, and these things reveal to us something of the thought of the designer; but the thing made is not the maker. It is not the work, but the workman, that is counted worthy of honor. So while nature is an expression of God's thought, it is not nature, but the God of nature, that is to be exalted.” (413)

“Above all lower orders of being, God designed that man, the crowning work of His creation, should express His thought and reveal His glory. But man is not to exalt himself as God.” (416)

“In the heavens above, in the earth, in the broad waters of the ocean, we see the handiwork of God. All created things testify to His power, His wisdom, His love. Yet not from the stars or the ocean or the cataract can we learn of the personality of God as it was revealed in Christ. God saw that a clearer revelation than nature was needed to portray both His personality and His character. He sent His Son into the world to manifest, so far as could be endured by human sight, the nature and the attributes of the invisible God.” (419)

Tweets of Healing:

In order to become like Him and to reveal His character, we must know Him aright. (409)

A knowledge of God is the foundation of all true education and of all true service. (409)

A right knowledge of God is the essential preparation both for this life and for the life to come. (409)

The things of nature that we now behold give us but a faint conception of Eden's glory. (411)

He who placed the pearls in the ocean and the amethyst and chrysolite among the rocks, is a lover of the beautiful. (412)

The things of nature are an expression of God's character and power; but we are not to regard nature as God. (413)

The work of creation cannot be explained by science. (414)

The stars, the ocean, or the cataract cannot teach us the personality of God as it was revealed in Christ. (419)

Our knowledge of God is partial and imperfect. (420)