

Thoughts on Ministry of Healing

(41) In Contact with Others (pages 483-496)

Summary:

It is through personal relationships that Christianity comes in contact with the world. Everyone who has received the gospel is to share with those who are unacquainted with it. This chapter emphasizes the softer, gentler virtues of Christian faith; kindness, gentleness, patience and sympathy. The focus is on the truth about life more than the truth about doctrine.

Thoughts:

This chapter is a gold mine of counsel on relationships; how to deal with people who are contrary, difficult, or simply of a different opinion. Everyone is different, so those who wish to be successful in Christian relationships need to consider those differences and meet people where they are. (483)

Among the qualities recommended in this chapter are patience and forbearance with leadership, avoiding hasty judgments regarding people's behavior and character, to avoid retaliation when wronged, presenting a positive attitude at all times, combining Christian graces with social justice, being faithful in the little things, being in control of one's thoughts and actions, speaking well of others, and being calm under provocation. While minds are quite varied, all are in need of kindness and sympathy. (484-496)

This chapter is about more than just relationships. It has a strong focus on what we today would call "positive psychology." How we view ourselves has a strong impact on how we view others. On the other hand, an overwhelmingly positive attitude can sometimes come across as fake. In order to comply with this chapter, one may be tempted to bury feelings and needs to promote the right image. As always when it comes to Ellen White, it is important to approach her strongest statements with a sense of balance.

One challenging feature of this chapter is the concept that in times of crisis, we should turn to God alone. But in practice is God alone really enough for most people? When we lose a loved one to death, we truly miss them. God's presence can be a help, but the encouragement of others also makes a difference. *Desire of Ages*, 297 is a helpful balancing statement. There are people whose eyes are so blinded by tears that they cannot grasp the Unseen without the help of a visible companion.

An important concept in this chapter and also the New Testament (1 Pet 3:9, Rom 12) is that one should never retaliate. In the words of Paul Heubach, "Don't defend yourself. Your foes won't believe it and your friends don't need it."

Quotable Quotes:

"Every association of life calls for the exercise of self-control, forbearance, and sympathy. We differ so widely in disposition, habits, education, that our ways of looking at things vary. We judge differently. Our understanding of truth, our ideas in regard to the conduct of life, are not in all respects the same. There are no two whose experience is alike in every particular. The trials of one are not the trials of another. The duties that one finds light are to another most difficult and perplexing." (483)

"So frail, so ignorant, so liable to misconception is human nature, that each should be

careful in the estimate he places upon another. We little know the bearing of our acts upon the experience of others. What we do or say may seem to us of little moment, when, could our eyes be opened, we should see that upon it depended the most important results for good or for evil.” (483)

“We cannot afford to let our spirits chafe over any real or supposed wrong done to ourselves. Self is the enemy we most need to fear. . . . No other victory we can gain will be so precious as the victory gained over self.” (485)

“We should not allow our feelings to be easily wounded. We are to live, not to guard our feelings or our reputation, but to save souls. As we become interested in the salvation of souls we cease to mind the little differences that so often arise in our association with one another. Whatever others may think of us or do to us, it need not disturb our oneness with Christ, the fellowship of the Spirit.” (485)

“If Christ dwells in us, we shall be patient, kind, and forbearing, cheerful amid frets and irritations. Day by day and year by year we shall conquer self, and grow into a noble heroism. This is our allotted task; but it cannot be accomplished without help from Jesus, resolute decision, unwavering purpose, continual watchfulness, and unceasing prayer.” (487)

“We need not keep our own record of trials and difficulties, griefs, and sorrows. All these things are written in the books, and heaven will take care of them. While we are counting up the disagreeable things, many things that are pleasant to reflect upon are passing from memory.” (487)

“If you do not feel lighthearted and joyous, do not talk of your feelings. Cast no shadow upon the lives of others. A cold, sunless religion never draws souls to Christ. . . . Instead of thinking of your discouragements, think of the power you can claim in Christ’s name.” (488)

“When, notwithstanding disagreeable circumstances, we rest confidently in His love, and shut ourselves in with Him, the sense of His presence will inspire a deep, tranquil joy.” (488)

“He who is imbued with the Spirit of Christ abides in Christ. Whatever comes to him comes from the Saviour, who surrounds him with His presence. Nothing can touch him except by the Lord’s permission.” (489)

“The Lord Jesus demands our acknowledgment of the rights of every man. Men’s social rights, and their rights as Christians, are to be taken into consideration. All are to be treated with refinement and delicacy, as the sons and daughters of God.” (489)

“Life is chiefly made up, not of great sacrifices and wonderful achievements, but of little things. . . . Only by acting upon principle in the tests of daily life can we acquire power to stand firm and faithful in the most dangerous and most difficult positions.” (490)

“The power of self-restraint strengthens by exercise. That which at first seems difficult, by constant repetition grows easy, until right thoughts and actions become habitual.” (491)

“Cultivate the habit of speaking well of others. Dwell upon the good qualities of those with whom you associate, and see as little as possible of their errors and failings. When tempted to complain of what someone has said or done, praise something in that person’s life or character.” (492)

“Evilspeaking is a twofold curse, falling more heavily upon the speaker than upon the hearer. He who scatters the seeds of dissension and strife reaps in his own soul the deadly fruits. The very act of looking for evil in others develops evil in those who look. By dwelling upon the faults of others, we are changed into the same image.” (492)

“The consistent life, the patient forbearance, the spirit unruffled under provocation, is

always the most conclusive argument and the most solemn appeal. If you have had opportunities and advantages that have not fallen to the lot of others, consider this, and be ever a wise, careful, gentle teacher.” (494)

“Until the judgment you will never know the influence of a kind, considerate course toward the inconsistent, the unreasonable, the unworthy. When we meet with ingratitude and betrayal of sacred trusts, we are roused to show our contempt or indignation. This the guilty expect; they are prepared for it. But kind forbearance takes them by surprise and often awakens their better impulses and arouses a longing for a nobler life.” (495)

Tweets of Healing:

Every association of life calls for the exercise of self-control, forbearance, and sympathy. (483)

There are no two whose experience is alike in every particular. (483)

Bitter experience gives us knowledge. (484)

Self is the enemy we most need to fear. (485)

We are to live, not to guard our feelings or our reputation, but to save souls. (485)

There is wonderful power in silence. (486)

If Christ dwells in us, we shall be patient, kind, and forbearing, cheerful amid frets and irritations. (487)

While we are counting up the disagreeable things, many things that are pleasant to reflect upon are passing from memory. (487)

If you do not feel lighthearted and joyous, do not talk of your feelings. Cast no shadow upon the lives of others. (488)

Instead of thinking of your discouragements, think of the power you can claim in Christ’s name. (488)

When we rest confidently in His love, the sense of His presence will inspire a deep, tranquil joy. (488)

Christ was courteous, even to his persecutors, and His true followers will manifest the same spirit. (489)

True refinement will never be revealed so long as self is considered as the supreme object. (490)

Life is chiefly made up, not of great sacrifices and wonderful achievements, but of little things. (490)

The power of self-restraint strengthens by exercise. (491)

The very act of looking for evil in others develops evil in those who look. (492)

Evil speaking is a twofold curse, falling more heavily upon the speaker than upon the hearer. (492)

Regard yourselves as missionaries, first of all, among your fellow workers. (493-494)

Until the judgment you will never know the influence of a kind, considerate course toward the inconsistent, the unreasonable, the unworthy. (495)

While minds are quite varied, all are in need of kindness and sympathy.