

## Thoughts on Ministry of Healing

### (13) The Helpless Poor (pages 201-208)

#### Summary:

When one has done everything possible to help the poor help themselves, there will still remain some who cannot help themselves; the widow and fatherless, the aged, the helpless and the sick. These should not be neglected.

#### Thoughts:

These are the ones who need a “safety net.” The problem is, the same programs that are life-enhancing and life-saving for the helpless poor, can do more harm than good for those who could help themselves. How can one help the helpless poor without damaging those who aren’t helpless?

Circumstances have changed, but many of the same issues remain today, orphans, single-mothers, the aged. The major plan for orphans today is foster care and these programs have too-often failed; offer children no sense of permanent family and then turn them loose at 18. Too often the end up in trouble with the law. One recent solution: “residential academies,” housing teens in groups with proper oversight and counseling. In Ellen White’s day, people often put unwanted children on trains heading west, hoping at some stop a family would pick them up and take care of them.

Ministry to the helpless poor should begin with “the household of faith.”

Single mothers are a special case. They are not helpless, yet their responsibilities are so overwhelming many times that they are forced to choose between earning money and the proper upbringing of their children. Help with child care and moral training can be a major support. (203)

Where possible, people should be allowed to “age in place,” among friends and familiar associations, worshiping among those they have known and loved. Multi-generational churches can be a great blessing. The young bring energy and sunshine to the aged and the aged bring wisdom and experience to the young. (204) This underlines that retirement at your “dream location” may not turn out well if you leave your support system and community behind.

Where orphanages are required, they should be modeled as closely as possible upon the Christian home. (205)

Given the world’s great needs in regard to the helpless poor, everyone, regardless of financial circumstances, should practice economy so they can help others and not make them envious. (207-208)

The anthropology behind this chapter is that human value is not based on production, but on the reality that everyone is a soul for whom Christ died. All the helpless are worthy of support because their value was set at the cross.

In today’s world we have become more aware that the system defines poverty more than the person. Many people today have lost job and home without any fault of their own, defeated by a system. Do we realize how much place and parentage has so much to do with what we have and who we are? This chapter doesn’t address such systemic issues, but that doesn’t mean Ellen White would not have addressed them were she writing today. For example, while she regretted that churches did not do more for the former slaves in the south, she supported the government’s

efforts at Reconstruction and chastised the government when it cut back on that support. Additionally, the main purpose of Ministry of Healing was mission, she is not addressing social issues, but teaching health practitioners how to reach different classes of people with the gospel. Next chapter? Dealing with the rich.

### **Quotable Quotes:**

“Many who have no children of their own could do a good work in caring for the children of others. Instead of giving attention to pets, lavishing affection upon dumb animals, let them give their attention to little children, whose characters they may fashion after the divine similitude. Place your love upon the homeless members of the human family.” (203)

“So far as possible let those whose whitening heads and failing steps show that they are drawing near to the grave remain among friends and familiar associations. Let them worship among those whom they have known and loved. Let them be cared for by loving and tender hands.” (204)

“Many despise economy, confounding it with stinginess and narrowness. But. . . without economy, there can be no true liberality. We are to save, that we may give.” (206)

“How much means is expended for things that are mere idols, things that engross thought and time and strength which should be put to a higher use! How much money is wasted on expensive houses and furniture, on selfish pleasures, luxurious and unwholesome food, hurtful indulgences! How much is squandered on gifts that benefit no one! For things that are needless, often harmful, professed Christians are today spending more, many times more, than they spend in seeking to rescue souls from the tempter.” (207)

“It is wrong to waste our time, wrong to waste our thoughts. We lose every moment that we devote to self-seeking. If every moment were valued and rightly employed, we should have time for everything that we need to do for ourselves or for the world. In the expenditure of money, in the use of time, strength, opportunities, let every Christian look to God for guidance.” (208)

### **Tweets of Healing:**

Ministry to the helpless poor should begin with “the household of faith.” (201)

Children develop best in the loving atmosphere of a Christian home. (203)

Many who have no children of their own could do a good work in caring for the children of others. (203)

Without economy, there can be no true liberality. We are to save, that we may give. (206)

How much money is squandered on gifts that benefit no one! (207)

It is wrong to waste our time, wrong to waste our thoughts. We lose every moment that we devote to self-seeking. (208)

If every moment were valued and rightly employed, we would have time for everything that we need to do. (208)