

Thoughts on Ministry of Healing

(20) General Hygiene (pages 271-276)

Summary:

Human beings are a temple for God, a dwelling where God's glory is to be revealed. This should provide the highest incentive to care for and develop our physical powers.

Thoughts:

Since the body is a temple for God, this chapter encourages us to make it our study, to understand its needs and to do all we can to preserve it from harm and defilement. (271)

Temple was a symbol of purity in the ancient world, Ellen White translated this for today in very practical ways, such as cleanliness. Temples also involve the presence of God. Adventist self-supporting institutions consciously or unconsciously build on the purity idea, living far out in the country keeps you from being polluted by the city and the culture. Kellogg sought to apply the temple concept to the body in creative ways, thinking he was honoring a long-standing Adventist way of thinking, but pantheistic tendencies got him in trouble with White instead. Mormons also have a strong interest in temple purity issues, so this may be responding to a strong tendency in American culture at the time.

The basic thesis of the chapter is that in order to have good health we need to have "good blood." Good blood is defined as what you have when the blood is supplied with the proper food elements and when it is cleansed and vitalized by contact with pure air. The better the circulation, the better the blood can bring life and vigor to every part of the body. (271) The concept of "bad blood" was used at the time for a wide range of maladies, so Ellen White's language here made sense at the time. Today we will want to focus on the larger principles and test the utility of the detailed particulars in an evidence-based way.

Circulation is hindered by tight clothing or insufficient clothing of the extremities of the body. The blood is cleansed and vitalized by deep breathing. Good breathing is hindered by stooping and tight lacing, among other things. (272-274)

In the construction of buildings, care should be taken to provide for good ventilation and plenty of sunlight. As far as possible, buildings should be placed on high, well-drained ground. Sleeping rooms especially need to have free circulation of air day and night, while access to sunshine removes unhealthy dampness and mold. (274-275)

Scrupulous cleanliness is essential to both physical and mental health. Both the body and the clothing needs to be kept clean so that the pores can do their job of throwing off waste matter. (276)

Much of this chapter operates in the realm of what we call public health today.

Quotable Quotes:

"The knowledge that man is to be a temple for God, a habitation for the revealing of His glory, should be the highest incentive to the care and development of our physical powers. Fearfully and wonderfully has the Creator wrought in the human frame, and He bids us make it our study, understand its needs, and act our part in preserving it from harm and defilement." (271)

"In order to have good health, we must have good blood; for the blood is the current of

life. It repairs waste and nourishes the body. When supplied with the proper food elements and when cleansed and vitalized by contact with pure air, it carries life and vigor to every part of the system.” (271)

“In the construction of buildings, whether for public purposes or as dwellings, care should be taken to provide for good ventilation and plenty of sunlight. Churches and schoolrooms are often faulty in this respect. Neglect of proper ventilation is responsible for much of the drowsiness and dullness that destroy the effect of many a sermon and make the teacher’s work toilsome and ineffective.” (274)

“Perfect cleanliness, plenty of sunlight, careful attention to sanitation in every detail of the home life, are essential to freedom from disease and to the cheerfulness and vigor of the inmates of the home.” (276)

Tweets of Healing:

In order to have good health, we must have good blood. (271)

In order to have good blood, we must breathe well. (272)

So far as possible, all buildings intended for human habitation should be placed on high, well-drained ground. (274)

No room is fit to be occupied as a sleeping room unless it can be thrown open daily to the air and sunshine. (275)

Scrupulous cleanliness is essential to both physical and mental health. (276)

Lack of cleanliness leads to disease. Germs abound in dark corners, decaying refuse, dampness, mold and must. (276)