

Thoughts on Ministry of Healing

(3) With Nature and with God (pages 51-58)

Summary:

The secret of a life of power is found in communion with Scripture, self, nature and nature's God.

Thoughts:

What did Ellen White mean by a "life of power?" (51) I didn't find it clearly defined in the chapter, but I would take it as the ability to handle the kind of stress and people pressure Jesus faced without inner turmoil; an inner peace that generates personal energy and exudes encouragement toward others. No one ever carried more responsibility than Jesus or carried it with such a combination of peace, power and compassion.

The key to Jesus' "power" was absorbing the content of Scripture and then meditating on it in the context of nature. (Today we might talk about living our faith in the context of what we know also from science) Jesus lived, to a great degree, an outdoor life (climate similar to southern California). (52)

Using nature, Jesus called people's thoughts from the artificial to the natural. (54) What implications does this have in a world of artificial reality and computer graphics?

Page 56 has an interesting test case for the problem of suffering. Jesus could have intervened to save John the Baptist but He did not even though it severely tested His own disciples' faith. Interestingly she doesn't tell us why Jesus did this, just describes how He acted to comfort the disciples. How relevant is this to patient care?

Lives devoted to others nevertheless need to turn aside from ceaseless activity and contact with human needs to seek retirement and spiritual recharge. (58) The solution to the great need of the world is not unceasing effort, but more people willing to sacrifice and serve.

The theme of this chapter (communion with nature and God) connects with what some have called "mysticism." There are two main types of mysticism: a mysticism of communion (in which an individual draws closer to God yet retains their own individuality) and a mysticism of absorption (in which the mystic loses the self in the experience of God— like a drop of water falling into the ocean and being absorbed into the whole). While an either/or approach to mysticism doesn't cover all the bases, Ellen White seems to favor the communion type in this chapter.

Expressing the summary statement above in other words; this chapter invites us to be biblio-centric, ego-centric (in the best possible sense of that phrase), eco-centric and theo-centric. To limit oneself to one or two of the above would diminish one's wholeness. All four legs are needed in a solid spiritual foundation.

In her own life, Ellen White did not always experience the kind of power she is talking about here. For her this chapter was more of a prayer than a prescription. We should resist using this chapter as a checklist that will discourage others.

It seems that Jesus acquired inner strength through introspection and direct communion with God. Ellen White, by way of contrast, was often beset with negative thoughts in solitude and seemed to rise out of depression in preaching (communion with others). Likewise today, there are some people who find strength in introspection and others who find it in fellowship.

People who write devotional material tend to write about spiritual life from the perspective of their own temperaments. This often leaves others out.

Quotable Quotes:

“The Saviour’s life on earth was a life of communion with nature and with God. In this communion He revealed for us the secret of a life of power.” (51)

“When Jesus said to His disciples that the harvest was great and the laborers were few, He did not urge upon them the necessity of ceaseless toil, but bade them, ‘Pray ye therefore the Lord of the harvest, that He will send forth laborers into His harvest.’” Matthew 9:38. (58)

“All who are under the training of God need the quiet hour for communion with their own hearts, with nature, and with God.” (58)

“When every other voice is hushed, and in quietness we wait before Him, the silence of the soul makes distinct the voice of God. He bids us, ‘Be still and know that I am God.’” Psalm 46:10. This is the effectual preparation for all labor for God.” (58)