

Thoughts on Ministry of Healing

(5) Healing of the Soul (pages 73-94)

Summary:

A vital component of whole-person health care is conviction of sin and healing from “spiritual diseases” (or “renewing of the heart”).

Thoughts:

“Healing” and “salvation” are both translations of the same word in the Greek, thus providing a biblical foundation for the basic concept of this chapter.

Health care should not be made dependent on whether a person brought disease upon themselves or not. Jesus healed all, regardless of their past and present vices. (73) This point is strongly illustrated also by the story on page 91. Being in His presence, however, also brought conviction of sin and *many* were healed of “spiritual disease” as well as their physical maladies. So it seems that spiritual healing is more conditional than physical healing is or should be.

The great condition of divine healing is a sense of need. God “fills the hungry with good things” and sends “the rich” away empty (Luke 1:53). (75) How much more would God do in today’s world were it not for a pride that knows no need?

The power to read the heart was evidence that Jesus had the power to forgive sins. (76)

The root of healing power is creation power. The voice that brought something out of nothing and created humans from “dust” is capable of speaking life to dying bodies. And the same power that gives life to human bodies can also renew the heart, the spiritual and emotional side of the human condition. (77) The question that plagues us, of course, is why this happens some times (rarely?) and not others.

Jesus longs to exercise His healing power and make every sufferer whole. But circumstances alter cases. (81) This may sometimes be related to the point of page 75, that we often get in the way of God’s work for us. But in the Pool of Bethesda story it was political and contextual circumstances that prevented Jesus from doing more than He did on that occasion.

Remorse for sin is a major deterrent to wholistic health. (85)

It is the Holy Spirit’s job to convict of sin, so why this large emphasis in this chapter? It depends on the definition of sin. If you define sin in terms of separation from God, one can engage a patient to discover how they may have become separated from God, self and others. Ellen White was not in favor of preaching fear and condemnation, so this is not what she meant in this chapter. She takes a larger view of sin in terms of alienation from God (breaking the law is a symptom of the deeper problem).

The rebuke of wrong-doing is certainly appropriate in some contexts (injustice, abuse), but the hospital setting is not a good place for that.

In many ways language has changed today from Ellen White’s day. Instead of “sin” we may speak of brokenness or alienation, metaphors that are different from “sin” but also grounded in the biblical world view.

If the quote on page 84 (below) is true, we should avoid condemning a patient for what they are not capable of doing. We can point them instead to the power and graciousness of God.

It may be helpful to distinguish between sin and iniquity or lawlessness. Sin translates a biblical term for “missing the mark.” Everyone misses the mark sometimes. But iniquity or lawlessness is when one intends to miss the mark. Such versions of “sin” need to be confronted

in the context of loving relationship.

Quotable Quotes:

“Of ourselves we are no more capable of living a holy life than was the impotent man capable of walking.” (84)

“The greater the sinner’s guilt, the more he needs the Saviour. His heart of divine love and sympathy is drawn out most of all for the one who is the most hopelessly entangled in the snares of the enemy. With His own blood He has signed the emancipation papers of the race.” (90)

“He does not tell to any all that He might reveal, but He bids every trembling soul take courage.” (90)

“There are multitudes today as truly under the power of evil spirits as was the demoniac of Capernaum. All who willfully depart from God’s commandments are placing themselves under the control of Satan. Many a man tampers with evil, thinking that he can break away at pleasure; but he is lured on and on, until he finds himself controlled by a will stronger than his own. (92-93)

“No cry from a soul in need, though it fail of utterance in words, will be unheeded.” (93)

“It is true that Satan is a powerful being; but, thank God, we have a mighty Saviour, who cast out the evil one from heaven. Satan is pleased when we magnify his power. Why not talk of Jesus? Why not magnify His power and His love?” (94)