

Thoughts on Degrees and Accreditation

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Preventive Medicine

The subject of degrees and accreditation has perplexed Seventh-day Adventists ever since the Church undertook the task of providing an education for its youth. Because of the desire to receive accreditation and to offer degreed programs, Battle Creek was not able to follow precisely the "divine blueprint." Compromise was made in order to meet state approval.

Due to the problems perpetuated, Ellen White in 1903 wrote, "As I consider the state of things in Battle Creek, I tremble for our youth who go there. The light given me by the Lord, that our youth should not go to Battle Creek to receive their education, has in no particular changed." 8T 227.

"There is great need of elevating the standard of righteousness in our schools, to give instruction after God's order. Should Christ enter our institutions for the education of the youth, he would cleanse them as he cleansed the temple, banishing many things that have a defiling influence. Many of the books which the youth study would be expelled, and their places would be filled with others that would inculcate substantial knowledge, and abound in sentiments which might be treasured in the heart, in precepts that might govern the conduct." CT 25.

"We are rapidly nearing the final crisis in this world's history, and it is important that we understand that the educational advantages offered by our schools are to be different from those offered by the schools of the world. Neither are we to follow the routine of worldly schools. The instruction given in Seventh-day Adventist schools is to be such as to lead to the practice of true humility. In speech, in dress, in diet, and in the influence exerted, is to be seen the simplicity of true godliness." CT 56.

"God has revealed to me that we are in positive danger of bringing into our educational work the customs and fashions that prevail in the schools of the world. If teachers are not guarded, they will place on the necks of their students worldly yokes instead of the yoke of Christ. The plan of the schools we shall establish in these closing years of the message is to be of an entirely different order from those we have instituted." CT 532.

"No argument is so powerful as is success founded on simplicity. You may attain success in the education of students as medical missionaries without a medical school that can qualify physicians to compete with the physicians of the world. Let the students be given a practical education. The less dependent you are upon worldly methods of education, the better it will be for the students." 9T 175.

In view of the magnitude of the task before us, and in consideration of the shortness of time, Ellen White repeatedly urged the necessity of a speedy preparation. She recommended "medical evangelistic tours among the towns and villages." Such a vision can be fulfilled by only trained workers. **You cannot "afford to spend years in preparation," she pleaded. "Workers—gospel medical missionaries are needed now."** But how were they to be trained? "'There should be companies organized, and educated most thoroughly to work as nurses, as evangelists, as ministers, as canvassers, as gospel students, to perfect a character after the divine similitude.' To prepare to receive the higher education in the school above, is now to be our purpose." Loma Linda Messages, p. 69.

It is not that God has no use for dedicated workers who have received degrees. Humble men of letters can be of service, for the Lord is going to cut His work short in righteousness by whatever means He can use. **"Young men and young women, gather a stock of knowledge. Do not wait until some human examination pronounces you competent to work, but go out into the highways and hedges, and begin to work for God. Use wisely the knowledge you have. Exercise your ability with faithfulness, generously imparting the light that God gives you. Study how best to give to others peace and light and truth and the many other rich blessings of heaven. Constantly improve. Keep reaching higher and still higher. It is the ability to put to the tax the powers of mind and body, ever keeping eternal realities in view, that is of value now. Seek the Lord most earnestly, that you may become more and more refined, more spiritually cultured. Then you will have the very best diploma that anyone can have—the endorsement of God."** 7T 281.

Gems Natural Health Center came into existence for the purpose of providing such a training as the foregoing calls for. Its founder was encouraged by others who pioneered the way. Ellen White herself was a strong promoter of Madison College, which was, for years, a self-supporting, unaccredited school that became the mother of scores of satellite institutions. The objections and obstacles that arise from time to time are nothing new. They are as old as Christendom. **The work that Jesus conducted was itself a self-supporting venture. His right to be a teacher and a healer was often challenged: "By what authority doest thou these things?" "How knoweth this man letters having never learned?"** There was no place for Him in the "regular lines." **His hospital was wherever He happened to be; on the mountain, in the fields, or beside the sea. His "students" were sent out on missionary tours setting an example of true medical missionary work. The Holy Spirit blessed their ministry. "Even the devils were subject" unto them! Although they had been sent forth without purse or script, they were able to testify that they lacked nothing.**

We aspire to fill the "heavenly vision." "Let little companies go forth to do the work to which Christ appointed His disciples. Let them labor as evangelists, scattering our publications, and talking of the truth to those they meet. Let them pray for the sick,

ministering to their necessities, not with drugs, but with nature's remedies, and teaching them how to regain health and avoid disease." 9T 172. "God will send forth into His vineyard many who have not been dedicated to the ministry by the laying on of hands." AA 110.

"The Lord employs various instrumentalities for the accomplishment of His purpose; and while some with special talents are chosen to devote all their energies to the work of teaching and preaching the gospel, many others, upon whom human hands have never been laid in ordination, are called to act an important part in soul-saving. There is a large field open before the self-supporting gospel worker. Many may gain valuable experience in ministry while toiling a portion of the time at some form of manual labor; and by this method strong workers may be developed for important service in needy fields." AA 355.

The great Apostle Paul was at times obliged to support himself by making tents. William Carey, the famous pioneer of the gospel in India, cobbled shoes for a living.

The call for workers exceeds our capacity to train them. Some go to other self-supporting institutions, some venture out on their own. Some have gone out to assist physicians who are seeking to establish rural health conditioning centers. We get frequent calls from ministers who need help in health evangelism, five-day stop smoking plans, and cooking schools. We count it a privilege to be one of those little healing streams, which merge into others to cover the earth as the water covers the sea. The thought to be kept before students is that time is short and that they must make speedy preparation for doing the work that is essential for this time. . . . I am bidden to say to you that you know not how soon the crisis will come. It is stealing gradually upon us, as a thief. The sun shines in the heavens, passing over its usual round, and the heavens still declare the glory of God; men are pursuing their usual course of eating and drinking, planting and building, marrying and giving in marriage; merchants are still engaged in buying and selling; publications are still issuing one upon another; men are jostling one against another, seeking to get the highest place; pleasure lovers are still attending theaters, horse races, gambling halls, and the highest excitement prevails; but probation's hour is fast closing, and every case is about to be eternally decided. There are few who believe with heart and soul that we have a heaven to win and a hell to shun; but these show their faith by their works. {CT 413.3}

The signs of Christ's coming are fast fulfilling. Satan sees that he has but a short time in which to work, and he has set his agencies to work to stir up the elements of the world, that men may be deceived, deluded, and kept occupied and entranced until the day of probation shall be ended and the door of mercy be forever shut. {CT 414.1} The kingdoms of this world have not yet become the kingdoms of our Lord and of His Christ. Do not deceive yourselves; be wide awake and move rapidly, for the night cometh in which no man can work. Do not encourage students who come to you burdened with the work of saving their fellow men, to enter upon course after course of study. Do not lengthen out to many years the time for obtaining an education. By so doing you give them the impression that there is time enough, and this very plan proves a snare to their souls. {CT 414.2}

Many are better prepared, have more spiritual discrimination and knowledge of God, and know more of His requirements, when they enter upon their course of study than when they are graduated. They become inspired with an ambition to become learned men and are encouraged to add to their studies

until they become infatuated. They make their books their idol and are willing to sacrifice health and spirituality in order to obtain an education. They limit the time which they should devote to prayer and fail to improve the opportunities which they have to do good. They fail to put to use the knowledge which they have already obtained and do not advance in the science of winning souls. Missionary work becomes less and less desirable, while the passion to excel in book knowledge increases abnormally. In pursuing their studies they separate from the God of wisdom. **Some congratulate them on their advancement and encourage them to take degree after degree. . . . {CT 415.1}**

The question was asked, "Do you believe the truth? do you believe the third angel's message? If you do believe, then act your faith." . . . Probationary time will not permit of long-protracted years of drill. God calls; hear His voice as He says, "Go work today in My vineyard." Matthew 21:28. Now, just now, is the time to work. . . . {CT 415.2}

"The Lord hath His way in the whirlwind and in the storm, and the clouds are the dust of His feet." Nahum 1:3. O that men might understand the patience and long-suffering of God! He is putting under restraint His own attributes. His omnipotent power is under the control of Omnipotence. O that men would understand that God refuses to be wearied out with the world's perversity and still holds out the hope of forgiveness even to the most undeserving! But His forbearance will not always continue. Who is prepared for the sudden change that will take place in God's dealing with sinful men? Who will be prepared to escape the punishment that will certainly fall upon transgressors? . . . {CT 415.3}

There is a large work to be done, and the vineyard of the Lord needs laborers. Missionaries should enter the field before they are compelled to cease labor. There are now open doors on every side; students cannot afford to wait to complete years of training, for the years before us are not many, and we need to work while the day lasts. . . . {CT 416.1} Understand that I say nothing in these words to depreciate education, but I speak to warn those who are in danger of carrying that which is lawful to unlawful extremes, and of making altogether too much of human education. Rather insist upon the development of a Christian experience, for without this the education of the student will be of no avail. {CT 416.2} If you see that students are in danger of becoming engrossed in their studies to such an extent as to neglect the study of that Book which gives them information as to how to secure the future welfare of their souls, then do not present the temptation of going deeper, of protracting the time for educational discipline. In this way all that will make the student's education of value to the world will be sunk out of sight. . . . {CT 416.3}

As long as time shall last, we shall have need of schools. There will always be need of education; but we must be careful lest education absorb every spiritual interest. There is positive peril in advising students to pursue one line of education after another and in leading them to think that by so doing they will attain perfection. The education thus obtained will prove to be deficient in every way. The Lord says: "I will destroy the wisdom of the wise, and will bring to nothing the understanding of the prudent. Where is the wise? where is the scribe? where is the disputer of this world? hath not God made foolish the wisdom of this world? For after that in the wisdom of God the world by wisdom knew not God, it pleased God by the foolishness of preaching to save them that believe." 1 Corinthians 1:19-21. {CT 417.1}

Moses was learned in all the wisdom of the Egyptians. In the providence of God he received a broad education, but a large part of that education had to be unlearned and accounted as foolishness. Its impression had to be blotted out by forty years of experience in caring for the sheep and the tender lambs. If many who are connected with the work of the Lord could be isolated as was Moses, and could be compelled by circumstances to follow some humble vocation until their hearts became tender, . . . they would not be so prone to magnify their own abilities, or seek to demonstrate that the wisdom of an advanced education could take the place of a sound knowledge of God. . . . {CT 417.2}

The kingdoms of this world have not yet become the kingdoms of our Lord and of His Christ. Do not deceive yourselves; be wide awake, and move rapidly, for the night cometh, in which no man can work. **Do not encourage students, who come to you burdened for the work of saving their fellow men, to enter upon course after course of study. Do not lengthen out the time for obtaining an education to many years.**

By this course they suppose that there is time enough, and this very plan proves a snare to their souls. Many are better prepared, have more spiritual discrimination and knowledge of God, and know more of His requirements, when they enter upon a course of study than when they graduate. They become inspired with an ambition to become learned men, and are encouraged to add to their studies until they become infatuated. They make their books their idol, and are willing to sacrifice health and spirituality in order to obtain an education. They limit the time which they should devote to prayer, and fail to improve the opportunities which they have had to do good, and do not communicate light and knowledge.

They fail to put to use the knowledge which they have already obtained, and do not advance in the science of winning souls. Missionary work becomes less and less desirable, while the passion to excel in book-knowledge increases abnormally. In pursuing their studies, they separate from the God of wisdom. Some congratulate them on their advance, and encourage them to take degree after degree, even though they are less qualified to do the work of God after Christ's manner of instruction than they were before they entered the school at Battle Creek. {FE 355.1}

The question was asked those assembled: "Do you believe the truth? do you believe the third angel's message? If you do believe, then act your faith, and do not encourage men to continue in Battle Creek when they should be away from that place doing their Master's business." The Lord is not glorified in this procrastination. Men go to Battle Creek, and receive a far higher idea of their capabilities than they should. They are encouraged to take a long, protracted course of study; but God's way is not in it. It does not have a heavenly endorsement. Precious probationary time will not permit of long protracted years of drill. God calls: hear His voice as He says, "Go work today in My vineyard." Now, just now, is the time to work. Do you believe that the Lord is coming, and that the last great crisis is about to break upon the world? {FE 356.1}