

Elder W.C. White's Address to the Field School in its fourth year

January 19, 1931

My heart is filled with conflicting emotions as I meet with you this morning. I greatly rejoice to look you in the face and see so goodly a company that are taking part in the school for this, its fourth year. It has been my privilege to be present on the first day of the first terms of several of our largest denominational schools, and it is in none of them that I took more joy than in this school.

Solomon says, "There is nothing new under the sun," and I want to call your attention very briefly to the burden that was laid on the heart of the pioneers of this denomination for the kind of work that you are training for.

The work began in a very simple way. Shortly after the great revelation on the question of Health Reform and Medical Evangelism was given to Ellen G. White at Otsego, Michigan, June 5, 1863, she with her husband visited the larger bodies of Seventh-day Adventists, and presented the subject of Health Reform. Our people were stirred by this message and prepared their hearts for the call that came three years later to build an institution for the care of the sick. Sister White and her husband were not satisfied simply with preaching; they felt they must set these principles before the world. Now it happened that the Michigan State Fair that year was held in Battle Creek.

Elder and Mrs. White felt that this was an opportunity to demonstrate Health Reform living and hygienic cooking. So they rallied the officers of the Battle Creek Church to see what could be done. Two booths were hired in the Fair and the deaconesses of the church with several younger women entered heartily into the work of demonstrating the foods and the methods of

cooking advocated by the Seventh-day Adventist leaders.

Two or three cook stoves were set up, and busy hands engaged in cooking graham gems and other lines of unleavened bread which were offered freely to visitors. Furthermore, on the shelves and counters were displayed many lines of fruit in glass bottles. This would not be a curiosity in these days, but then it was something new.

All through their labors, James and Ellen White studied how to develop the practical side of their propaganda for Health Reform.

For many years after this the chief agency for getting Health Reform principles before the world was first through the *Review and Herald* and then through the *Health Reformer* established for this purpose.

In addition to literature, the health institutions established at Battle Creek in 1867, in St. Helena in 1879, and later on in many other places, carried to the world in demonstration and in theory, these Health Reform principles.

When in the providence of God, the Loma Linda Sanitarium was being established, a great burden was laid upon Sister White to make it known to our people that God's purpose in giving us that magnificent institution was that it might be a center of influence from which an educational work would be carried on in surrounding cities. Redlands, Riverside, San Bernardino, and Los Angeles were repeatedly named as places where the principles of healthful living as given to us for the world, should be taught and demonstrated.

But what could they do? The Sanitariums at Glendale and Paradise Valley were just getting on their feet and the burden of this larger insti-

tution at Loma Linda looked formidable and for such an institution, struggling to round out this work by securing a strong faculty and a wise management, to undertake immediately a field work, seemed more than they could do. How could they at such a time take up this work for the surrounding country! But the message kept coming, urging that it be done, and Elder Burden who had carried much responsibility regarding the purchase of the place, prayed and planned and Sister White prayed and planned, and after a time Dr. Lillis Wood Starr was encouraged to take the leadership of this outside work. Among the many things that were planned to be done, it was decided to begin by sending out the nurses with the book *Ministry of Healing*—thus they found many families needing and willing to receive counsel regarding better ways of healthful living.

While this work was going on, meetings were held in our churches and classes organized to be held in the homes of our people where the principles of better living could be taught. Very soon our sisters were deeply interested, and they were encouraged to bring in their neighbors. Soon the rooms used for these classes were overcrowded, and when the leader was asked what could be done, some well-to-do matron (not an S.D.A.) would say, "I have a room larger than this. You may have the meetings in my house if you choose."

This is exactly what the leader desired, and when the meetings were transferred to the big dining room of some influential lady, the way was thus opened for her and her associates to bring in other women who were non-Adventists. Thus practical lessons were given on diet, food, clothing, rest and exercise, and simple nursing to a large number of influential women. This educational work in the homes of the people was carried on, as I remember it, for about three years. This is quite a contrast to the many good efforts put forth elsewhere which continued for only a few months and then ceased.

In many places many wonderful efforts have been made in these and similar lines which have proved a great success, but quietly they have died and gone into history. I was about to say that they are nothing, only in memory, but this is not true because their influence on the people has been lasting and powerful in the matter of teaching better ways of living and of developing a friendly interest toward the people to whom God has committed the knowledge of history and prophecy for these last days.

When the managers of Loma Linda Sanitarium said, "We cannot support this field work. It is largely evangelical and should be supported by the Conference"—then the Conference manager said, "We cannot support this health work; it is largely in the interest of the Sanitarium."

Then Sister White said, "It is in the interest of both. God has revealed to me that such work should be done in many places. Now if the Conference will pay one-third of the expense of this campaign, and the Sanitarium will pay one-third, I will pay one-third." And it is this encouragement that helped in the matter of the work being continued in a vigorous way for about three years.

During recent years many physicians have settled in towns surrounding Loma Linda, and they are making a great success of their work. Some of these physicians have said to the Conference officers, "We have many patients who need encouragement in Christian living. They need Bible studies and we are too busy with the medical side of our work to give them the attention which they ought to have. If you will select a good nurse who is a Bible worker to do follow-up work, you may pay her her salary, and we will pay you." The results of this work are good and the extent of their value will only be known in eternity.

When the Fernando Academy was at the height of its career, Sister White urged the teachers to take their older students into Los Angeles and teach them to do city missionary work during the vacation. One year they took this seri-

ously and Prof. Lucas as head of the school with Elder Warren as Bible teacher, and Dr. Lillis Wood Starr as matron and leader in medical work with Brother Horsman as leader in the Canvassing work, united their efforts to carry out the counsel of Sister White.

Nearly twenty students were led by them in a summer campaign in Los Angeles. The results were a joyful surprise to many. Some sold [*Christ's*] *Object Lessons* and *Ministry of Healing*. Some held Bible readings, and others did nursing. Every day they met and reported their experiences and all the workers were greatly benefited by the experience, and a far-reaching work was done in behalf of the people.

We who were watching this remarkable undertaking, felt greatly rejoiced. We thought that this would lead many other schools to do a similar work. In this we were disappointed. With this one magnificent effort, wonderfully blessed of God, the work ceased.

Many other efforts to do in our cities the work outlined in the "Testimonies" have been undertaken, and have proved a great success, but after one successful experience, the work has died. A few years ago there was developed a method of sending out specially trained canvassers with the medical book and health journals, with which was connected the privilege of membership in a health school. This work proved successful. The people appreciated what they learned, and in one place a small church was raised up as a result; but because strong churches were not raised up in every place and because those bearing the chief burden of this work became weary, these efforts were discontinued.

A beautiful combination work was done for two or three years in these lines in Utah, Salt Lake City and Ogden, but where is it today! These one-year efforts, these two-year efforts, and three-year efforts, have all died for lack of nourishment. That we may be nerved to action we must remember that "we wrestle not against flesh and blood, but against principalities against powers against the

rulers of the darkness of this world, against spiritual wickedness in high places."

I know of nothing that seems to be hated more by Lucifer and all his hosts than our efforts to encourage the education and training of men and women to do a work similar to that of the Master.

Our friends say, "That is all good, but conditions have changed. You can not now work the way the Master did. Conditions have changed—present conditions make it necessary to do something entirely different."

It is very true that conditions have changed and will change to the end of time, and in minor plans and details our work must change and be adapted to present conditions. We must meet the people where they are, but we must also remember that God has not changed—that the power of the Holy Spirit has not been withdrawn from the world, and that God will open the way for us to follow the instruction of the Master.

After the disciples had been three and one-half years with the Master, the greatest teacher the world ever knew, yet their hearts were so dulled by their early training and by the influence all around them that they did not know how to do the work comprehended in the great commission, till the Holy Spirit took possession of their heart and mind, and led them to do the work that needed to be done.

We as well as they must meet the people where they are, and must adapt our efforts in their behalf to their circumstances, their interests and their willingness to be helped. The Lord Jesus expects us to find a way to do the things that He has commanded.

The Lord has sent us messages about the work to be done in the cities. He has sent scores and hundreds of these messages to stir us to various lines of evangelism, and regarding no line has He spoken more clearly, more forcibly than of this line of Medical Evangelism. He wants us to follow in the footsteps of the Master to teach, to preach, and to hear.

If there were time I would be glad to review some phases of our denominational history. I

would be glad to point out some interesting facts regarding the pioneers—their education and their work. God in His providence chose noble men to demonstrate different phases of our work.

Joseph Bates was a leader in Temperance work. Goodloe Bell was chosen to demonstrate to our people simple methods of practical education and to show that simple, practical lines of education could develop strong characters, forcible men and women, much better than the ordinary lines of classical education. These leaders whom God had chosen, were criticized. Elder Bates was laughed at. Goodloe Bell was derided because of his poverty, his simplicity, his thoroughness in discipline, and in his insistence in making a practical use of that which was studied in his classes.

We may well understand and believe what the Scripture says, "They that will live godly, shall suffer persecution." From whom do we expect persecution? From the government, from the officers of the State, from the leaders of the popular churches? Yes, but that does not terrify us. The persecution that hurts is that which comes from our own brothers and sisters, leaders that we love.

I pray God to give us courage. I pray God to give to every student here a clear understanding of the principles taught in this school and a heart knowledge of these principles through practice. Also that He may give a knowledge of the power of Medical Evangelism, through practical experience gained by students in the homes of the people.

Our most important study is to learn how to get access to the homes and to the hearts of the people.

There is another work which I believe that the students of this school can do just now to great advantage. It is the matter of placing before their friends and brethren and before church officers and conference officers with whom they may be acquainted, the wonderful advantages of this school.

Very largely the criticism of any new line of work for the Master comes from those who do

not understand it. I think your teachers will be ready to admit that I have been continually a thorn in their side, urging that more be done to make known what is being done in this school. One Monday morning in October, it was my privilege to be present at the round-table held in this room, and I made request that students and teachers should tell us what they felt they were getting here, in this school. Their remarks were so interesting, that we urged them to write out their statements. Some of these statements have been passed to the printer, and soon we shall have them in leaflet form, and I suggest that you use them quite freely. Send them to your friends and church officers and in a simple, modest way, make known your confidence in the way that God is blessing this work.

It is better that we use no extravagant statements, that we make no comparison with other lines of educational effort. Boasting must be excluded, and we must bear constantly in mind the promise, "The meek will He guide in judgment, the meek will He teach His way." I believe that this body of students could do a blessed work in making known to others what is being done here, but this must be done with the utmost simplicity and modesty.

When I was secretary of our Foreign Mission Board in 1888, I studied the whole field, and at the camp-meetings I gave labored talks loaded with statistics. This fell dreadfully flat, and I attributed my failure to the fact that I was an inexperienced speaker. One day, Brother Prescott said to me, "if you want to interest the people, give them lots of incidents," and so I will say to you, if you want to interest your friends in this work, do not deal with generalities. Give them brief pointed incidents regarding methods and results.

There was a time when the leaders in the Battle Creek Sanitarium held monthly meetings on Sabbath afternoon, in which experiences were given by physicians, nurses, and leaders of Departments, showing what God was doing for the patients and for those ministering to them. Competent secretaries selected the best of these expe-

riences and had them mimeographed, and sent them out to Conference presidents and leading workers all over the world. These documents of four to six pages, sent out each month, did very much to solidify the confidence of our people in the work of the Battle Creek Sanitarium.

Now if you want to double the membership of your school, write to your friends, giving personal experiences in which you have had contact with the people in soul-winning work, and in sowing seeds of present truth.

I pray God that He may through our self-denial, through our consecration, through our heart-to-heart converse with one another, with our teachers, with our ministers, and with our young people and leaders of our Sabbath school work, win their confidence.

I pray that by our earnest consecration to the work in general, by our effort to improve every opportunity to help where help is needed, that we may establish confidence in this work of medical evangelism, and carry to the hearts of the people a belief that it is of primary importance.

Consider foreign missionary fields. My heart is burdened over the work in Poland, Latvia, Rumania, Yugoslavia, and other countries where God is working mightily, and where our people are winning converts in face of persecution.

How can their work be strengthened? By a clear knowledge of how to do Medical Evangelism. In these fields they need more ministers; they need schools; they need more colporteurs; but it is my conviction that most of all they need help in developing medical evangelism. Then the laymen of those countries, wisely trained, can do a work which will overcome many of their present difficulties.

You will inquire, what can we do about it? They are far away. Yes, but sometimes in our work we are brought in contact with representatives of these lands, for individuals from these countries may occasionally be found in our California churches.

Some of us may have contact by correspondence with leading workers in these mission

fields, and we can encourage them to plan for some one from their country to come over here and study with us the best method of Medical Evangelism. We may also suggest that they shall encourage representatives of their nationality who are in California, to connect with this work we are doing, and get an experience that will fit them to be leaders and helpers when in the good providence of God they are called to their native land as missionaries.

Whenever you feel discouraged about your present experience or about the difficulties to be met in the practical side of this school work, read the article in *Testimonies for the Church*, Volume 7, pages 267–276, entitled “To the Teachers in our Schools,” but it also applies very forcibly to city workers, On page 269 of this article, we read:

“Christ can look on the misery of the world without a shade of sorrow for having created man. In the human heart He sees more than sin, more than misery, In His infinite wisdom and love He sees man’s possibilities, the height to which he may attain. He knows that, even though human beings have abused their mercies and destroyed their God-given dignity, yet the Creator is to be glorified in their redemption.”

Do you think you can master this thought? As we look upon the misery in the world, the natural feeling is “I wish we were all dead,” but this is not Christ’s feeling. He saw the possibilities in man, and for “the joy that was set before Him, He endured the cross, despised the shame.”

One time when I was on my way from New York to Boston, on one of those magnificent steamers called “floating hotels,” I became weary of the conversation of my fellow passengers in the saloon. It was not uplifting, so I got away from it by going out on the forward deck and in the darkness I was meditating upon the work of the morrow and looking at the black water. Then I saw just ahead what appeared to be an old hulk. It looked black and dangerous, and I thought, “Will we run into it?” As I peered into the darkness, the great flash-light was turned upon it, and behold it was a beautiful schooner,

beautifully built, perfectly rigged. It was as pretty as a picture.

Then I thought, when you come in contact with disagreeable people, with those who are wretched, disappointed and apparently without God in the world—people whom you naturally would like to shun, just ask Jesus to turn on the flash-light of His love and help us to see the possibilities of good, the possibilities of improvement in these people.

A few months ago I enjoyed a conversation with Prof. Pettish, head of the great International School in Peking. He told me this incident. He knew a man who was in government employed for seven years in Japan. In that time he had come to hate both the country and the people, and he was preparing to return to America. He

thought it would be a shame for him to go back without finding one man in Japan that had one good trait. So he began looking for one Japanese who had one good trait. He found him and then others and finally came to love the Japanese, and he stayed and worked in Japan for eighteen years afterward.

Let us learn to look upon the people with whom we are associated as Christ looks upon them, and let us also remember that Christ never reviled men. He denounced sin, but he never took His disciples apart and criticized men. The most severe things He said to the priests, He said to their faces.

Let us love and give due respect to every man who is working for the upbuilding of mankind.