

SOLVING THE PROBLEM OF STUDENT SELF-SUPPORT, AND MAKING VOCATIONAL SUBJECTS A PART OF THE WORKING CURRICULUM

DR. E. A. SUTHERLAND

IN the science of Christian education, student self-support is made very prominent. The spirit of prophecy says:

"In acquiring an education, many students would gain a most valuable training if they would become self-sustaining. . . . The lessons of economy, industry, self-denial, practical business management, and the steadfastness of purpose, thus mastered, would prove a most important part of their equipment for the battle of life."-" Education," p. 221.

"By the Israelites, industrial training was regarded as a duty. . . . Various industries were taught in the schools of the prophets, and many of the students sustained themselves by manual labor."-" Counsels to Teachers," p. 276.

"Students have been . . . learning to become self-supporting, and a training more important than this they could not receive."-" Appeal for the Madison School."

In speaking of the problem of student self-support, I wish I had time to mention the excellent work of our neighboring institutions,- Emmanuel Missionary College and Southern Junior College,- but time is short, and I know that naturally you expect me to speak from my experience at Madison.

In the founding of the Madison school we were instructed by the spirit of prophecy to develop a school that would give students an opportunity to earn their school expenses, that they might become self-supporting missionaries; and no training, the "testimonies" tell us, is more important than this.

We are located in the Southern field, where there is need of many self-supporting missionaries. If our workers are to be self-sustaining in the field, they must be taught and tested in self-support while in the training school. Today I am ready to tell you that student self-support is possible. Our students can make such school expenses as board, room rent, laundry, etc., by work while taking their training. Madison has developed activities that will support two hundred students continuously throughout the year. What once was a matter of faith has become a reality. And not only are students supporting themselves, but the institution is supporting its teaching force. Friends have kindly assisted with donations, but these gifts have been used for equipment, not to meet operating expenses.'

One of the first essentials in a school that gives students opportunity for self-support is a working force that has faith in the plan, a definite aim, and staying qualities that will hold them together until the scheme has become a recognized working power in the school. '

To insure efficiency in a manual labor department, the director should understand the business, should be apt to teach, should have tact and patience, should be punctual, scientific, and deeply grounded in the love of the truth. He must be in sympathy with all other departments of the institution, and willing to work in the closest co-operation with them. He should be a good disciplinarian, and should take the right attitude toward matters of public concern in our schools, such as diet, dress reform, and the social problems of students and teachers.

I stress teaching ability, because we find some men who are good tradesmen and business managers who are weak teachers of the industries. And we find teachers who are not strong when it comes to the practical "work of an industrial department. To obtain the best results, we need directors who are both good teachers and efficient workmen.

The old-fashioned law and medical students read law or medicine under a practicing lawyer or physician, and many became eminent in their profession." "That apprentice system has given way to systematized institution in school for the development of men of the professions. Our training of workers will fall short of the ideal so long as we are obliged to conduct the industries on the old apprentice system, but even that system brings better results than the purely Intellectual method of teaching.

We need teachers with a love for, and the spirit of, the self-supporting idea; who have health, nerve, courage, vision, and the willingness, as Dr. Finney of Oberlin used to tell his students, "to go anywhere that duty called if need be, with but an ear of corn in the pocket."

To find such men and women out of which to form a faculty for the self-supporting manual training school is indeed a problem. We have been obliged to use men with one or more of the outstanding qualifications, and then train them. Once, when we complained to Sister White of the dearth of teachers for the industries, she replied that we had no one but our-selves to blame, for we had not been diligent during all the years of our school work to train teachers to do this type or educational work.

In order for the manual labor school to succeed, it is most important that it be properly located. On this point we read from the new book, " Fundamentals of Christian Education," page 312:

" Never can the proper education be given to the youth in this country, or any other country, unless they are separated a wide distance from the cities."

Students should have land for cultivation. 'Students in co-operation with teachers should do the farming, and not leave it to hired help. One manual labor school paid a higher wage to outside help to harvest the crop than it paid its teachers; and when the students returned from their vacation, the school did not have work enough for them to make their expenses. This emphasizes the necessity of the all year school, if the industries are to earn the support of the school and its students. There can be no long periods of vacation, and at no time can the work of the school be suspended.

Madison has a farm of approximately five hundred acres. It is divided into land for general farming, garden, orchards, and pasture land. Over these divisions, including also the dairy, poultry, bees, etc., there are eight men in authority, who form a responsible group known as the Committee on Food Production. These men are given power and authority to operate the various farm industries, and they are responsible for the didactic work of the departments.

Each of these directors has with him a group of students to whom are assigned definite responsibilities, and who attend the meetings of the Food Production Committee. Some of these students show marked ability, and their association with the teachers is a continual spur to the instructors to keep up standards and work for progress both in the instruction and in methods of work.

The necessity of the situation led us to adopt this method of carrying forward our industrial departments, but we find that it is sanctioned by the spirit of prophecy, 'which urges us to make use of advanced students as associates with the teachers in tutor work. This is valuable training for men who later will be called upon to lead out in church and mission work.

After trying in vain to find men big enough to head up some of these important departments in the school, I have come to believe that after all much of our industrial work will have to be carried on in this manner. This project plan in education has brought our school where it is recognized by those in our State who are carrying forward the vocational education under the Smith-Hughes Act of Congress.

Further, in regard to equipment: Buildings should be economically constructed, and largely by the students and teachers. There is a city style of architecture and a rural, and the farm school should have buildings adapted to a rural school.

Tools, machinery, supplies, etc., should be such as are necessary to carry forward the industries and enterprises which the Lord tells us should be connected with our schools.

In choosing the location, keep in mind the outside activities of the students, as well as the relation of the outside world to an institution of learning and health. The school must be far enough from the city to escape its contaminating atmosphere, and yet near enough to draw patronage for its sanitarium, and near enough for students to carry forward city missionary activities, such as vegetarian cafeterias, treatment- rooms, health lecture work, circulation of literature, Bible work, etc. We are told that twenty miles is not too, far.

Having adopted the policy that the school is to train students in self-support, the teachers are driven to study the activities which the Lord says should be connected with our educational centers. These group themselves about as follows:

1. The farm and all phases of agriculture and farm mechanics,- that students may learn to raise the food they consume, and construct all necessary buildings.
2. A sanitarium which handles the sick from outside the school family, and trains students for genuine medical missionary work.

3. Facilities for the manufacture and sale of health foods and the teaching of dietetic reform.
4. The manufacture and repair of clothing, furniture, and other articles necessary for comfort.
5. A printing department.
6. Centers of light and missionary activity in the cities, such as vegetarian cafeterias and treatment-rooms, health food stores, schools of health, etc.

We are told that a sanitarium should be connected with all our larger educational institutions. There are wonderful advantages in the close association of the two institutions. From the material standpoint it is a profitable combination. Sanitarium forms a home market for all the produce of farm, gardens, orchards, and for dairy and poultry products, at good prices and without the expense of marketing or competition with city markets. It also furnishes much profitable labor, and is the source of greatest cash income.

From the educational standpoint, both sanitarium and school are benefited by co-operative institutional work. Patients in the rural sanitarium, and the close proximity with the school of activities, become very much interested in the work, and their own mental attitude is changed toward life's problems and manual labor. This is especially true in the South, where the dignity of labor has not been exalted as it should be. The wholesome atmosphere of a student body and teachers all engaged in useful work, and that as a part of the educational program, appeals to them, and elevates and ennobles labor in their eyes.

There is also a personal touch with Christian people in such institutions that is difficult to find elsewhere. The close association of patients with active, vigorous, spiritual-minded students, is a constant uplift to patients, and akin to other treatments. And the association of students-in-training with patients, many of them refined and influential people, steadies the students, gives them a feeling that they have a God-given work in the world, and that they are in the work of the Lord while taking their training. It is a stimulus to spiritual growth and development.

This close association of sanitarium patients with the school at Madison led naturally to the development of the Nashville city work. Patients returning to their homes wanted to continue the diet of the sanitarium; some of them wanted to continue treatments, and so the cafeteria and city treatment-rooms were opened. About fifteen young men and women from the school go to the city each day. There they come in contact with the very best people. They are standing for principle; and they are teachers in a broad way and along vital lines. Then the sanitarium and city enterprises open in a most natural way the avenue for further presentation of the truths we have for the world.

We could not afford to hire outside help to carry forward these enterprises, but we can do a profitable business, profitable especially from the educational standpoint, when we utilize student labor.

I was impressed with a statement made recently by a minister who said that of all the cities he had worked as an evangelist, Nashville showed the least prejudice, and he felt that much of this work was due to the influence of the school and sanitarium at Madison, and the cafeteria and treatment-rooms in the city. We are told that medical missionary work should be the door for the entrance of truth into the large cities.

As this work has gone forward in Nashville, the city which is the natural field for Madison school activities, cafeterias and treatment-rooms have been opened in other cities of the South, largely by our students. In a number of instances these have the hearty co-operation of the local church, and they are a demonstration to lay members of work they can do with the blessing of the Lord and on a self-supporting basis. It is the duty and the privilege of the self-supporting school to help the church as well as its students in matters of training for greater efficiency in Christian service.

I well remember the time in our educational work when as faculties we puzzled our heads to find employment for students, sometimes even soliciting positions in outside families for some worthy young people seeking an education. Today the situation is reversed. Madison is providing work for about one hundred fifty students, and yet it lacks help fully to man all its departments with student labor. Men are more needed in our school than money, and so we put a premium upon student self-support. We charge a student double who wants to pay cash rather than work, because we cannot hire enough help with his money to do the work to care for such a student.

One thing I must not fail to mention : If the school is to make its way and the way of its students by the industries, it becomes necessary to make radical changes in the daily program. The program followed in schools not of the manual labor order can fill the hours with classroom recitations alternating with head study. But the school

that gives students opportunity to work for self-support must arrange a program that admits for unbroken periods of several hours for manual labor.' Equipment should be in use all day long; all farm operations must be continuous; cafeterias must hold workers for several hours at a stretch. operation of a sanitarium demands the same. This has led us to adjust the work and study program so that students have a block of solid time for work while another set of students are doing class work and study. Then the crews, or squads, change places. Thus each student alternates days of work with days of classroom activities.

It is interesting to find that when the Smith-Lever Act was put into operation, the scheme of study and work was patterned after that followed for a number of years at Madison. It is a plan that proves advantageous wherever the laboratory or the project method of teaching is applied. It seems essential when the element of student support is added to that of these up-to-date methods of teaching.

In all our educational work we must keep the missionary fields in view. Health is one of the first essentials. Manual training is given its place in the curriculum, we have a natural means of testing the strength and health of the student. We should let the student understand that he who cannot stand up to the manual labor program, is not physically fitted for the foreign field. Again, the manual labor program in the training school is the best possible means of building up the physical condition of students. It is a health preserver, a health maker, and a great moralizer.

There are also mental developments that follow manual training in education that are needed in the future life of our missionaries. Manual labor, rightly conducted, develops the spirit of economy, patience, tact in dealing with men, adaptability, faith, courage, endurance. In the words of the spirit of prophecy, it will give them "standing room" in the field of labor to which they may be called.

An energetic student can, during the school year of forty eight weeks, earn his school expenses and at the same time carry on his class work, and receive a full year of recognized school credits.

People coming in contact with our school are often surprised at the volume of business done by the institution. While it is a school, it is also a business concern, and students are active in business. They are partners in a growing plant that handles several thousand dollars' worth of business each month.

Some may be interested in the details of remuneration for students. Some years ago we decided upon a policy that is akin to the old system of barter. In exchange for student labor, the school gives him his board, rent, laundry, in fact, all expenses except books and clothes. In spite of the fluctuations in prices of labor and food in the world, the school has maintained what we consider an even balance, allowing the student to earn his expenses.

For their labor, students received credit by the hour. Some are worth more to the institution than others, and more than they are allowed. However, students in training for missionary work need to learn that the wage one earns is not so important as the development in him of a spirit of helpfulness toward the institution, toward the missionary enterprise with which he is to be connected through life. The school is not a cold-blooded, commercial concern. It has been created and is maintained by great sacrifice on the part of the teachers. Equipment has been the gift of friends, and the operation of the institution depends upon the closest co-operation of students and teachers. The student needs to learn to produce more than he consumes. If he has a living while in training, that is sufficient. He goes forth from the institution without debt, and with the spirit to give his time and ability to the enterprise with which he may connect when his training is over. Such students will serve in mission fields at much less outlay of means than other workers.

A school providing self-support for students is a growing institution, and must add to its equipment frequently. A school giving its students opportunity to earn their way, should not be asked to provide funds from its earnings for new equipment. If the school can keep up its manual training equipment, and keep out of debt, and maintain its efficiency, it will have little trouble in getting financial help in the way of donations from friends for new facilities.

Caution is needed, however, in the development of manual training departments, lest they be conducted for the commercial value largely. When the spirit of commercialism gets possession of any manual training department of a school, it will kill the efficiency of that department in training workers for the great harvest field. Let us develop those industries that the Lord has said should be operated by the members of the church, such industries as students can develop in the churches which they raise up when they go from the school, the industries which can be carried on by our people while they are giving the gospel to the world. .

Paul was a missionary of the self-supporting type. He made tents as a means of livelihood, but he did not attempt

to compete with the tent factories of the day. He was not sewing tents for the money he could make, but for his own bread and clothes, that he might not have to depend upon the new converts for these necessities. In our industrial education we need so to conduct the manual training departments that students will be taught to care for themselves - to provide the food they eat, the clothes they wear, the houses that shelter them. In addition to this they must be able to care for them-selves and for others in case of sickness. Carey cobbled shoes, not to make money, but as a means of livelihood while preaching the gospel while seeking souls for the kingdom. Let us stress, therefore, those industries in our manual labor schools, which will train the students to provide necessities plus that which will enable them to make others comfortable in health and in sickness. They will then be ready to go out into the churches and teach others to do those things for which our religion eminently fits us, such as feeding people the proper foods, and caring for the sick.

Judgment must be used also not to attempt industries that are beyond the capacity of the students, or that require too much time in attaining a working knowledge. The world is helping in the solution of this problem. Intensive instruction in short courses, is now being given in many places to meet the demands of men in the world. The Knights of Columbus and the Young Men's Christian Association are carrying forward lines of instruction in industrial training in which six weeks will prepare a man for a job, and then he continues his education while holding the job. We should do as much.

A few figures may put this question of student and institution self-support in a clearer manner before our minds :

The average yearly expenses of a student in our schools is from \$250 to \$300. Madison had 150 students last year who earned their way by work. Had these students paid cash, they have turned in more than \$35,000. They earned this amount while obtaining their training as missionaries. We consider this a valuable part of their education.

Madison's twenty-five teachers if paid at the average teacher's wage, would have drawn a salary of \$25,000, making a total of \$60,000.

The income at Madison from the industries last year was about \$75,000, approximately \$65,000 of which came to the institution as cash from the world through its sanitarium, cafeteria, and other enterprises operated with student labor. The institution gave its students their board and room rent and their instruction; and the teachers a humble living; besides some money for tithes, offerings, etc., for the local and general cause. The upkeep of the plant was maintained, and some new equipment was added.

These figures indicate that students and teachers, co-operating, have brought in more than twice as much as the students would have paid in cash.

When the habit of self-support is formed in students during their school life, we reap the results in self-supporting missionary enterprises, such as rural schools and medical missionary centers. There are in the South more than 200 workers of this class, aside from those at the Madison school. These 200 workers, at a salary of \$500 a year, would draw \$100,000 annually. I believe if they could not support themselves, it would be too great a burden to throw their support upon the cause.

It is by solving this problem in our educational institutions that the laymen of the church will unite with the ministry in proclaiming the last message to the world, and then will the end come. This idea is clearly set forth by Sister White in the following language:

"The students have been taught to raise their own crops, to build their own houses, and to care wisely for cattle and poultry. They have been learning to become self-supporting, and a training more important than this they could not receive. . . . To this is added the knowledge of how to treat the sick and to care for the injured. This training for medical missionary work is one of the grandest objects for which any school can be established. . . . The class of education given . . . is such as will be accounted a treasure of great value by those who take up missionary work in foreign fields. If many more in other schools were receiving a similar training, we as a people would be a spectacle to the world, to angels, and to men. The message would be quickly carried to every country and souls now in darkness would be brought to the light. Then the light of truth would be carried in a simple and effective way, and a great work would be accomplished for the Master in a short time." _ " Appeal for the Madison School."

This talk was given at the MV and Educational Convention held at Colorado Springs in 1926.