

Why the Battle Creek College Can Not Confer Degrees

The question is frequently asked, Why does not Battle Creek College confer degrees as formerly? The reasons are various.

Our college claims to be a training-school under the supervision of Christ himself. If Jesus Christ has direct control of the school, it cannot be in harmony with worldly ideas of education any more than his teaching harmonized with that of the rabbis while he was on earth. Education from heaven has never been received cheerfully by the world, nor will it ever be. Of Christ it was said that never man taught as he did, and yet he was regarded by the popular educators as ignorant, because he had not learned under them. They would not place their seal of approval upon his educational system. He has plainly said that his disciples also would be considered straight-laced extremists, and it would therefore be unreasonable to expect the world to place its seal of approval upon scholarship that is the result of an educational system, the standard of which, to them, seems low and narrow – in fact, like utter foolishness.

Granting degrees is the result of an educational system that attempts to measure the mind of man,¹ which God alone can do.² Degrees at one time were licenses, or testimonials, granted by the church to serve as a protection both to the holder and to the people. However, no one who felt that he was called to work was denied the privilege of trying his talent, even if he had not taken the training required by the church. This plan is still practiced by God's people. In time the papacy felt that it was necessary to restrict all from teaching or preaching who did not hold licenses. In order to be certain that the teachers or preachers were orthodox, it was necessary to keep them in school a number of years, which led to a course of study from which modern school courses have been largely drawn.

"A complete university course was represented by four degrees, – bachelor, master, licentiate, and finally doctor, – which last was usually taken at the age of thirty or thirty-five. . . . that the bachelorship was taken very young, we know from the history of many universities. In the seventeenth century a statute was passed at Oxford University, fixing fourteen as the youngest age for matriculation; and centuries before this, twelve years of age had been fixed as a minimum at Paris." – Laurie, *"Rise and Constitution of Universities"*, pages 229, 230.

The church had such a monopoly of education that "men have studied from twenty to forty years, and have learned neither Latin nor German." – Painter, *"History of Education"*, page 38.

This system was a gigantic monopoly of education, the object of

1 – See Old G.L.U. 388-9

2 – See Ch.S. 268

which was to compel³ the students to study the ideas of men so faithfully that they would become obedient slaves to one man, the pope. All independent and original thinking was destroyed by the long years of study of man's thoughts. It would have been impossible to make this system a success without a prescribed course of study; for otherwise there would have been freedom in selecting the studies required for the best development of the individual mind. A *course* of study enslaves by compelling the student to obey a lifeless machine in the hands of a tyrant whose entire happiness consists in breaking the will and spirit of his victim, making him a mere automaton. Papacy and paganism could never exist without this system to reduce the minds of men to abject slavery by the long-drawn-out process of studying *men*. The thought is shackled, and the completion of the course of study and the obtaining of the degree are signs that the individual is a servant of the one who controls the system.

We have heard of tests between persons to see who could eat or drink the most. Many have died as a result of such gluttony. Is not this cramming and stuffing the mind even worse as the mind is more delicate than the stomach? The brain is crowded to the point of congestion by the hardest kind of mental effort in preparing for examinations to complete a course, the end of which is a degree. The result is weakness, not mental vigor. Students could not be induced to do this if it were not for the final reward — the degree. They are led to believe that their whole success in life depends upon taking the prescribed studies, passing their examinations, and receiving a degree.

A degree is measured by the value of the seal upon it. At present the seal is placed there by the state. The state says by this act that it approves the system of education which grants the honor. In other words, the state says that the work represented by the degree has been done as satisfactorily as if it were done by a state institution. Whenever a Christian school asks the state to place its seal upon its work, it virtually says to the state, "we do our work as you do yours. We teach the same things that you teach. Our one object is to train men and women as the state trains them, and the end of our educational system is the same as that of the educational system of the state."

At once the question arises, Is the educational system of the Seventh-day Adventists the same as that of the state? If we follow the Word of God and the Testimonies, we know that there is no more similarity between our educational work and that of the world, than there is between our religious work and that of the popular denominations. In fact, there is not so much; for the educational system of the state is supposed to be secular, to be entirely separate from religion, while there is in the popular denominations a great deal with

which we are in harmony. But when education is stripped of Bible religion, what is it? Seventh-day Adventists can answer the question; for they know the history of the papacy and its formation.

All the facts taught in the worldly schools are arranged to prove that man can work out his own salvation. The system has been separated from Christ's teaching, and is united with a belief of what is popularly known as *evolution*, the center of modern religion. There is no need of Jesus, righteousness by faith, nor wisdom by faith: all perfection can be reached and truth discovered by *study*. It differs as much from the educational system revealed to Seventh-day Adventists as light differs from darkness, Christ from Satan. This does not mean that there are no facts taught in the worldly schools that are true; but the facts are linked to *theories* that lead away from truth. These theories become so subtly interwoven in the minds of students that they are not conscious of their presence; and the danger is that the very elect shall be deceived.

When we say to our people that our education is in harmony with Christ, and at the same time ask the state, which is opposed to Christ's educational system, to place its seal of approval upon our work, it shows weakness somewhere.

When Christ was on the earth, there were times when the learned doctors of the Jewish schools offered to bestow upon him the master's degree. But he kindly yet firmly refused this honor; for he could not be honored by worldly men and also by God. For several centuries the church was firm, and refused to conform to worldly methods of education. But unconverted men came into the church with their pagan ideas of education, and encouraged young men to receive the culture and learning of the pagans, in order to do more efficient work for the pagans. The years of hard study in the pagan learning fixed pagan principles in their minds, through which in after-years they read and interpreted the Bible.

Pagan education in the minds of professed Christians created "the beast." The result of this union was the adoption of pagan institutions, chief among which was Sunday. Professed Christian young men in pagan universities were continually striving to interpret the word of God to harmonize with pagan wisdom.

In time, institutions of learning were founded by the church, and the first *degree* was granted by a pope. The Catholic Church has always believed that it should control the educational system of the world. The Jesuits are devoted to counteracting the educational reform of the sixteenth century, under Luther. They have one great object, to establish the Catholic educational system wherever the Protestant system has been planted. They have succeeded in doing this in every country in Europe. Germany has become, educationally speaking, completely Catholic. Our country is patterning after the European universities. Its educational system is Catholic and medieval. The idea of courses, the conferring of honors, degrees, etc.,

have all been adopted from Catholic institutions of Europe, which they borrowed from the pagans. A degree with the state seal upon it represents a certain amount of education that is worldly, not Christian.

In this time, when darkness is covering the earth, and gross darkness the people, and when all the world is again wondering after the beast, is it possible for God to place his seal of approval upon an educational system that is approved by the state? He longs for that which will bring the outpouring of the latter rain, the baptism of his Spirit. This is placing *his* seal of approval upon the true educational system.

Do we not see that Seventh-day Adventists are just as much in danger of receiving the mark of the beast as any one else? Can we not see that the professed Christian world has made the image in the same manner that the "beast" was made? We should come completely out of Babylon (the popular churches) and Egypt (the worldly educational system.)

E. A. Sutherland.

— *Advent Review and Sabbath Herald*, October 10, 1899.

SPALDING and MAGAN COLLECTION 437 from W. C. White 10/29/08 to J. G. Lamson

"Regarding the question asked in your letter, Mother says, it would be much wiser for our brethren to make quick provision for the education of your people in their territory in the fourteen grades. That will prepare them to be evangelists, church school teachers, and general workers, and leave the work of the fifteenth and sixteenth grades to be done at Union College, which is closely associated with a large sanitarium.

"Mother says that we are too near the end of our work to spend time in educating professionals who want degrees. She urges that our energies be devoted to the training of workers for our cause, and these do not need degrees except in the medical work; and for that part of college training, students can best get their education where there are sanitariums and colleges working hand in hand."

SMC 445 Do not regard as most essential the theoretical part of your education You may say, The world will not acknowledge us. What if the world will not acknowledge you? It is the power of God that makes the impression upon human minds.

MM 206 The Lord has shown us the evil of depending upon the strength of earthly organizations. He has instructed us that the commission of the medical missionary is received from the very highest authority. He would have us understand that it is a mistake to regard as most essential the education given by physicians who reject the authority of Christ . . .

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