Created Whole, with a Warrantee: Part: 17

Jesus Christ Maketh Thee Whole! Acts 9:34

Useful Thoughts on Gardening and Education: from H. Skadsheim.

This is a story written in the 1970s by a person who had a lot of experience and learned from it. First off, he learned that it is great to grow your own food if you can; he later learned that if you did not have natural whole foods grown on healthy soil, after a while, you become weak and sickly! He learned that chemical fertilizers and pesticides create inferior crops that do not store well and do not nourish well and they also damage the soil. He learned that using nature's own methods to build up soil is what works best, even though it takes more work and time to get it established, especially on land that has been ruined by over planting, chemicals and lack of organic materials being restored to the soil.

Even the Bible indicates it is not right to take crops from the land and not restore straw and so on as organic matter to feed the soil that feeds us. God also left directions to Israel that the land should be rested every seven years, this man saw that by leaving a field to rest, the land would be restored to better fertility. It does not need to be a specific year, nor does it have to be all the land at once.

In education he also learned that practical knowledge was more real value than philosophical knowledge. It is better to be able to take tools and do real hands-on work than to have a bunch of letters after your name and not know how to even take care of your own needs!

Here is his story: see what principles you can gather from it. Keep in mind, healthy rich soil makes healthy plants, which produce nutritious food which make for healthy bodies. For those who are able to grow some of your food, as you read, consider what you can do to build up the soil of your gardens!

NATURAL LIVING:

On a homestead in the north woods of Minnesota (in the late 1800s) we lived a natural life. We had achieved almost complete independence of commercial sources, and did not have to be victims of artificial controls and high-jacked prices, or completely deprived by the action of some labor union boss cutting off all sources, as we do in highly organized, super-civilized communities. Our fuel was abundant, and we slashed down only the choicest, and cut it up with the buzz saw. We grew our own grains, mostly wheat, rye and corn. We worked the ground and planted it ourselves, harvested it ourselves, thrashed it with our own machines, ground it ourselves, baked it ourselves and ate it ourselves. There were no middlemen's profits or sales taxes to take the lion's share. We figured out that we could sell a bushel of corn for fifty cents, and then buy it back in corn flakes packages for about nine dollars a bushel—highly devitalized at that. That is the shortest road to the poorhouse I know of—to dispose of everything you produce, and buy everything you use.

We raised loads of potatoes, pumpkins and squash, cut up the culls for the livestock and used the choicest ourselves. Mother made me lord of the garden when I was ten, and we grew all the standard vegetables ourselves, and also the flavoring herbs, especially sage and thyme, and we picked wild hops to make our own yeast for the bread, and wild fruits from strawberries in the spring to high and low bush cranberries in the fall. The cellar was full to the ceiling, of vegetables in the bins and cabbages hung head down, and canned fruits on the shelves, crocks of preserves, bins full of grains.

Life was really primitive. We produced much of our own clothing. We sheared a large flock of sheep and carded, spun and knit our socks, mittens tam-o-shanters, sweaters and even underwear. When the animals grew older, we ate up all their carcasses before they died, so there would be no waste—most primitive people do that.

Now going back from civilization to the more primitive ways of living, there was quite a panic about 1907. We found out about it when we went seventeen miles to the nearest town to cash a small check. They said nobody

could cash checks. Also a little later a six months railway strike was threatened. That was before the days of trucking, and city people were in panic again. They said everybody would starve if food could not be shipped in. We said, let them keep their checks, and let them strike, six months or sixteen months, it made no difference, for we had a barrel of salt and a keg of nails, and five gallons of oil for the steam engine, so we could eat and build and even renew our own clothes in a pinch. Finance wizards and labor bosses could not panic us. We were independent.

Then came the problem of education. A need of scientific knowledge would drag us out of our smug isolation from human society. We had only five months school a year, and in the spring we had to miss some of that to help plant our crops and in the fall again we had to dig potatoes and thresh grains. I was the first one who finished the eighth grade in the 27 years the district existed

Formal Education

At the academy the registrar said I had to take algebra and Latin and other 'ologies and 'osophies. I was not ready to ossify yet, so asked why I had to take such studies. "Scholastic standards required them," she said. Finding they were only a hangover from scholasticism and had little relation to real life, I told the registrar I wanted to take living languages and useful subjects first, and if I had time to spare later, I would come back and get some of the frills. "But they will not let you graduate if you do not line up," she pleaded. However when graduation time came around, even the state standards had discarded Latin, and in the course in methods of teaching in high schools, by Parker, I learned how much more practical a course in applied mathematics was, where the material was arranged according to the needs of the learner, instead of artificially arranged as a systematic subject, such as algebra.

Of course we had been prepared for such sophistries, by readings every evening from the counsels of Mrs. E. G. White, such as:

> "In the colleges and universities, thousands of youth devote a large part of the best years of life to the study of Greek and Latin. And while they are engaged in these studies, mind and character are molded by the evil sentiments of pagan literature.... Far better would it be for the world were the education gained from such sources to be dispensed with.... Who can bring a clean thing out of an unclean?" Ministry of Healing, p. 443. Fund. of Chr. Education. p. 467.

Later, my brother, who is much brighter than I am, came back from college and remarked that he had taken all the mathematics they teach in any college, and got straight A's in every one. I was putting up a forty foot building at the time so I suggested that he figure out the gables for me, and the length of all the studdings and rafters, so I could cut them without climbing up to fit them. I gave him all the measurements needed for the calculations. After puzzling for considerable time, he said, "No. I can't do it." Now, of what use is an education if you cannot use it?

Dr. Fryklund also said. "There is no development in merely acquiring information. Development comes in applying knowledge. That is why there is no such a thing as education, without an industrial program connected with it."

In contrast a preacher said. "We cannot waste the time of our students on bookbinding, printing, carpentering and agriculture or other secular pursuits. We must make preachers of them." From a standpoint of logic, that sounds plausible, but it feels very sacrilegious after you have studied the Counsels of the Spirit of Prophecy. How wonderful it is to have higher sources of counsel for life than the sophistries of the worldly wise. The following comes to mind:

> "While attending school, the youth should have an opportunity for learning the use of tools. Under the guidance of experienced workmen, carpenters who are apt to teach, patient, and kind, the students themselves should erect buildings on the school grounds and make needed improvements, thus by practical lessons learning how to build economically. The students should be trained to manage all the

> different kinds of work connected with printing, such as type setting, press work, and bookbinding, together with tent making and other useful lines of work. Small fruits should be planted, and vegetables and flowers cultivated.
> "Culture on all these points will make our youth useful in carrying the truth to foreign countries. . Missionaries will be much more influential among the people if they are able to teach the inexperienced how to labor according to the best methods.
> "A much smaller fund will be required to sustain such missionaries, because, combined with their studies they have put to the very best use their physical powers in practical labor; and wherever they go, all they have gained in this line will give them vantage ground." Testimonies Vol. 6, p. 176.

As we had always raised a good garden at home, and whether I had worked in an office in the middle of a large city, or the cold shores of Lake Superior, or the hot regions of the tropics, we continued to make gardening our hobby. When we hired natives to help us weed our garden, we noticed that they carried off all the weeds as greens, and ate them. If we had known what they were and realized their importance in our dietary, our health would have been preserved much longer.

Coming from Northern Minnesota and with absolutely no knowledge of tropical conditions, or taste for the entirely different foods, which cannot be acquired overnight, we began to lose our appetite from the exhausting heat and overwork, and then sent to New York for more of the devitalized commercial foods, which hastened the complete physical collapse of our health.

On a small tropical island without mountains, there is no relief from the exhausting heat. . . To recuperate we were invited to spend the winter with that wonderful man, Dr. Charles Cave of Barbados. What an education to associate with such a character. I could fully appreciate the statement by Dr. V. C. Fryklund to a group of us taking a course in Industrial Education. "If you teachers could only realize, that what you are is of much greater consequence educationally, than all the subjects you can teach. Much of the subject matter is forgotten, but your personality impresses itself indelibly on those young people." It is the more remarkable for having been said in a large secular University, How important that we choose our teachers, more than our subjects. Tell me who you associate with and I will tell you what you are.

Vocational Education Pays

Six months in the hospital, and we were able to return to America and then an operation by Dr. W. T. Truman in Washington Sanitarium, and then Veterans Hospitals for nearly two years, and being told that we were permanently disabled, we had the rude awakening of realizing we had to do some rethinking of life.

Being stranded in the hospital, gives the first chance modern man has to really think. He is too busy while preoccupied with a routine job, to do any creative thinking. Making no progress health-wise in the great institutions, we decided to return to natural living, as it is pleasanter to even be miserable there, than in congested wards.

We wrote our friend E. L. Green, the conference treasurer that our qualifications were that we could do absolutely no physical work or mental work, but we wanted a job. I wanted to be caretaker of the conference camp ground. The conference thought I could be trusted. Even when completely disabled, a reputation, or character, can be of value. I swung a hammock among the trees and listened to the birds, and enjoyed the scenes of nature.

As I had studied general agriculture in our academy and then gone to a larger school and taken courses in Soil Chemistry, Fertility, Feeds and Feeding, and Crops, I wanted to try gardening. The soil was pure silicate sand, every vestige of vegetation burned off every year, and not enough rain fell. I could not hoe or even pluck the small weeds, so had to hire a neighbor. It cost $26 to raise eight dollars' worth of vegetables.

When camp meeting time came, I asked them not to burn the straw stack, as I wanted to work it into the soil. Then I planted soy beans, peas and beans to build up the nitrogen in the soil. I needed to renew technical

knowledge, and later findings, so I sent for every agriculture bulletin available from Superintendent of Documents, Washington, D.C. and several Universities. These were classified and bound into reference books, and one day I figured out that I could do this for farmers and asked the superintendent, "Not interested," he remarked. "I am interested." said the county nurse noticing my physical condition.

Again it was industrial education to the rescue; but how the doctors of philosophy despise it. A college dean remarked. "I do not think that we should give any credit for agriculture, bookbinding, printing and carpentering. Those subjects are suitable for such as do not have sufficient mental capacity for intellectual education."

Students soon get influenced by these leaders. Brother L. N. Holm, agriculture teacher and college business manager, said one day. "How many do you think I got in my agriculture class. Out of over 500 students I have lined up today, I got only three." And this is the very subject that should be the ABC of all our education.

The year 1930 the depression was coming on and so I invited some students who were unable to earn their education, to join me in the bookbinding. They had the physical strength I lacked, but I could teach them how to do this skilled work. I was averaging a net profit of about $125 a month, when the school invited me to move my bindery on to the campus and give other students work. Soon these students who learned skilled work were earning exactly twice as much per hour as those who did ordinary dishwashing, janitor work and similar work for the school.

One day the principal of the school said that on account of his health, he was to be let out of his job, and wondered if I would take him in as a partner. I told him I did not believe in joint ownership, but give me twenty minutes to think and I will have a plan. I proposed I would teach him and his wife the trade the rest of the school year, leave the foreman I had in the shop, and a nucleus of trained workers, and then I would go and start other binderies.

"Scientific" Agriculture

At the college in Michigan I anticipated association with the best agriculture men in our denomination. The University had offered to grant $20,000 every year if the college would permit these men and their crews to carry out research for them.

I rented a garden. Then I proceeded to learn the latest developments in agriculture problems, by the use of chemical fertilizers and poison sprays to fight insects and pests we had never heard of in the virgin lands of the natural forest regions. I was told we could work the soil only twenty minutes, between the time it was too wet and sticky to work, or set almost as hard as a cement floor.

To further complicate matters, my physical handicaps made it impossible to use a hoe, but I got a flat blade cultivator which pushed more gently, and cut off the roots just below the surface, making only a shallow mulch. We eked out a meager crop and put it in the cellar. In a few weeks it was all decayed and we had to take it out and bury it. The plants I had poisoned so intensively to carry them through the growing period, did not have resistance to storage diseases either. All these things were interesting problems to study as a diversion from the shop work. I had drilled my students on the ideal that where there was problem, there is where you find an opportunity. So I set to work, on them.

Natural Gardening

First I had to work on the problem that I was not able to work the hard ground. I went to the woods with a wheelbarrow and hauled in loads of black leaf mold, and put it on top of the ground, after plowing, and then put small leaves and other trash that would not hinder the cultivator, on top of the humus, as a mulch.

I remembered our agriculture teacher said, if you want the best in agriculture, study nature and imitate it. In the woods and meadows, we always found the black loam on top of the ground. Man-made methods put the fine mineral soil on the surface and buried the plant residues. Dust mulch was advocated everywhere, but it

produced mostly dust bowl storms. If it rained, the drops puddled the fine mineral soil and made an impermeable pie crust, so the water could not sink into the subsoil, but washed away more land. When this dried it made a hard crust and air could not penetrate to the roots, and the remedy advocated was more dust mulch cultivating. The methods that the Creator used in nature are ignored in our machine age.

More Humus

Another problem was the sprouting and stooling out of crops, and getting them to ripen in the north, or getting more of the growing finished during the wet spring months before the summer droughts came on. Light colored mineral soils plowed up to the surface reflected back the heat from the sun, so badly needed to heat the soil. Capillary action was bringing up water to the surface for evaporation that produced more chilling. Mineral soil is a good conductor of heat, so during cold nights the soil lost more heat, during those wet spring months when exactly the opposite was needed on every count.

Disease and Pests

Then I noticed that humus was a good insulator and would keep the soil warmer. It matted on the surface so no dust could blow away. Like a blotter it absorbed rain which sank into the soil, and it made the soil so mellow to work. Adding lime made the subsoil also more friable (crumbly). I began learning simple lessons from nature.

So I got an inspiration to form a garden and nature club. I lived in the grove. Professor B. H. Phipps, the biology teacher also lived in the grove. One day as we passed his garden he remarked that he had no diseases or pests in his fruits or vegetables, but there were plenty of them all around it because the neighbors had sprayed six times already that season. His plants seemed to develop natural immunity. "We see this before our eyes, but cannot explain it," he said.

Then he pointed out how he always put a good mulch of leaves, weeds, waste and garbage on his garden, but the neighbors burned theirs. I was putting mulch on my garden too, and after a few years, when we put our vegetables in the same cellar, some kept till the following April or May instead of decaying in a few weeks. Going back to natural methods built up the resistance in the plant's cells to disease while growing, as well as in storage.

Conserving Heat in Soils

Dark colored humus also absorbs many times as much heat from the sun, as light colored mineral soils do. It also forms a good insulates, so the soil does not lose its heat during chilly nights, or by fast evaporation. Sweet potatoes, large corn, etc, can be grown 200 miles further north with rich humus than with bare mineral soil.

Effects of Plowing

Methods of plowing are also important from a health angle. We all know that if we seal out the air in cans, harmful germs multiply by the billions, but these germs cannot live in the presence of air. Neither can tetanus germs that cause lockjaw, nor gangrene or dysentery. If we take manure from a barn that has been contaminated by diseased animals, and plow it down so the air is shut out, putrefaction or decay sets in and germs increase tremendously in the soil. If we leave this material near the surface it gets moldy and does not stink. The molds produce penicillin and dozens of other mycelium which counteract disease germs. Therefore the man made method is a disease producer, but the natural way we learn from nature, is a disease resistance program.

Restoring Soils

Professor E. H. Falconer says in his book, Plowman's Folly, p. 60: "I had seen the same fields pass through several alternate periods of cultivation and neglect, and had noted that the mere growth of weeds and briars had renewed productivity on such land."

Modern science has not found any better method of restoring land than the Creator's method's explained in the Old Testament. We find actual experiences everywhere confirming the need of learning natural living.

Louis Broomfield tells in his book, 'Beautiful Valley': "All around is a country of abandoned or run down farms, houses and barns fallen, the fields a wilderness of weeds, underbrush and seedlings reclaiming once rich land. In the midst of this is the Blumbaugh place like a jewel in a tarnished setting. His first years were hard going. The soil was miserably poor in minerals and humus—that residue of decayed and decaying organic material without which all soil is dead.

"Blumbaugh was learning from his land. He said: 'I was feeling my way, but I did know enough to pile on that soil every scrap of manure, trash, spoiled hay and corn fodder from neighbors farms, and put it on our land. A big corn sheller in Danville gave us 5000 bushels of corn cobs. We had a big sawdust pile in the woods. Everybody said sawdust would poison the land, but we used it to mulch our trees.' At the U.S. Conservation station he saw hillsides planted in contour with alternate strips of cultivated crops and hay sod, and trash farming which chops manure and rubbish into the soil and makes it porous.

"In less than ten years corn yields leaped from 15 to 100 bushels, wheat from 18 to 35. Another miraculous thing happened: Springs of water which had dried up, yielded an inexhaustible flow, the ponds were full of water, even . . during the worst drought Ohio had known in 50 years. The water trapped on the hillsides went into the ground and came out again clear, instead of running with tons of precious top soil. This is only part of the story, for with it has been the best of diets, good living and one of the most beautiful spots on earth."

Economical Homes

By learning this natural agriculture method, people can buy economical land, instead of expensive farms, and improve the soil with leaves, cuttings from roadsides and lawns, garbage and wastes. We read about the famous G. W. Carver, on page 73, Reader's Digest for Dec. 1942:

"When G W Carver arrived in Tuskegee, there seemed little for him to work on and nothing for him to work with... . He wanted a school farm; the soil was defiant. He wanted grass on the lawn; there was only sand. The soil on his 16 acre 'experiment farm' was sandy, eroded and impoverished. He sent his students into the swamps and woods armed with buckets and day after day they brought back muck and leaf mold and covered the ground with it. On these acres he demonstrated that the South's worst soils can be made to produce."

When we add humus, mulch and ground rocks or shells to depleted soils, and make living soils, they develop resistance to disease. When we see so much disease in plants, animals and man, there must be something wrong with man-made methods, for we are told:

> "If men would read the Old Testament scriptures they would see that the Lord knew better than they in regard to proper treatment of land." *Fundamentals of Christian Education, page 523.*

Recent discoveries prove that plant residues must be returned to the soil to make food for beneficial bacteria, molds, enzymes, mycelium and earthworms that digest the elements in the soil for the plants. When only bare mineral soil is provided for the plants, they lose something vital. Because the people were too greedy to let the land rest, or to return a part of the crops to restore the soil, the rich land they inherited was left desolate. Likewise in our rich land, over one third of the soil has been ruined by using artificial, chemical methods of cultivation. What shall we do about it?

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