

Selected Ellen White Comments on the Use of Charcoal

Selected Messages, Book 2, page 294

The Lord has given some simple herbs of the field that at times are beneficial; and if every family were educated in how to use these herbs in case of sickness, much suffering might be prevented, and no doctor need be called. These old-fashioned, simple herbs, used intelligently, would have recovered many sick who have died under drug medication.

One of the most beneficial remedies is pulverized charcoal, placed in a bag and used in fomentations. This is a most successful remedy. If wet in smartweed boiled, it is still better. I have ordered this in cases where the sick were suffering great pain, and when it has been confided to me by the physician that he thought it was the last before the close of life. Then I suggested the charcoal, and the patient slept, the turning point came, and recovery was the result. To students when injured with bruised hands and suffering with inflammation, I have prescribed this simple remedy, with perfect success. The poison of inflammation was overcome, the pain removed, and healing went on rapidly. The most severe inflammation of the eyes will be relieved by a poultice of charcoal, put in a bag, and dipped in hot or cold water, as will best suit the case. This works like a charm.

I expect you will laugh at this; but if I could give this remedy some outlandish name that no one knew but myself, it would have greater influence. . . .But the simplest remedies may assist nature, and leave no baleful effects after their use.--Letter 82, 1897 (To Dr. J. H. Kellogg).

Selected Messages, Book 2, page 295-296

There are many simple herbs which, if our nurses would learn the value of, they could use in the place of drugs, and find very effective. Many times I have been applied to for advice as to what should be done in cases of sickness or accident, and I have mentioned some of these simple remedies, and they have proved helpful.

On one occasion a physician came to me in great distress. He had been called to attend a young woman who was dangerously ill. She had contracted fever while on the campground, and was taken to our school building near Melbourne, Australia. But she became so much worse that it was feared she could not live. The physician, Dr. Merritt Kellogg, came to me and said, "Sister White, have you any light for me on this case? If relief cannot be given our sister, she can live but a few hours." I replied, "Send to a blacksmith's shop, and get some pulverized charcoal; make a poultice of it, and lay it over her stomach and sides." The doctor hastened away to follow out my instructions. Soon he returned, saying, "Relief came in less than half an hour after the application of the poultices. She is now having the first natural sleep she has had for days." {2SM 295.2}

I have ordered the same treatment for others who were suffering great pain, and it has brought relief and been the means of saving life. My mother had told me that snake bites and the sting of reptiles and poisonous insects could often be rendered harmless by the use of charcoal poultices. When working on the land at Avondale, Australia, the workmen would often bruise their hands and limbs, and this in many cases resulted in such severe inflammation that the worker would have to leave his

work for some time. One came to me one day in this condition, with his hand tied in a sling. He was much troubled over the circumstance; for his help was needed in clearing the land I said to him, "Go to the place where you have been burning the timber, and get me some charcoal from the eucalyptus tree, pulverize it, and I will dress your hand." This was done, and the next morning he reported that the pain was gone. Soon he was ready to return to his work.

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A brother was taken sick with inflammation of the bowels and bloody dysentery. The man was not a careful health reformer, but indulged his appetite. We were just preparing to leave Texas, where we had been laboring for several months, and we had carriages prepared to take away this brother and his family, and several others who were suffering from malarial fever. My husband and I thought we would stand this expense rather than have the heads of several families die and leave their wives and children unprovided for.

Two or three were taken in a large spring wagon on spring mattresses. But this man who was suffering from inflammation of the bowels, sent for me to come to him. My husband and I decided that it would not do to move him. Fears were entertained that mortification had set in. Then the thought came to me like a communication from the Lord to take pulverized charcoal, put water upon it, and give this water to the sick man to drink, putting bandages of the charcoal over the bowels and stomach. We were about one mile from the city of Denison, but the sick man's son went to a blacksmith's shop, secured the charcoal, and pulverized it, and then used it according to the directions given. The result was that in half an hour there was a change for the better. We had to go on our journey and leave the family behind, but what was our surprise the following day to see their wagon overtake us. The sick man was lying in a bed in the wagon. The blessing of God had worked with the simple means used.--Letter 182, 1899

We need a hospital so much. On Thursday Sister Sara McEnterfer was called to see if she could do anything for Brother B's little son, who is eighteen months old. For several days he has had a painful swelling on the knee, supposed to be from the bite of some poisonous insect. Pulverized charcoal, mixed with flaxseed, was placed upon the swelling, and this poultice gave relief at once. The child had screamed with pain all night, but when this was applied, he slept. Today she has been to see the little one twice. She opened the swelling in two places, and a large amount of yellow matter and blood was discharged freely. The child was relieved of its great suffering. We thank the Lord that we may become intelligent in using the simple things within our reach to alleviate pain, and successfully remove its cause.--Manuscript 68, 1899 (General Manuscript).

Paulson Collection of Ellen G. White Letters, page 38

I will tell you a little about my own experience with charcoal as a remedy. For some forms of indigestion it is more efficacious than drugs. A little olive oil into which some of this powder has been stirred tends to cleanse and heal. I find it is excellent. Pulverized charcoal from eucalyptus wood, we have used freely in cases of inflammation...