



R. J. CHRISTIAN

TESTIMONY FOR THE CHURCH. NO. 14.

INTRODUCTION.

IN Testimony No. 13, I gave a brief sketch of our labors and trials, reaching from Dec. 19, 1866, to Oct. 21, 1867. I will, in these pages, notice the less painful experience of the past five months.

During this time I have written many personal testimonies. And for many persons whom I have met in our field of labor the past five months, I have testimonies still to write as I find time and have strength; but just what my duty is, in relation to these personal testimonies, has long been a matter of no small anxiety to me. With a few exceptions, my course has been to send them to the persons to whom they related, and leave them to dispose of them as they chose. The results have been various, as follows:

1. Some have thankfully received the testimonies, and have responded to them in a good spirit, and have profited by them. These have been willing that their brethren should see the testimonies, and have freely and fully confessed their faults.

2. Others have assented that the testimonies to them were true, and after reading them have laid them away to remain in silence, while they have made but little change in their lives. And these testimonies related more or less to the churches to which these persons belonged, who could also be benefited by them. But all this was lost in conse-

quence of these testimonies being held in private.

3. And yet others have rebelled against the testimonies. Some of these have responded in a fault-finding spirit. Some have shown bitterness, anger, and wrath, and have, for my toil and pains in writing the testimonies, turned upon us to injure us all they could. While others, in personal interviews, have held me for hours to pour into my ears and my aching heart their complaints, murmurings, and self-justifications, perhaps in a spirit of appeal to their own sympathies with weeping, in which they would lose sight of their own faults and sins. The influence of these things has been terrible upon me, and sometimes has driven me nearly to distraction. That which has followed from the conduct of these unconsecrated, unthankful persons has cost me more suffering, and has worn upon my courage and health ten times more, than all the toil of writing the testimonies.

And all this has been suffered by me, and my brethren and sisters generally have known nothing about it. They have had no just idea of the amount of wearing labor of this kind which I have had to perform, nor of the burdens and sufferings unjustly thrown upon me. I have given some personal communications in several numbers of my testimonies, which in some cases have offended because I did not give all. This, on account of their number, would be hardly possible, and would be improper, on account of some of them relating to sins which need not, and should not, be made public.

But, finally, I have decided that many of these personal testimonies should be published, as they all contain more or less reproofs and instructions

which apply to hundreds or thousands of others in similar condition. These should have the light which God has seen fit to give, which meets their cases. It is a wrong to shut it away from them by sending it to one person, or to one place, where it is kept as a light under a bushel. My convictions of duty on this point have been greatly strengthened by the following dream :

A grove of evergreens was presented before me. Several, including myself, were laboring among them. I was bidden to closely inspect the trees, and see if they were in a flourishing condition. I observed that some of them were fading, and turning yellow, as if dying. Some were dwarfed. They did not grow. Some were being bent and deformed by winds, and needed to be supported by stakes. I was carefully removing the dirt from the feeble and dying trees, to ascertain the cause of their condition. I discovered worms at the roots of some. Some had not been watered properly, and were dying with drought. The roots of others had been crowded together to their injury. My work was to explain to the workmen the different causes of the want of prosperity of all these trees. This was necessary from the fact that trees in other grounds were liable to be affected from different causes as these had been, and the knowledge of the cause of their not flourishing, and how they should be cultivated and treated, must be made known.

I have spoken freely of the case of sister Hannah More, not from a willingness to grieve the Battle Creek church, but from a sense of duty. I love that church notwithstanding their faults. I know of no church that in acts of benevolence and

general duty do so well. I present the frightful facts in this case to arouse our people everywhere to a sense of their duty. There is not one in twenty of those who have a good standing with Seventh-day Adventists who is living out the self-sacrificing principles of the word of God.

And let not their enemies, who are destitute of the first principles of the doctrine of Christ, take advantage of the fact that they are reprov'd. This is evidence that they are the lawful sons and daughters of the Lord. Those who are without chastisement, the apostle says, are bastards and not sons. Then let not these illegitimate children boast over the legal ones of the Almighty.

THE HEALTH INSTITUTE.

IN former numbers of Testimonies to the Church, I have spoken of the importance of such an institution, established by Seventh-day Adventists for the benefit of the sick, especially for the suffering and sick among us. I have spoken of the ability of our people, in point of means, to do this; and that, in view of the importance of this branch of the great work of preparation to meet the Lord in gladness of heart, our people should feel themselves called upon, according to their ability to do, to put a portion of their means into such an institution. And I have also pointed out, as they were shown to me, some of the dangers to which physicians, managers, and others, would be exposed in the prosecution of such an enterprise; and I did hope that the dangers shown me, would be avoided. In this, however, I enjoyed

hope for a time, only to suffer disappointment and grief.

The health reform was a subject in which I had taken great interest, and my hopes of the prosperity of the Health Institute were high. The responsibility of speaking to my brethren and sisters in the name of the Lord, relative to it, and of their duty to furnish necessary means, I felt as no other one could feel, and watched the progress of the work with intense anxiety and interest.

When I saw those who managed and directed, running into the dangers shown me, and of which I had warned them publicly, and in private conversation and letters, a terrible burden came upon me. That which had been shown me as a place where the suffering sick among us could be helped, was one where sacrifice, hospitality, faith, and piety, should be the ruling principles. But when unqualified calls were made for large sums of money, with statements that stock taken would pay large per cent; when those brethren employed in the institution to fill their several stations, all more or less responsible, seemed more than willing to take larger wages than those were satisfied with, who filled equally important stations in the great cause of truth and reform; when I learned, with pain, that, in order to make the institution popular with those not of our faith, and to secure their patronage, a spirit of compromise was rapidly gaining ground at the Institute, which, in order to meet the unbelief of unbelievers, was manifested in the adoption of the use of Mr., Miss, and Mrs., instead of Bro. and Sister, and popular amusements, in which all could engage in a sort of comparatively innocent frolic; when I saw these things, I said,

This is not that which was shown me as an institution for the sick, which would share the signal blessing of God. This is another thing.

And yet calculations for more extensive buildings were being made, and calls for large sums of money were urged. As the thing was being managed, I could but regard the Institute, on the whole, a curse. Although some were being benefited in the point of health, the influence on the church at Battle Creek, and upon brethren and sisters who visited the Institute, was bad to such a degree as to overbalance all the good that was being done; and this influence was reaching churches in this and other States, and was terribly destructive to faith in God, and in the present truth. Several came to Battle Creek humble, devoted, confiding Christians, who went away almost infidels. The general influence of these things was creating prejudice against the health reform in very many of the most humble, the most devoted, and the best of our brethren, and was destroying faith in my testimonies and in the present truth.

It was this state of matters relative to the health reform and the Health Institute, with which other things were brought to bear, that made it my duty to speak as I did in Testimony No. 13. I well knew that that would produce a reaction and trial upon many minds. I also knew that a reaction must come sooner or later, and for the good of the Institute, and the cause generally, the sooner the better. Had matters been moving in a wrong direction, to the injury of precious souls, and the cause generally? the sooner this could be checked, and they be properly directed, the better. The further the advance, the greater the ruin, the

greater the reaction, and the greater the general discouragement. Such a check, the misdirected work must have; and there must be time to correct errors, and start again in the right direction.

The good work wrought for the church at Battle Creek last fall, the thorough reform and turning to the Lord, by physicians, helpers, and managers, at the Health Institute, and the general agreement of our brethren and sisters in all parts of the field, relative to the great object of, and the manner in which to conduct, the Health Institute, to which is added the varied experience of more than one year, not only in the wrong course, but also in a right direction, give me more confidence that the health reform and the Health Institute will prove a success, than I ever before had. I still fondly hope to see the Health Institute at Battle Creek prospering, and, in every respect, the institute shown me. But it will take time to fully correct and outgrow the errors of the past. With the blessing of God this can and will be done.

The brethren who have stood at the head of this work have appealed to our people for means, on the ground that the health reform was a part of the great work connected with the third angel's message. In this they have been right. It is a branch of the great, charitable, liberal, sacrificing, benevolent work of God. Then why should these brethren say, "Stock in the Health Institute will pay a large per cent.," "it is a good investment," "a paying thing"? Why not as well talk of stock in the Publishing Association paying a large per cent? If these are two branches of the same great, closing work of preparation for the coming of the Son of man, why not? Or why not make

them both matters of liberality? The pen and the voice that appealed to the friends of the cause in behalf of the publishing fund, held out no such inducements. Why, then, represent to wealthy, covetous Sabbath-keepers, that they may do great good by investing their means in the Health Institute, and at the same time retain the principal, and also receive large per cent. for the simple use of it? The brethren were called upon to donate for the Publishing Association, and they nobly and cheerfully sacrificed unto the Lord, following the example of the one who made the call, and the blessing of God has been upon that branch of the great work. But it is to be feared that his displeasure is upon the manner in which funds have been raised for the Health Institute, and that his blessing will not be upon that Institution to the full, till this wrong be corrected. In my appeal to the brethren in behalf of such an institution, in Testimony No. 11, page 50, I said:

“I was shown that there is no lack of means among Sabbath-keeping Adventists. At present, their greatest danger is through their accumulation of property. Some are continually increasing their cares and labors. They are overcharged, and the result is, God and the wants of his cause are nearly forgotten by them, and they are spiritually dead. They are required to sacrifice to God an offering. A sacrifice does not increase, but decreases and consumes.”

My view of this matter of means was a “sacrifice to God, an offering;” and I never received any other idea. But, if the principal is to be held good by stockholders, and they are to draw a certain per cent., where is the decrease, or the con-

suming sacrifice? And how are the dangers of those Sabbath-keepers who are accumulating property, decreased by the present plan of holding stock in the Institute? Their dangers are only increased. And here is an additional excuse for their covetousness. In investing in stock in the Institute, held as a matter of sale and purchase like any other property, they do not sacrifice. As large per cent. is held out as an inducement, the spirit of gain, not sacrifice, leads them to invest so largely in the stock of the Institute that they have but little or nothing to give, to sustain other branches of the work still more important. God requires of these close, covetous, worldly persons, a sacrifice for suffering humanity. He calls on them to let their worldly possessions decrease for the sake of those afflicted ones who believe in Jesus and the present truth. They should have a chance to act in full view of the decisions of the final Judgment, as described in the following burning words of the King of kings:

“Then shall the King say unto them on his right hand. Come, ye blessed of my Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world: for I was an hungered, and ye gave me meat; I was thirsty, and ye gave me drink; I was a stranger, and ye took me in; naked, and ye clothed me; I was sick, and ye visited me; I was in prison, and ye came unto me. Then shall the righteous answer him, saying, Lord, when saw we thee an hungered, and fed thee? or thirsty, and gave thee drink? When saw we thee a stranger, and took thee in? or naked, and clothed thee? Or when saw we thee sick, or in prison, and came unto thee? And the King shall answer and say

unto them, Verily I say unto you, Inasmuch as ye have done it unto one of the least of these my brethren, ye have done it unto me.

“Then shall he say also unto them on the left hand, Depart from me, ye cursed, into everlasting fire, prepared for the Devil and his angels: for I was an hungered, and ye gave me no meat; I was thirsty, and ye gave me no drink; I was a stranger, and ye took me not in; naked, and ye clothed me not; sick, and in prison, and ye visited me not. Then shall they also answer him, saying, Lord, when saw we thee an hungered, or athirst, or a stranger, or naked, or sick, or in prison, and did not minister unto thee? Then shall he answer them, saying, Verily I say unto you, Inasmuch as ye did it not to one of the least of these, ye did it not to me. And these shall go away into everlasting punishment; but the righteous into life eternal.” Matt. xxv, 34-46.

Again, on pp. 51-53 of Test. No. 11, I said:

“There is a liberal supply of means among our people to carry forward this great enterprise without any embarrassment, if all will feel the importance of the work. All should feel a special interest in sustaining this enterprise; and especially those who have means should invest in it. A suitable home should be fitted up for the reception of invalids, that they may, through the use of proper means, and the blessing of God, be relieved of their infirmities, and learn how to take care of themselves, and thus prevent sickness.

“Many who profess the truth are growing close and covetous. They need to be alarmed for themselves. They have so much of their treasure upon the earth, that their hearts are on their treasure.

They have much the largest share of their treasure in this world, and but little in Heaven; therefore their hearts and affections are placed on earthly possessions, instead of on the heavenly inheritance. There is now a good object before them where they can use their means for the benefit of suffering humanity, and also for the advancement of the truth. This enterprise should never be left to struggle in poverty. These stewards to whom God has entrusted means should now come up to the work and use their means to the glory of God. Those who through covetousness withhold their means, will find it will prove to them a curse rather than a blessing."

In what I have been shown, and what I have said, I received no other idea, and designed to give no other, than that the raising of funds for this branch of the work was to be a matter of liberality, the same as for the support of other branches of the great work. And although the change from the present plan to one that can be fully approved of the Lord, may be attended with difficulties, and require labor and time to bring it about, yet I think it can be done with little loss of stock already taken, and will result in a decided increase of capital donated, to be used in a proper manner to relieve suffering humanity.

Many have taken stock who are not able to donate it. Some of these are suffering for the very money they have invested in stock. As I travel from State to State, I find afflicted ones standing on the very verge of the grave, who should go to the Institute for a while, but cannot for want of the very means they have in Institute stock. These should not have a dollar invested

there. One case, in Vermont, I will mention. As early as 1850 this brother was a Sabbath-keeper, and began at that date to liberally donate to the several enterprises that have been undertaken to advance the cause, until he became reduced in property. Yet when the urgent, unqualified call came for the Institute, he took stock to the amount of one hundred dollars. At the meeting at West Enosburgh he introduced the case of his wife, who is very feeble, who can be helped, and must be helped soon, if ever. He also stated his circumstances, and that if he could command the one hundred dollars then in the Institute; he could send his wife there to be treated. But as it was he could not. We replied that he should never have invested a dollar in the Institute; that there was a wrong in the matter which we could not help; and there the matter dropped. I do not hesitate to say that this sister should be treated a few weeks at least, at the Institute, free from charge. They are able to do but little more than to pay fare to and from Battle Creek.

The friends of humanity, of truth and holiness, should act in reference to the Institute on the plan of sacrifice and liberality. I have \$500 in stock in the Institute, which I wish to donate, and if my husband succeeds well with his anticipated book, he will give \$500 more. Will those who approve this plan please address us at Greenville, Montcalm Co., Michigan, and state the sums they wish to donate, or to be held as the stock in the Publishing Association is held? When this is done, then let the donations come in as needed; let the sums, small and large, come in. Let expenditures of means be made judiciously. Let

charges for patients be as reasonable as possible. Let brethren donate to partly pay the expenses at the Institute, of suffering, worthy poor in their midst. Let the feeble ones be led out, as they can bear it, to cultivate the beautifully-situated acres owned by the Institute. Let them not do this with the narrow idea of pay, but with the liberal idea that the expense of the purchase of them was a matter of benevolence for their good. Let their labor be a part of their prescription, as much as the taking of baths. Oh! yes, let benevolence, charity, humanity, sacrifice for others' good, be the ruling idea with physicians, managers, helpers, patients, and with all the friends of Jesus, far and near, instead of wages, good investment, a paying thing, stock that will pay. Let the love of Christ, love of souls, sympathy for suffering humanity, rule and govern all we say and do relative to the Health Institute.

Why should a Christian physician, who is believing, expecting, looking, waiting, and longing for the coming and kingdom of Christ, when sickness and death will no longer have power over the saints, expect more pay for his services than the Christian editor, or the Christian minister? He may say that his work is more wearing. That is yet to be proved. Let him work as he can endure it, and not violate the laws of life which he teaches to his patients. There are no good reasons why he should overwork and receive large pay for it, more than the minister or the editor. Let all who act a part in the Institute and receive pay for their services, act on the same liberal principle. No one should be suffered to remain as helper in the Institute who does it simply for pay. There are

those of ability, who, for the love of Christ, his cause, and the suffering followers of their Master, will faithfully and cheerfully fill stations in that Institute, with a spirit of sacrifice. Those who have not this spirit should remove and give place to those who have it.

As nearly as I am able to judge, one-half of the afflicted among our people who should spend weeks or months at the Institute, are not able to pay the entire expenses of the journey and to tarry at the Institute. Shall poverty keep these friends of our Lord from the blessings he has so bountifully provided? Shall these be left to struggle on with the double burden of feebleness and poverty? The wealthy feeble ones, who have all the comforts and conveniences of life, and are able to hire their hard work done, may, with care, rest, by informing themselves, and home practice, receive and enjoy a very comfortable state of health without going to the Institute. But what can that poor, feeble brother or sister do to recover health. They may do something; but poverty drives them to labor beyond what they are really able to do. They have not even all the comforts of life; and as for conveniences in house-room, furniture, means of taking baths, and good ventilation, they do not have them. Perhaps their only room is occupied by a cook-stove, winter and summer; and it may be that all the books they have in the house, excepting the Bible, you can hold between your thumb and finger. They have no money to buy books, that they may read and learn how to live. These dear brethren are the very ones who need help. Many of them are humble Christians. They may have faults, and

some of these may reach far back, and be the cause of their present poverty and misery. And yet they may be living up to duty better than we who have the means of self-improvement, and to improve the condition of others. These must be patiently taught and cheerfully helped.

But they must be willing and anxious to be taught. They must cherish a spirit of gratitude to God and their brethren for the help they receive. Such persons generally have no just ideas of the real expenses of treatment, board, room, fuel, &c., &c., at a Health Institute. They do not realize the magnitude of the great work of present truth and reform, and the many calls for the liberality of our people. They may not be aware that the numbers of our poor are many times larger than the numbers of our rich. And they may not also feel the force of the frightful fact that a majority of these wealthy ones are holding on to their riches, and are on the sure road to perdition.

These poor, afflicted persons, should be taught that when they murmur at their lot, and against the wealthy on account of their covetousness, they commit a great sin in the sight of Heaven. They should first understand that their sickness and poverty are their misfortunes, most generally by reason of their own sins, follies, and wrongs; and if the Lord puts it into the hearts and minds of his people to help them, it should inspire in them feelings of humble gratitude to God and his people. They should do all in their power to help themselves. If they have relatives who can and will help them to the Institute, they should have the privilege.