

Ellen & James White comment on The Battle for James' Health

"While at Paris, Maine, I was shown that my husband's health was in a critical condition, that his anxiety of mind had been too much for his strength. When the present truth was first published, he put forth great exertion and labored with but little encouragement or help from his brethren. From the first he has taken burdens upon him which were too taxing for his physical strength.

"These burdens, if equally shared, need not have been so wearing. While my husband took much responsibility, some of his brethren in the ministry were not willing to take any. . . .

"When we overtax our strength, and become exhausted, we are liable to take cold, and at such times there is danger of disease assuming a dangerous form. We must not leave the care of ourselves with God, when He has placed that responsibility upon us.

"Some ministers among us fail to bear all the responsibility that God would have them. This lack throws extra labor upon those who are burden bearers. . . ." *Testimonies*, Vol. 3, pp. 9-13.

"Many years ago [in 1865], while my husband was bearing heavy responsibilities in Battle Creek, the strain began to tell on him. His health failed rapidly. Finally he broke down in mind and body, and was unable to do anything. My friends said to me, 'Mrs. White, your husband cannot live.' I determined to remove him to a place more favorable for his recovery. His mother said, 'Ellen, you must remain and take

care of your family.'

"'Mother', I replied, 'I will never allow that masterly brain to fail entirely. I will work with God, and God will work with me, to save my husband's brain. . . .'

"Constantly I kept my husband working at. . . little things. I would not allow him to remain quiet, but tried to keep him active. This is the plan that physicians and helpers in our sanitariums should pursue. Lead the patients along step by step. . . , keeping their minds so busily occupied that they have not time to brood over their own condition. . . .

"I made him exercise his mind. If he had not been made to use his mind, in a little while it would have completely failed.

"Daily my husband went out for a walk. In the winter a terrible snowstorm came, and Father thought he could not go out in the storm and snow. I went to Brother Rood and said, 'Brother Rood, have you a spare pair of boots?'

"'Yes,' he answered.

"'I should be glad to borrow them this morning,' I said. Putting on the boots and starting out, I tracked a quarter of a mile in the deep snow. On my return, I asked my husband to take a walk. He said he could not go out in such weather. 'Oh, yes, you can,' I replied. 'Surely you can step in my tracks. . . .' That morning he took his usual walk.

"In the spring there were fruit trees to be set out and garden to be made. 'Willie,' I said, 'please buy three hoes and three rakes. Be sure to buy three of each.' When he brought them to me, I told him

to take one of the hoes, and Father another. Father objected, but took one. Taking one myself, we began work; and although I blistered my hands, I led them in the hoeing. Father could not do much, but he went through the motions. It was by such methods as these, that I tried to cooperate with God in restoring my husband to health. And oh, how the Lord blessed us!

"I always took my husband with me when I went out driving. And I took him with me when I went to preach at any place. I had a regular circuit of meetings. I could not persuade him to go into the desk while I preached. Finally, after many, many months, I said to him, 'Now, my husband, you are going into the desk today.' He did not want to go, but I would not yield. I took him up into the desk with me. That day he spoke to the people. Although the meetinghouse was filled with unbelievers, for half an hour I could not refrain from weeping. My heart was overflowing with joy and gratitude. I knew that the victory had been gained.

"After eighteen months of constant cooperation with God in the effort to restore my husband to health, I took him home again. Presenting him to his parents, I said, 'Father, Mother, here is your son.'

"After his recovery, my husband lived for a number of years, during which time he did the best work of his life." *Selected Messages*, Book 2, pp. 306, 307.

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"The hand of God in his restoration was most apparent. Probably no other one upon whom such a blow has fallen ever recovered. Yet a severe shock of paralysis, seriously affecting the brain, was by the good hand of God removed from His servant, and new strength granted him both in body and mind." *Testimonies*, Vol. 1, p. 104

"I have given you this brief recital of personal experience, in order to show you that I know something about the use of natural means for the restoration of the sick.

"God will work wonders for every one of us if we work in faith, acting as we believe, that when we cooperate with Him, He is ready to do His part. I desire to do everything I can to lead my brethren to pursue a sensible course, in order that their efforts may be the most successful. Many who have gone down into the grave might today be living, if they had cooperated with God. Let us be sensible men and women in regard to these matters." *Selected Messages*, Book 2, p. 308.

Before James White died, he expressed his deep concern for the work he had worked so hard to build up:

"In my relations to this cause I have been longest and most closely connected with the publishing work. Three times have I fallen, stricken with paralysis, through my devotion to this branch of the cause. Now that God has given me renewed physical and mental strength, I feel that I can serve His cause as I have never been able to serve it before.

"I must see the publishing

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work prosper. It is interwoven with my very existence.

"My life has been given to the upbuilding of these institutions. It seems like death to leave them. They are as my children and I cannot separate my interest from them. These institutions are the Lord's instrumentalities to do a specific work. Satan seeks to hinder and defeat every means by which the Lord is working for the salvation of men. If the great adversary can mold these institutions according to the world's standard, his object is gained. . . . I would rather die than live to see these institutions mismanaged, or turned aside from the purpose for which they were brought into existence." *Testimonies*, Vol 1, pp. 106-107.

Ellen White expressed the following anxieties in the Spring and early Summer of 1881 when she and James were planning to return to the Pacific Coast and dedicate their time to writing:

"My husband desired to present more fully the glorious subject of redemption, and I had long contemplated the preparation of important books. . . .

"[We were] to attend a tent meeting at Charlotte, North Carolina, Sabbath and Sunday, July 23 and 24. . . .

"Little did I think, as we traveled on, that this was the last journey we would ever make together. The weather changed suddenly from oppressive heat to chilling cold. My husband took cold, but thought his health so good that he would receive no

permanent injury. He labored in the meetings at Charlotte, presenting the truth with. . . clearness and power. . . .

On our return home, my husband complained of slight indisposition, yet he engaged in his work as usual." *Ibid.*, 106-108.

On Monday, July 31, ". . . he had a severe chill, and the next day, I, too, was attacked. Together we were taken to the sanitarium for treatment." Ibid., p. 109.

It was malaria! By Friday, Ellen, though greatly weakened, had taken a turn for the better. But James had not. She further commented,

"I was taken to his room, and as soon as I looked upon his countenance, I knew that he was dying. . . . I asked if Jesus was precious to him. He said: 'Yes, oh, yes.' 'Have you no desire to live?' I inquired. He answered: 'No. . . .' A peaceful expression rested upon his countenance.

Sabbath morning ". . . he had a chill, which left him unconscious. At 5 p.m., Sabbath, August 6, 1881, he quietly breathed his life away, without a struggle or a groan. . . ." Ibid., p. 109-110.

"Side by side we had labored in the cause of Christ for thirty-six years [including before marriage]; and we hoped that we might stand together to witness the triumphant close. But such was not the will of God. The chosen protector of my youth, the companion of my life, the sharer of my labors and afflictions, has been taken from my side, and I am left to finish my work and to fight the battle alone." *Ibid.*, p. 105-106. ♦