

Q. & A. File No. 34-H
Health Reform

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QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS

Bro. Smith: I have received from the hands of the _____ and _____ Conference Committee the following questions. I append a reply to each of them, that both question and reply may appear in the same number of the Review for the benefit of the brethren and sisters of the _____ Conference, and all others who wish to learn the facts in the case.

Question Number One.

Did you receive your views upon health reform before visiting the Health Institute at Dansville, N. Y., or before you had read works on the subject?

Answer.

It was at the house of Bro. A. Hilliard, at Otsego, Mich., June 6, 1863, that the great subject of Health Reform was opened before me in vision. I did not visit Dansville till August, 1864, fourteen months after I had the view. I did not read any works upon health until I had written Spiritual Gifts, Vols. III and IV, Appeal to Mothers, and had sketched out most of my six articles in the six numbers of "How to Live." I did not know that such a paper existed as the Laws of Life, published at Dansville, N.Y. I had not heard of the several works upon health, written by Dr. J. C. Jackson, and other publications at Dansville, at the time I had the view named above. I did not know that such works existed until September, 1863, when in Boston, Mass., my husband saw them advertised in a periodical called the Voice of the Prophets, published by Eld. J. V. Himes. My husband ordered the works from Dansville and received them at Topsham, Maine. His business gave him no time to peruse them, and as I determined not to read them until I had written out my views, the books remained in their wrappers.

As I introduced the subject of health to friends where I labored in Michigan, New England, and in the State of New York, and spoke against drugs and flesh meats, and in favor of water, pure air, and a proper diet, the reply was often made, "You speak very nearly the opinions taught in the Laws of Life, and other publications, by Drs. Trall, Jackson, and others. Have you read that paper and those works?" My reply was that I had not, neither should I read them till I had fully written out my views, lest it should be said that I had received my light upon the subject of health from physicians, and not from the Lord. And after I had written my six articles for How to Live, I then searched the various works on Hygiene and was surprised to find them so nearly in harmony with what the Lord had revealed to me. And to show this harmony, and to set before my brethren and sisters the subject as brought out by able writers, I determined to publish "How to Live," in which I largely extracted from the works referred to. — E. S. W. — in RF 3d. 2/187

Question Number Three.

How long EGW wear Reform Dress

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In Testimony, No. 11, you say: "My apology for calling your attention again to the subject of dress is that not one in twenty of my sisters, who profess to believe the testimony, have taken the first step in the dress reform." How long before writing No. 11, had you worn the reformed dress?

Answer.

I put on the reformed dress September, 1865, when I visited Dansville with my sick husband. It was the same length I now wear, and I was distinctly given to understand that it was not the "American Costume." I have worn this style of dress ever since that time, excepting at meetings, in the crowded streets of villages and cities, and when visiting distant relatives. Since I commenced to write No. 11, in January, 1867, I have worn no other than the reformed dress. My reasons for pursuing the course I have are as follows:—

1. I put on the reformed dress for general use more than two years since, because I had seen that it was a convenient, modest, and healthful style, and would, in the providence of God, as Health Reform should lead the way, finally be adopted by our people.

2. It was my duty to avoid raising prejudice against the dress, which would cut off my testimony if I wore it, until I had fully set the matter before the people, and the time came, in the order of events, for it to be generally adopted.

3. The dress reform was among the minor things that were to make up the great reform in health, and never should have been urged as a testing truth necessary to salvation. It was the design of God that at the right time, on proper occasions, the proper persons should set forth its benefits as a blessing, and recommend uniformity, and union of action.

4. The issue came too soon. The defence of the dress was forced upon us by those who opposed it, who at the same time professed full confidence in my testimonies. When the Health Institute was opened at Battle Creek, and the dress adopted by female patients, as directed by the physicians, then came the opposition, chiefly from brethren at Battle Creek. The physicians having full confidence in my testimonies, stated to them that the style of dress they recommended for their patients was the same as I had seen would be adopted by our people. Then came the general inquiry, and a strange spirit of blind and bitter opposition arose with some who professed to be among the firmest friends of the testimonies. The general inquiry spread everywhere, and in the autumn and winter of 1866, letters came in from all directions inquiring in regard to what I had seen, asking for immediate answers. I therefore determined to hasten out No. 11. We visited the church at Wright, Mich., Dec. 21, 1866, and labored with them six weeks. I there wrote most of Testimony, No. 11. The first two Sabbaths and first-days I spoke to the people in my long dress. But when I had fully set the matter before the people without raising their prejudice, I put on my present style of dress, which was immediately adopted by the numerous sisters of that church. I have worn it since that time. At Greenville, Orleans, Orange, Windsor, Bushnell, Greenbush, Monterey, and Ithaca, I have, in speaking upon the great subject of health, mentioned the dress reform as one of the items of least importance which make up the great whole. With the dear sisters of these churches I have had no unhappy conflicts. I have presented the claims of this new and unpopular style of dress to them, while I set them an example. They have received my testimony, and have followed my example from principle, and not as the result of being urged. Those who, by their blind opposition, brought the issue too soon, caused confusion and prejudice, especially in the church at Battle Creek, must settle the matter with God and their brethren. I am clear in this matter, having done the best I could in standing in defence of the truth, and in laboring to save our people from confusion upon the subject.

E. G. White, Review & Herald, Oct 8, 1867

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Why was it so long
before Health Reform vision
was given?

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Question Number Six.

Your last vision was given Dec., 1865. Many inquire, "If the visions are so important for the church, why so long before the subject of Health Reform was brought out?"

Answer.

I had, before I had the last vision Dec. 1865, spoken quite fully upon the subject of health. My last vision related mostly to individual cases. I have written thousands of pages since that time of personal testimonies which most of our people know nothing about. I have written hundreds of letters relative to the establishing of a Health Institute, of which still more are ignorant. I have been pressed with cares, labors and grief by reason of sickness in my own family. Yet I have done much in further bringing out the subject under most unfavorable circumstances. It may be that I have done this, especially on the dress question, as fast as the Lord would have me. It has certainly been brought out faster than some who raise this question have been ready to receive it.

E. G. White, Review & Herald, Oct. 8, 1867

Q. & A. File No. 34-H

*Is there danger of extreme views
in health reform?*

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Question Number Four.

Is there not danger of brethren and sisters taking extreme views of the Health Reform?

Answer.

This may be expected in all stirring reforms. The devotion to the subject manifested by our preachers and by the Review, and the unqualified, stirring appeals for large sums of money without giving proper cautions in the matter, has given the impression to many that Health Reform is that which demands their attention above all others, and some who need to be taught the first principles of righteousness, have urged it out of season, and have thus disgusted the people. It is God's plan that persons who are suited to the work should prudently and earnestly set forth the Health Reform, then leave the people to settle the matter with God and their own souls. It is the duty of those every way qualified to teach it to make people believe and obey, and all others should be silent and be taught.

E. G. White, Review + Herald, Oct. 8, 1867

Is there danger of urging Health Reform too soon?

Question Number Five.

Is there not danger of urging the Health Reform upon others before they are prepared to receive?

Answer.

There is. This is especially true in the matter of dress. When we first received the third message the Lord had many things to say to us, but we could not hear them all then. He has led us with a gentle hand and tender care, step by step, till we have reached the reform in health. When young disciples have learned what we had learned up to the time of the introduction of this reform, let this also be prudently set before them.

Ibid.