

(From the Battle Creek Daily Moon of Oct. 11, 1909)

SEPARATION IS PROVIDENTIAL

E.G. White Research Center
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Between the Seventh-day Adventists Church and the B. C. San.

Declares Pastor Tenney in a sermon on religion at the
"San" Saturday.

No occasion for bitterness or recrimination, says the
Sanitarium Pastor.

"The Adventist Creed has become the most cast-iron thing in
"Theology" he adds.

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The position of the Battle Creek Sanitarium, long accepted as an Adventist institution, in relation to religion, was definitely outlined Saturday in an unusual address by Rev. George C. Tenney. In view of the character of the sermon, which had been announced under the title of "Religion at the Sanitarium- Its Place and Status", a large audience gathered in the Sanitarium chapel, many townspeople being among those present.

In part Pastor Tenney said:

"Religion in the present discussion is to be regarded as the relation existing between a man and his God? This relation must necessarily be personal and direct. God does not deal with his people through an agent or medium, but heart to heart and face to face. Loyalty to a cause or adherence to a creed do not stand for true religious life and character. Religion is defined in the Bible thus: 'Pure and undefiled religion before God and the Father is this, To visit the fatherless and the widow in their affliction, and to keep himself unspotted from the world.'" The Master's definition of a religious life is given in Matthew 25 in that great Judgment scene where the standard is our attitude to the sick, the hungry, the naked, the stranger, and the man in prison.

"On what ground, then, can it be claimed that the Sanitarium is a religious institution? It can be claimed only as its workers represent in their lives and actions the principles of true religion. The principles for which the institution stand are distinctly religious and Christian, but the manner of the carrying out of these principles determines the character of the place, and that must rest with those who have them in hand.

"The institution had its rise in a band of devoted and enthusiastic Christians who were deeply impressed with a sense of new truth committed to them, and they incorporated with their message the work which has developed into the present Sanitarium system, or as it is called, "The Battle Creek Idea"-the religion of the body. This band of people were pioneer Seventh-day Adventists. At the outset there was associated with the Health Reform Institute an element of commercialism, the expectation of gain. But it soon discovered that the idea of money-making was incompatible with that of true philanthropy and Christian service, so it was eliminated from the institution for all time. At that time the Seventh-day Adventist cause was in its elementary stage. The idea of establishing a fixed creed was very distasteful to those pioneers, and to avoid this the following simple church covenant form was adopted. 'We, the undersigned, associate ourselves together as a church, taking the name of Seventh-day Adventists, covenanting to keep the commandments of God and the faith (in) Jesus.' While this pledge was very broad in its application, yet, because no specifications or limitations were affixed to it, the Bible was left an open book, the conscience of the people was left free, the path of progress was left open, and a way was left for undiscovered truth to be brought to the people. And for many years it was so; the grasp of that people upon revealed truth was enlarged, their hearts were cheered by new light upon the Scriptures, and God

placed in their keeping many important truths for the world. But unconsciously or otherwise the very thing they sought to avoid came to pass, and their creed has become the most cast-iron thing in the whole range of theology. Their pursuit of truth has degenerated into sectarian propaganda, in which the real principles of the Gospel are obscured by denominational zeal. The slightest deviation from the teachings of the body is considered and made sufficient ground for dismissal from the ministry and the church, and conformity in faith and practice is required as a means of preserving unity. This statement of the case is not intended as an attack upon the denomination: it is a very simple allusion to a policy that has become too obvious to be denied.

"The principles represented in the Sanitarium and its work are of an altogether different character: They are not related to dogmatic theology, but to Christian philanthropy, and as such are not sectarian or denominational. They belong to the world, and equally to all men, Christian or non-Christian. It is evident that the policies of sectarian propaganda and broad philanthropy could not coalesce indefinitely. One or the other must yield, and the inevitable separation came. And the separation is evidently very satisfactory to the denomination, for they have spared no pains to make it as wide and as decisive as possible. It is equally satisfactory to those who have charge of the work here, and our wonder is that it did not come sooner. The denominational leaders have done what they regarded to be their duty, and are content. The Sanitarium has maintained its ground where it believes it was called of God to stand. Both regard the separation as providential, and so, there seems to be no occasion for recrimination or bitterness. Each may thank God and take courage. The Sanitarium is grateful for the broader field of usefulness and Christian cooperation now extended to it by the various Christ-

ian bodies, all of whom are equally welcomed and recognized here.

"To many of the Sanitarium workers the upheavel has brought a test of the stability of their Christian principles. It now remains with us to demonstrate to ourselves and to others how much of our religious life was performed in sight of men, and how much of it was really wrought in God. Whether this institution shall continue to do its work as a part of the saving Gospel of Jesus Christ, must depend upon our individual work and personal devotion to the principles which underlie this work. As a commercial undertaking this institution could not possibly live. The moment that self-seeking comes in here as the leading element our work is doomed to failure. So long as we as workers can exhibit the self-denial and the disinterested love manifested by our great Master, and so conduct this work that the divine blessing can attend it, it will go on, and will continue to grow for the healing of the people, for the saving of the nations."