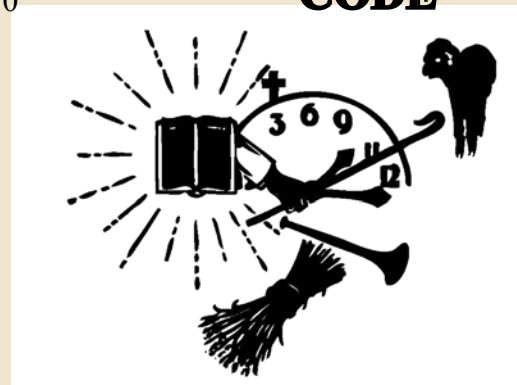
THE SYMBOLIC CODE

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AN UNPUBLISHED LETTER OF INTEREST

Introduction

The following excerpts from a letter written in 1932 by Brother V.T. Houteff to a Seventh-day Adventist Elder is being published at this time not only because of some early historic facts it contains, but also because of its other statements of interest. (By way of explanation, we point out that the letter was written after The Shepherd's Rod, Vol. 1 was printed but before Vol. 2 came.)

Los Angeles, California
April 22, 1932

Dear Elder_:

This is in answer to both of your communications. I hardly know how to explain this most vital subject, by which the Spirit of God through His holy Word has opened the avenue of correspondence. It is not difficult to express the idea I wish to convey to you, but how to say it; fearing

a chance of misunderstanding or diminishing the Truth God has so graciously revealed to His people; realizing that this is dealing with a matter of life and death. First of all Elder _____, I wish to thank you for your interest in me, for I really think you are sincere and very anxious that the denomination should accept the message in The Shepherd's Rod, thus avoiding a great loss of life.

If I have made any mistake that has caused them to turn against it I trust that my God will forgive me, for I have done the best I know how. On my part, I am ready to do anything if it could alter the situation whether it be confession of my blunders or even giving my life if it would save the church of God.

Apparently, you think the leadership of our denomination would have accepted the message in The Shepherd's Rod if I had eliminated every idea but held to the "one Subject"; namely, the 144,000 also the call for reformation. I must confess that I do not know of anything in The Shepherd's Rod that has no connection with these two great subjects. My request was that you name the topics which you think should be left out. In your reply, you speak only of the leopard-like beast of Rev. 13.

It seems necessary that I should give you further information of my dealings with the brethren. The message in The Shepherd's Rod did not come all at once; it is the result of Bible studies for almost two years. These studies were presented to a company of believers from Sabbath to Sabbath as the one which you yourself witnessed. In the beginning we had no idea of what was ahead of us, or of writing a book -- it came step by step. From

the very start I tried to get either a private hearing, or else some of the leading men to come and see what it was all about, pleading with them that it was their duty to correct us if we were in error, or if we had any Truth that they should know it. While they refused to give us any kind of hearing, they did everything possible to close our place of meeting, and some of those who attended these studies were frightened for fear of losing their church membership. Their spirit of resistance to reasoning with us, bears witness of their lack of interest in the things of God. This evidence proves that it is not what is in The Shepherd's Rod that has barred them from accepting the message, but the fact that they are saying in their hearts: "I am rich and increased with goods, and have need of nothing!" By these acts they are fulfilling prophecy.

You will note on pg. 236 (The Shepherd's Rod, Vol. 1) that I had given them thirty-three manuscripts several months before the book was published. These manuscripts contained only the first 172 pages of the book, dealing with the 144,000 and a call for reformation. By this information you will note, that the leopard-like beast was not in the manuscript. As they rejected the manuscript before the book was published is self evident that the "beast" is NOT the thing which made them reject the message .

If the leadership of the Advent movement should accept a message Elder_____, it would be something that has never happened with any movement since the world began. It would also be contradictory to the Spirit of Prophecy. *See 5T62, 6T427*, at top of page. They may fool themselves

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but they can never impose on God.

The truth of the leopard-like beast was revealed to us after they had rejected the message in the manuscript by their dishonest investigation, showing that God controls the revelation of the Scriptures and reveals Them at the right time. The blasphemy on the seven heads is a symbol proving that the leadership of this denomination has done the same (violence to the Truth) by rejecting the message, as all the rest of them prior to 1844. Is this not Truth? If so, then what is wrong with the interpretation of the heads? They think this is calling the church Babylon. But if The Shepherd's Rod is wrong in this, then they find fault with Christ as well, for He also has enumerated these "seven churches" in the third chapter of Revelation and has given the blackest record of them all to the Laodiceans (S.D.A.). If Christ by doing this is not calling the Laodiceans Babylon, then neither the interpretation of the heads is doing it. Because this denomination is not Babylon, is not a sign that we are better but worse as far as condemnation is concerned. (The more light the greater the sin -- blasphemy). If these seven denominations are not the seven churches of Revelation, then who are they?

I am trying to answer your letter, Elder _____, in my humble way, not with Intention of coming back at you in everything you have said, but in fear, and by prayer that I do you no injustice in this matter by flattery or reproach. I must speak the Truth as I understand it lest I come under condemnation.

The straight Truth poured out by The Shepherd's Rod, is the product of the Bible and the Testimonies. Therefore, it is impossible that it should not bring His chosen leaders into disrepute. This is not the only time in history He has had a church. Think of the severe messages He has been sending to His chosen leaders in ages past. Of course you understand the charge is not to any one individual; it is to the "angel of the church of the Laodiceans" (the leadership as a body). It may be severe, but is it not needed?

This fact I think you can prove to your own satisfaction. You know that if you should arise to declare the message in The Shepherd's Rod, or one similar to it, the same charges that they have poured upon me would also be poured upon you. The same would prove true with any one individual that would dare tell the straight Truth. The class that lived in the days of Christ is also here today, and if He failed to convince them, it is not likely that I can do it now.

Yes, it is possible for a man to cut himself off from God by cutting himself off from his brethren, if he voluntarily departed from them. But I have not done so, it is they that are determined to cut me off. In this they will miserably fail, except they do it by violence, in the same manner as ancient Israel mistreated the prophets and slew them. If you turn your face toward Zion, Elder_____, it will be impossible to have peace with the devil. If you are not having trouble, it is because you are not doing the work God expects you to do. Let it be remembered that God's servants seldom met opposition from the world. Their trouble was from false brethren in the church. We shall never be able to do the work

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of Elijah by good words and fair speeches. And if we bear the message of Elijah, we shall incur the displeasure of the unconsecrated and demand a fight to the finish. It is also true that the church of God has never been led away from the Truth by a false message or persecution; she was overthrown time and again by the leaderships from within the church. Such have split the church in numerous sections and brought about division after division and disrepute to the cause of Christ.

There can be no plainer statement made than the one concerning the prophet Elijah in Testimonies to Ministers, p. 475. Elder ____ in one of his documents against me, has quoted words of the Spirit of Prophecy as found in The Shepherd's Rod, page 87, credits them to me, thus making it appear that I was the author of the statement concerning Elijah's coming, while I was but quoting the words of Sister White. By doing this, he is hiding the truth of the Spirit of Prophecy from God's people and aiding the enemy to deceive the church. The servant of the Lord says the Elijah message is to come. (*See 9T16, TM 475*.) They have been telling us that the Sunday blue law is the thing that is to make the shaking in the church; but the Spirit of Prophecy says: "I asked the meaning of the shaking I had seen, and was shown that it would be caused by the straight testimony called forth by the counsel of the True Witness to the Laodiceans. This will have its effect upon the heart of the receiver, and will lead him to exalt the standard and pour forth the straight truth. Some will not bear this straight testimony. They will rise up against it, and this is what will cause a shaking among God's people." -- *Early Writings, p. 270*.

The very fact that they have not been able to contradict any part of the message in The Shepherd's Rod, is self evident that the thing is right; and had not the Spirit of God made it possible, it would have been like the rest of their books. They are not against The Shepherd's Rod because they fear it may be error, for they know it is the Truth. The reason they are warring against it, is because it tells the truth of their ungodly deeds, and is calling for a decided change of things.

I am not surprised at what they are doing to me, for they have been doing the same thing to Sister White who founded the denomination and whom they had already accepted to be the servant of the Lord. Think of the message in 1888. This same class of workers stood in the way and the message never reached the people! If they performed such ungodly deeds then, it is much easier for them to do it now.

You speak of re-writing The Shepherd's Rod, and to "hold to the one subject, namely, the 144,000 and a call for reformation," also having it proof-read by an English teacher. I believe you are sincere in this Elder _____, and I appreciate your admonition; but I also believe you will give earnest attention to what I am about to say, as I will try to explain my position in the fear of the Lord.

As I said before, I have nothing in The Shepherd's Rod to my knowledge that has no bearing on the 144,000 and a call for reformation. I think if you will study it from that angle, you will see that my statement is correct. This is one of the

reasons why we did not leave out any of the topics. Our second reason is, the truth of the 144,000 came through these topics to which many have objected and doubtless you perhaps refer to the same things. Now, Elder _____, stop and think how foolish it would be to kill the hen as soon as the chickens are hatched out!

I agree with you, Elder ____, if I had my way I would never have written the idea the way it is. I would have put in all the nice things, and left out all the rebuff and condemnation. I would have hired the finest English teacher I could get and have him clothe the thing in good flowery language; thus making sure that it would find a welcome in every home. But had I done so, it would have contradicted the very principle it stands for, and the tune of its voice would have condemned its profession. In other words, it would have been non-descript -- "lamb-like," but speaking like a dragon.

The intention of The Shepherd's Rod is to "cry aloud, spare not," show the sins and uncover the shame. It is to destroy the confidence of the sheep on the arm of flesh. By its human weakness it is to humble the lofty looks, and bow down the haughtiness of men. Its mission is to abase the proud, and to exalt the Lord alone. (Read Isa. 2; Rev. 3-5; Jer. 17:5-7.)

If The Shepherd's Rod had not poured out the straight Truth, and told the things which we may think would not bring disrepute to the church of God, and to the watchmen on the walls of Zion, God could not be vindicated by His "strange act" with the fulfillment of Ezekiel 9. The message in The Shepherd's Rod is for a witness to the world which church is His. By this example (Ezek. 9) He will call out His sheep, and quickly finish the work. "Not by might nor by power, but by My Spirit, saith the Lord of hosts." Depending on high-minded men, He can never finish His work, nor gather His people. This is why The Shepherd's Rod contains the things which are objectionable to human reasoning.

Your other remark which is of the greatest importance, you say I "must not take the position that The Shepherd's Rod is infallible." I have never used the word "infallible"; but I have stated that The Shepherd's Rod contains either all Truth, or there is no Truth in it. This position I have taken on the strength of the Bible, and the Spirit of Prophecy, as they both agree that God alone is able to reveal the Truth in His holy Word, regardless of its simplicity. This means Inspiration, which is especially true of timely Truth. The Word says, "I will guide you into ALL Truth." Do you doubt this clear-cut statement, Elder ____? I hardly think you do.

Your admittance that we have the Truth of the 144,000, and that it is the "message for the hour" proves my position. This most startling revelation was not made known before this because the time was not ripe for it. This fact proves that God controls the Scriptures, and to whomsoever He will, He reveals the truth of them. Since we have the message of the 144,000, and that they are to be preachers in the time of the "loud cry," the Word of God declares that they are "without guile in their mouth." How could this scripture be true if the very message concerning themselves, and

which they must proclaim be mixed with error? Why will He allow error? Has He lost His power? Is it not His will that we shall know the Truth and that the Truth shall make us free? I shall never say "God will not permit me to claim all Truth." This kind of unbelief has been the trouble in all ages: while they accept one point they refuse the other. It is this prevailing iniquity that has dragged down the church to the present state of stupor, of deception, and unbelief in the Spirit of Prophecy.

You say a report has been circulated that we claim Inspiration for the book, and that this has given another reason to the brethren for cutting loose from us. I am sure there is neither logic nor good reason for such action on the part of our brethren. Why should they stick to us if the book was not inspired Elder _____? I would not waste my time with it, or give one cent for it. If it is not divinely communicated, how could it be the "MESSAGE FOR THE HOUR?" Such contrary reasoning shows that the Laodiceans need to anoint their eyes with "eye salve." Think of it, they will accept the book if it is mixed with error, but ALL TRUTH they WILL NOT! Denying Inspiration of the message is throwing God out of it! Sinning against the Holy Ghost! May God forgive them for the thought.

It is true that the devil is determined that I shall not succeed. I have received a number of letters telling me how to teach the message. As one is contrary to the other, whom shall I accept as a safe guide? There is a danger, Elder ____, in fulfilling the prophecy as in Testimonies to Ministers, pp. 475, 476. Speaking of Elijah's

message we read: "Somebody is to come in the spirit and power of Elijah, and when he appears, men may say: `You are too earnest, you do not interpret the Scriptures in the proper way. Let me tell you how to teach your message.'" These words do not come from those who are opposed to it, for they say: "Let me tell you how to teach your message."

I hope, Elder _____, I shall not be misunderstood in what I have stated in this letter. It is not my intention to come back at you in everything you said. My only aim is to clear the Truth from misunderstanding, and I hope you will not be offended for my so doing.

If you cannot refute with facts my position in these matters, then it must be that I am right, and the safest way for us would be to march on openly with God's message, for it demands immediate action. If we beauty parlor what God has revealed, it would be His message no longer, and useless to waste our time with it. It is impossible to tell you my experience, but it will suffice to say that if The Shepherd's Rod is not inspired, I would not have said that it is. Your doubt in this fact does not only discredit God, but it also leaves you destitute of His power, and robs the fruit of your labor.

It is well said by the prophet Zechariah, time will prove, "and thou shalt know that the Lord of hosts hath sent me unto you." Zech. 4:9. There is much more that I would like to say, but I must not weary you with too much reading. I close with the words: "Today if ye will hear His voice, harden not your hearts."

Let me hear from you at your convenience.

May the good Lord bless you and make these things clear.

I am your sincere brother in Christ,

(Signed) V.T. Houteff

P.S. Read TM, p. 296; 9T16; Zech. 12:8; 5T263.