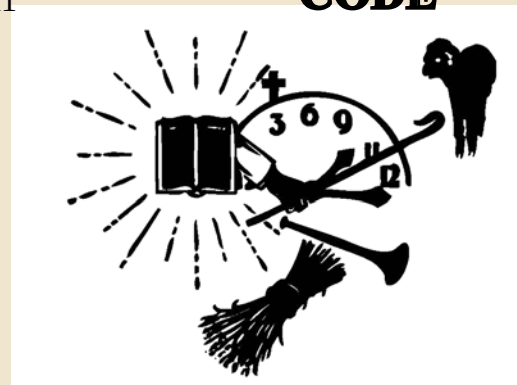
THE SYMBOLIC CODE

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THE KINGDOM OF HEAVEN LIKENED UNTO TEN VIRGINS

PURPOSE

This publication is dedicated to the mission of conveying to Davidian present truth believers, edifying news and articles of timely significance. This comforter freely gives its time to minister to those who shall be heirs of salvation, and neither collects fees nor charges for its service.

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THE SYMBOLIC CODE

Mt. Carmel Center Waco, Texas

THE KINGDOM OF HEAVEN LIKENED UNTO TEN VIRGINS

(The sermon selected for this month's issue of The Symbolic Code was delivered by Brother V. T. Houteff June 8, 1946.)

PRAYER THOUGHT: "It is a law of the mind that it gradually adapts itself to the subjects upon which it is trained to dwell. If occupied with commonplace matters only, it will become dwarfed and enfeebled. If never required to grapple with difficult problems, it will after a time almost lose the power of growth. As an educating power, the Bible is without a rival. In the word of God the mind finds subject for the deepest thought, the loftiest aspiration. The Bible is the most instructive history that men possess. It came fresh from the fountain of eternal truth, and a divine hand has preserved its purity through all the ages. It lights up the far-distant past, where human research seeks vainly to penetrate. In God's word we behold the power that laid the foundation of the earth and that stretched out the heavens. Here only can we find a history of our race unsullied by human prejudice or human pride. Here are recorded the struggles, the defeats, and the victories of the greatest men this world has ever known. Here the great problems of duty and destiny are unfolded. The curtain that

separates the visible from the invisible world is lifted, and we behold the conflict of the opposing forces of good and evil, from the first entrance of sin, to the final triumph of righteousness and truth: and all is but a revelation of the character of God. In the reverent contemplation of the truths presented in His word, the mind of the student is brought into communion with the infinite mind. Such a study will not only refine and ennoble the character, but it cannot fail to expand and invigorate the mental powers.

"The teaching of the Bible has a vital bearing upon man's prosperity in all the relations of this life. It unfolds the principles that are the cornerstone of a nation's prosperity, -- principles with which is bound up the well-being of society, and which are the safeguard of the family, -- principles without which no man can attain usefulness, happiness, and honor in this life, or can hope to secure the future, immortal life. There is no position in life, no phase of human experience, for which the teaching of the Bible is not an essential preparation. Studied and obeyed, the word of God would give to the world men of stronger and more active intellect than will the closest application to all the subjects that human philosophy embraces. It would give men of strength and solidity of character, of keen perception and sound judgment, -- men who would be an honor to God and a blessing to the world." -- *Patriarchs and Prophets, p. 596.*

Brother _____, who is visiting us, has asked me to give a study on the Kingdom. And with God's help I shall endeavor to do my best to bring out certain facts on that subject. Let us turn to

Matt. 24:42, 43 -- "Watch therefore: for ye know not what hour your Lord doth come. But know this, that if the goodman of the house had known in what watch the thief would come, he would have watched, and would not have suffered his house to be broken up."

These verses convey the idea that no one knows the day and the hour of the Lord's coming, and therefore the Lord admonishes His people to be ready all the time. Then He draws the illustration that if a certain one knew that a thief would attempt to break into his house at a certain time he would certainly watch for him. But the fact is that no one knows exactly when a thief will enter.

Matt. 24:44, 45 -- "Therefore be ye also ready: for in such an hour as ye think not the Son of man cometh. Who then is a faithful and wise servant, whom his Lord hath made ruler over his Household, to give them meat in due season?"

This implies that there are certain conditions which must be met by those who would be called faithful and wise servants. They must

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be giving meat in due season.

Matt. 24:46 -- "Blessed is that servant, whom his Lord when he cometh shall find so doing."

We as a denomination, as Seventh-day Adventists, should be able to reason out the lesson that is in these verses. According to verse 45, the Lord has made someone ruler over His household. Who would that be in God's church, in the denomination? If we are to attach this to someone it would necessarily be attached to the President of the General Conference who heads all the work. And, of course, since his responsibility is spread throughout the churches and shared by the ministry whom he directs, it follows that they all are included in what Christ is saying here. That is the only thing that it could mean.

Matt. 24:45 -- "Who then is a faithful and wise servant, whom his Lord hath made ruler over His household, to give them meat in due season?"

Should not meat in due season be a message from God especially addressed to His people and applicable at that time? Another name for meat in due season is present Truth. So, then, the servant is to give his household present Truth.

Matt. 24:46 -- "Blessed is that servant, whom his Lord when He cometh shall find so doing."

If our application is now right that this is speaking to the denomination, the church, just prior to the Lord's coming, then we must understand that God wants His servants to give to His household meat in due season until He comes.

Matt. 24:47 -- "Verily I say unto you, That He shall make him ruler over all His goods."

This verse implies that God has not as yet made his servant ruler over all His goods. But when he proves true by tending to his business of faithfully giving to His household meat in due season until the Lord comes, then God is going to make him ruler over all His goods. That is the promise.

Matt. 24:48-50 -- "But and if that evil servant shall say in his heart, My lord delayeth His coming; and shall begin to smite his fellowservants, and to eat and drink with the drunken; the Lord of that servant shall come in a day when he looketh not for Him, and in an hour that he is not aware of."

If no one is to know the day and hour until the Lord comes then how could this servant be aware of the day and the hour? Do you see that one statement seems to contradict the other? No one knows the hour, the day. Therefore, God's people must be ready for the event to occur at almost any time; and if this servant does not faithfully perform his duties, then when

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the Lord is about to come that servant will not be aware of it. Is that not how you understand these two statements? Up to a certain time God's people do not know the day and the hour, but if they continue to receive meat in due season a day will come when this servant is going to be made aware of that hour, of that day.

This illustration was not given to us alone, but to all God's people ever since it was written, and they were warned to be ready all the time because no one knew the day and the hour of His coming. But as Truth progresses and the Word of God unrolls, God's servants in the end are to be aware of the day and the hour. Does it not say that? That is just what it does say. But what is the danger here? What caused the servant to begin to eat and drink with the drunkard? -- "They said, the Lord delayeth His coming."

There were only two occasions in all church history that man complained that the Lord delayed His coming. They were the first or early Christians, who had expected the Lord to come immediately. They thought surely it would not be very long before the Lord would come in like manner as He had gone up. But, lo, almost 2,000 years have passed since the promise was given and the Lord has not come yet. So there was a chance for the earlier Christians to complain that the Lord had delayed His coming.

But we are not dealing with the disappoint-

ment at the commencement of the Christian church. Rather, we are speaking of the time when the Lord is really to come -- in the time of the end. You know that there was a people on this end of the church's history who also expected the Lord to come long before now. I suppose you would say they were the Millerites. But to this I cannot agree, because there was no delay for them. They had set the date for Christ's coming, and the outcome for them was not a delay, but a bitter disappointment. Seventh-day Adventists, though, since 1844 believed that in their life time, in their generation, the Lord would come and take them to heaven. You that have been Seventh-day Adventists for a long time or even for a short time know that it was their expectation. Instead, however, many of them are in their graves today.

In the early days our churches used to have a sign hanging inside reading thus: "The Gospel preached to all the world in this generation." Those signs have long since been taken down. One hundred years ago everybody who knew Adventists knew what were our expectations but it is not the case today.

I can also recall that after I became a Seventh-day Adventist I heard the brethren say that the Lord will come almost momentarily. But the Lord has not come yet. They erroneously concluded that the Lord would come in a few years, but it was to their detriment, for

when the time passed they became careless. We see, then, that according to our early expectations as Adventists, the Lord apparently has delayed His coming. And inasmuch as no other people in all the Christian world ever expected the Lord to come as the Adventists did, then this lesson is applicable only to us.

Moreover, when at first God's people expected the Lord to come soon, they all seemed to conform to the diet regulations which were given to the church to keep them apart from the world. But when God's people thought that the Lord had delayed his coming, what did they do? -- The majority laid aside their Adventist habits of eating and living. They seemed not to have understood that their prescribed mode of living as God had enjoined upon them was not limited to any certain time, but it was to be binding upon them until the Lord comes.

What will the Lord do about those who became careless because they thought the Lord delayed His coming? Let us read

Matt. 24:48-51 -- "But and if that evil servant shall say in his heart, My lord delayeth His coming; and shall begin to smite his fellowservants, and to eat and drink with the drunken, the Lord of that servant shall come in a day when he looketh not for Him, and in an hour that he is not aware of and shall cut him asunder, and appoint him his portion with the hypocrites:

there shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth."

What a terrible disappointment it will be to the people that for a time waited for the Lord's coming, once lined up with His program, and then departed from it! To these the Lord comes when they are not expecting Him.

Matt. 25:1 -- "Then shall the Kingdom of Heaven be likened unto ten virgins, which took their lamps, and went forth to meet the Bridegroom."

This verse begins with the word "then," indicating that it takes place at the time the Lord comes as spoken of in the preceding verse. In other words, at the time the Lord comes, the Kingdom shall be likened to something. The Kingdom of God as a crowned kingdom does not exist today, as you know. Then what is meant here by the Kingdom? -- It is referring to the people that are candidates for citizenship in It. Who are the subjects for the Kingdom of God, if they are not the church? Then the people comprising the church of God shall be likened unto ten virgins.

Matt. 25:2-5 -- "And five of them were wise and five were foolish. They that were foolish took their lamps, and took no oil with them: but the wise took oil in their vessels with their lamps. While the Bridegroom tarried, they all slumbered and slept."

When this happens the church is likened unto ten virgins and the ones that were foolish had their lamps all right, but they did not take with them more oil than what was in the lamps. They therefore had no extra reserve of oil. What does oil stand for? When used in a lamp, it gives light which illuminates your way, does it not? In the spiritual realm it is the understanding of the prophecies of the Bible that alone causes you to know where you are going.

Only five of the virgins have extra oil. They had availed themselves of the extra oil so that they could refill their lamps in case the oil that was in them should be used before they reached their destination.

The light that came in 1844 to lighten the path forward was the truth of the Judgment of the Dead which began then. Those that received this light called themselves Seventh-day Adventists from that time on. In the words used in this parable, they filled their lamps with the oil which represented the Judgment of the Dead message. Then came the tarrying time.

It is true that the Millerites expected the Lord to come to earth for the saints on a certain date in 1844, and He did not appear. They concluded, therefore, that they must have made a mistake, and they were no longer known by a name. It was the Seventh-day Adventists that expected the Lord to come not on a certain day

but in a generation, in a certain period of time. Since He did not come, however, they therefore concluded that the Lord delayed His coming.

Matt. 25:5, 6 -- "While the Bridegroom tarried, they all slumbered and slept. And at midnight there was a cry made, Behold, the Bridegroom cometh; go ye out to meet Him."

The cry to meet the Bridegroom comes after the time of tarrying.

Matt. 25:7-12 -- "Then all those virgins arose, and trimmed their lamps. And the foolish said unto the wise, Give us of your oil; for our lamps are gone out. But the wise answered, saying, Not so; lest there be not enough for us and you: but go ye rather to them that sell, and buy for yourselves. And while they went to buy, the Bridegroom came; and they that were ready went in with Him to the marriage: and the door was shut. Afterward came also the other virgins, saying, Lord, Lord, open to us. But He answered and said, Verily I say unto you, I know you not."

An announcement is made that the Bridegroom cometh. All the virgins are wakened by it. If the announcement were to come from the General Conference you know that all the members would fill their vessels with oil and all would have it. The facts are, though, that the

cry does not come from there.

All trimmed their lamps, we are told. What is the implication in that? We may conclude that while the cry goes out the people trim their lamps with the oil that is in them. In other words, they begin to apply their message to the change in circumstances or events. But what happens? The lamps go out. That indicates that what we had expected to happen does not happen; instead, something else takes place.

Seventh-day Adventists are expecting the war of Armageddon to take place next. When they see something different come instead they will become confused. They will then realize that the oil in their lamps (the Judgment of the Dead message) is not sufficient to guide them through this situation. Then they will long for the extra oil (additional light -- the message of the Judgment for the Living) which had previously been available to them but they had failed to obtain it. Thus feeling their urgent need of it, they will demand it from those who have it. But it will be too late. By the time they arrive at the Bridegroom's chamber, they find that He has already entered and closed the door. They knock; they plead, thinking He will surely open the door and welcome them inside. But instead, what do they hear Him say? -- "Verily, I say unto you, I know you not." And the door remains shut. Probation has closed for them.

Let us now identify the different personalities brought in. Here is a bridegroom. But where is the bride? And who are the virgins? The cry was, "Behold, the Bridegroom cometh." This cry was not to the bride but to the virgins. The virgins can only represent the guests. Who is the bride? Let us turn to Revelation 21 for help in identifying who is the bride:

Rev. 21:9, 10 -- "And there came unto me one of the seven angels which had the seven vials full of the seven last plagues, and talked with me, saying, Come hither, I will shew thee the bride, the Lamb's wife. And he carried me away in the Spirit to a great and high mountain, and shewed me that great city, the holy Jerusalem, descending out of heaven from God."

The Lamb's wife is the city. John saw the foundations, and the walls and the buildings of the Holy City; he did not see people. He called the city the Lamb's wife. If the city is the Lamb's wife, and if the virgins are the ones who are to meet the Bridegroom, then who is the bride? -- The Kingdom must be the bride. The people of God's church are the guests and are represented by the virgins. The same thing is true in this parable as we find in the parable of the King going in to examine the guests for the marriage, one of whom He found without the wedding garment on. Those whom He examines are the guests. To summarize then, the people are the

guests, the Kingdom is the bride, and the Lord is the Groom.

Moreover, in the parable we are studying today, did the Lord come to earth where the ten virgins were? Yes, He did, for He came where both the unworthy and worthy virgins were. If He came to earth and had a door of His own to shut or to open that would indicate that He had a place of His own. Then He will come to His Kingdom, and unless the guests enter on time through the door, they will be disappointed when they knock and the door will not be opened to them.

Since this coming of the Bridegroom is obviously not the visible second coming of Christ to take to heaven His people who shall meet Him in the air, we should be able to find in the Bible something more about it. Let us now turn to

Matt. 25:31, 32 -- "When the Son of man shall come in His glory, and all the holy angels with Him, then shall He sit upon the throne of His glory: and before Him shall be gathered all nations: and He shall separate them one from another, as a shepherd divideth His sheep from the goats."

Did these verses say that the Son of man is going to come down on a cloud to where the just-risen dead along with the living saints will meet Him in the air as in 1 Thess. 4:16, 17? Is that what we just read? -- No. It says here that at

this coming He will gather all nations before Him and then He will sit down on a throne and separate them. He will put the "goats" on the left and the "sheep" on the right. Moreover He will tell each of the two classes what they have or have not done that caused them to be thus judged and separated.

Do you not see clearly why we need the extra oil -- the message of the Judgment for the Living? We as Adventists have been preaching the Judgment for a hundred years or more and yet never even for a moment did we see that these parables were talking about the Judgment, the Judgment for the Living! If we never saw it before we should now be able to see clearly that this Judgment included the separation of the righteous and the wicked.

You cannot say that the Judgment we are reading about in Matthew 25 is the Judgment which is to take place during the millennium because His people are not then among the nations. There is positively no escaping the conclusion that it takes place in the time of the Judgment for the Living when both the righteous and wicked are commingled on the earth. Since, moreover, this work of separation goes on among the people themselves, it is clear that it is not a work to be done in heaven but it is a work to be done on the earth. "Then shall two be in the field; the one shall be taken, and the other left. Two women shall be grinding at the

mill; the one shall be taken, and the other left." Matt. 24:40, 41. Some call that the "rapture," but it is quite different than what they think it is.

Now we plainly see that Christ in Matthew 25 is talking about the Judgment for the Living. And in connection with this subject we find that Malachi says the very same thing; namely, that after a messenger has prepared the way, the Lord will suddenly come to His temple to purify it (Mal. 3:1). When He comes it is not to judge the dead in the heavenly sanctuary, but to judge the living in the earthly sanctuary. And if the Lord is going to sit on His throne on earth and gather the nations before Him and judge and separate the people, where specifically is the Lord going to sit?

In Daniel 2 we find the description and interpretation of the great image which the king of Babylon saw in a dream. We as Adventists, and for that matter, not only we Adventists, but other Bible students as well recognize that this image represents the nations of the world from Babylon's time down to today. We also understand that the toe kingdoms represent the nations in existence today. Now let us read

Dan. 2:44, 45 -- "And in the days of these kings [the toe kings] shall the God of heaven set up a Kingdom, which shall never be destroyed: and the Kingdom shall not be left to other people, but It shall break in pieces and consume all these kingdoms, and It shall stand forever. Forasmuch as thou sawest that the stone was cut out of the mountain without hands, and that It brake in pieces the iron, the brass, the clay, the silver, and the gold; the great God hath made known to the king what shall come to pass hereafter: and the dream is certain, and the interpretation thereof sure."

Daniel here describes how the earth's governments come to their end, not how the earth comes to its end. He interpreted the stone to be the Kingdom, and it is God's Kingdom that will smite the nations, not Christ's coming from heaven to take up the saints, as we Adventists have taught. Jeremiah calls the Kingdom God's "battle axe" (Jer. 51:20).

What plainer language could be used to say that the Kingdom is going to be set up before the nations come to their end? The trouble some have believing this is not because of the language the Bible used but the trouble is with our preconceived ideas that were built up throughout the years, and the only way we can drive out our former erroneous ideas is to believe just what the Bible says. Now let us turn to

Ezek. 36:17-19 -- "Son of man, when the house of Israel dwelt in their own land they defiled it by their own way and by their doings: their way was before Me as the

uncleanness of a removed woman. Wherefore I poured My fury upon them for the blood that they had shed upon the land, and for their idols wherewith they had polluted it: and I scattered them among the heathen, and they were dispersed through the countries: according to their way and according to their doings I judged them."

This says that because of the evils of the people God dispersed them throughout the countries.

Ezek. 36:20 -- "And when they entered unto the heathen, whither they went, they profaned My holy name, when they said to them, These are the people of the Lord, and are gone forth out of His land.

They profaned His name when it was said of them that they are the people of the Lord gone out of His land. Is it not profaning God's name for the Gentiles to have driven God's people out of their own land and become rulers over them after God had so miraculously brought them there and set them up to be the greatest kingdom, even His Kingdom on earth? Could not the Gentiles feel that they had successfully defeated God's purpose for them? God's people having brought this great curse upon themselves through their disobedience, thus profaned God's holy name in the midst of the heathen whither they went. It has been brought up to me many times that

the Gentiles took God's people captive because God was not able to defend His own Kingdom, and therefore He was unable to fulfill His promise to Israel. Thus was His name profaned among the heathen, all because of the disobedience of God's own people.

Ezek. 36:21, 22 -- "But I had pity for Mine holy name, which the house of Israel had profaned among the heathen, whither they went. Therefore say unto the house of Israel, thus saith the Lord God; I do not this for your sakes, O house of Israel, but for Mine holy name's sake, which ye have profaned among the heathen, whither ye went."

It was because God could no longer tolerate the sins of His people that He through the Gentiles had to disperse them. The heathen did not know that, though. Now God says He will do something about it for His holy name's sake, not because His people are good. The next verses state plainly what He will do.

Ezek. 36:23, 24 -- "And I will sanctify My great name, which was profaned among the heathen, which ye have profaned in the midst of them; and the heathen shall know that I am the Lord, saith the Lord God, when I shall be sanctified in you before their eyes. For I will take you from among the heathen, and gather you out of all countries, and will bring you into your own land."

To those who ask how God can defend His name now since the heathen have dispersed throughout the nations the ancient kingdom of His people, we need only to read to them what God here says: that He will gather His people back from all countries, and show them and the heathen that He will yet honor His name by sanctifying Himself in them before the heathen.

Ezek. 36:25-27 -- "Then will I sprinkle clean water upon you, and ye shall be clean: from all your filthiness, and from all your idols, will I cleanse you. A new heart, also will I give you, and a new spirit will I put within you: and I will take away the stony heart out of your flesh, and I will give you an heart of flesh. And I will put My Spirit within you, and cause you to walk In My statutes, and ye shall keep My judgments, and do them."

Since all of this takes place when God gathers His people from among the heathen, then no one can dodge the fact that unless we go into the land where the cleansing will take place, we will not be cleansed and we will not receive the new heart and God's Spirit.

After we have been taken from among the heathen, God will sprinkle clean water upon us to cleanse us. By this we are to understand that until God gathers us from among the heathen we cannot be clean. After He cleanses us we will be without spot. The judgment time we must remember, is a cleansing time as well as a separating time. The Judgment for the Living takes place when God cleanses His people from all their filthiness and puts within them His Spirit and hearts of flesh. This work is to be done for His people after God has returned them to their own land.

This chapter tells us that we will never be clean until God gathers us from all the heathen and makes us what we ought to be. The Devil, however, wants to convince us that there is to be neither a land to which God's people are to go, nor a cleansing. Let us read further:

Ezek. 36:28 -- "And ye shall dwell in the land that I gave to your fathers; and ye shall be My people, and I will be your God."

The land that God gave to our fathers is Palestine. Because the children of Israel were dispersed, His name was profaned. And to show that He indeed rules over the earth and the people, He will gather out His people from the nations and set them right back in their own land and sanctify Himself in them.

Ezek. 36:29, 30 -- "I will also save you from all your uncleannesses: and I will call for the corn, and will increase it, and lay no famine upon you. And I will multiply the fruit of the tree, and the increase of the field,

that ye shall receive no more reproach of famine among the heathen."

If the land of our fathers in this chapter means heaven, there would be no heathen in existence to witness any more reproach of famine, and thus the last clause of Ezek. 36:30 would be unnecessary and meaningless.

Ezek. 36:31 -- "Then shall ye remember your own evil ways, and your doings that were not good, and shall loathe yourselves in your own sight for your iniquities and for your abominations."

After God has returned His people to their own land, and changed their hearts and put within them His Spirit, then will they hate their old evil doings. They will be genuinely sorry for them. This is the revival and reformation which God calls for, and which He Himself will work in His people.

Now let us turn to the next chapter:

Ezek. 37:15-24 -- "The word of the Lord came again unto me, saying, Moreover, thou son of man, take thee one stick, and write upon it, For Judah, and for the children of Israel his companions: then take another stick, and write upon it, For Joseph, the stick of Ephraim and for all the house of Israel his companions: and join them one

to another into one stick; and they shall become one in thine hand.

"And when the children of thy people shall speak unto thee, saying, Wilt thou not shew us what thou meanest by these? Say unto them, Thus saith the Lord God; Behold, I will take the stick of Joseph, which is in the hand of Ephraim, and the tribes of Israel his fellows, and will put them with him, even with the stick of Judah, and make them one stick, and they shall be one in Mine hand.

" And the sticks whereon thou writest shall be in thine hand before their eyes. And say unto them, Thus saith the Lord God; Behold, I will take the children of Israel from among the heathen, whither they be gone, and will gather them on every side, and bring them into their own land: and I will make them one nation in the land upon the mountains of Israel; and one king shall be king to them all: and they shall be no more two nations, neither shall they be divided into two kingdoms any more at all. Neither shall they defile themselves any more with their idols, nor with their detestable things, nor with any of their transgressions: but I will save them out of all their dwelling places, wherein they have sinned, and will cleanse them: so shall they be My people, and I will be their God. And David My

servant shall be king over them; and they all shall have one shepherd: they shall also walk in My judgments, and observe My statutes, and do them."

The ancient kingdoms of Judah and Israel were dispersed. Now, however, the Lord says that He will bring them back to their own land and join them into one kingdom where He will sanctify Himself in them. When God does this with His people, the heathen will learn who God is and what are His purposes in the earth.

I believe that the subject of the Kingdom is one of the plainest of all subjects. In fact, the Scriptures dealing with It actually need no interpretation if we believe what the Bible says, for It plainly states just what It means and is in perfect harmony throughout Its prophecies, parables, and symbols. The only trouble there could be is that we have put an erroneous idea into our minds that there is to be no Kingdom of God on earth before His second coming, and that idea has to be taken out, for it is unscriptural.

Daniel, too, talks of the Kingdom of God saying that It shall not be left to other people but It will stand for ever, and will grow and fill the whole earth.

Though there will be only 144,000 "cut" by God's own might and taken to Mt. Zion, yet they as "servants," and as the first fruits (Rev. 7:1-8 and Rev. 14:1-5), are to gather in the great multitude which no man could number of Revelation 7:9, 10. Thus will they enlarge the Kingdom that is finally to fill the earth. That is what the Lord purposes to do with His people.

If we would be among the wise virgins, we will not fight against God's setting up His Kingdom, but rather we will study about It and thus procure the "extra oil," we will work for it, and we will also certainly with understanding pray as Christ Himself taught us:

"Thy Kingdom come,
Thy will be done in earth
as it is in heaven."

O JESUS, I HAVE PROMISED

O Jesus, Thou hast promised
To all who follow Thee
That where Thou art in glory
There shall Thy servant be;
And, Jesus, I have promised
To serve Thee to the end;
O give me grace to follow
My Master and my Friend.

--John E. Bode

"THUS SAITH THE LORD"

"Thus saith the Lord... I will cause the captivity of Judah and the captivity of Israel to return, and will build them, as at the first. And I will cleanse them from all their iniquity, whereby they have sinned against Me; and I will pardon all their iniquities, whereby they have sinned, and whereby they have transgressed against Me.

"And it shall be to Me a name of joy, a praise and an honour before all the nations of the earth, which shall hear all the good that I do unto them: and they shall fear and tremble for all the goodness and for all the prosperity that I procure unto it.

"Thus saith the Lord; Again there shall be heard in this place, which ye say shall be desolate without man and without beast, even in the cities of Judah, and in the streets of Jerusalem, that are desolate, without man, and without inhabitant, and without beast the voice of joy, and the voice of gladness, the voice of the bridegroom, and the voice of the bride, the voice of them that shall say, Praise the Lord of hosts: for the Lord is good; for His mercy endureth for ever: and of them that shall bring the sacrifice of praise into the house of the Lord. For I will cause to return the captivity of the land, as at the first, saith the Lord.

"Thus saith the Lord of hosts; Again in this place, which is desolate without man and without beast, and in all the cities thereof, shall be an habitation of shepherds causing their flocks to lie down. In the cities of the vale, and in the cities of the south, and in the land of Benjamin, and in the places about Jerusalem, and in the cities of Judah, shall the flocks pass again under the hands of him that telleth them, saith the Lord.

"Behold, the days come, saith the Lord, that I will perform that good thing which I have promised unto the house of Israel and to the house of Judah.

"In those days, and at that time, will I cause the Branch of righteousness to grow up unto David; and he shall execute judgment and righteousness in the land. In those days shall Judah be saved, and Jerusalem shall dwell safely: and this is the name wherewith she shall be called, The Lord our righteousness." Jer. 33:2, 7-16.

"God's love runneth faster than our feet
To meet us stealing back to Him and peace,
And kisses dumb our shame; nay, and puts on
The best robe, bidding angels bring it forth."

--Selected .

"TODAY IF YE WILL HEAR HIS VOICE HARDEN NOT YOUR HEARTS"

"True we are establishing our headquarters on this mount that is found in prophecy, but our stay here shall be very short for `He will finish the work, and cut it short in righteousness: because a short work will the Lord make upon the earth.' (Rom. 9:28).

"It might be interesting to Elder G. to know that the naming of our 'camp' 'Mt. Carmel Center' came about in the same way as the naming of our publications `The Shepherd's Rod,' for we did not know before hand that it was in prophecy until after our attention was called to Mic. 7:14 and Amos 1:2. In the prophecy of Amos we read:

"'The Lord will roar from Zion, and utter His voice from Jerusalem; and the habitations of the shepherds shall mourn, and the top of Carmel shall wither.' Amos 1:2.

"With a few comments on the above scripture, any bible student will recognize at a glance that it applies at the time of the end, as explained by the gospel prophet: 'And it shall come to pass in the last days, that the mountain of the Lord's house shall be established in the top of the mountains, and shall be exalted above the hills...for out of Zion shall go forth the law, and the

word of the Lord from Jerusalem.' (Isa. 2:2, 3), which the language of Amos is, 'Utter his voice from Jerusalem. Looking to this same time Joel puts it as follows: 'And the Lord shall utter His voice before His army: for His camp is very great: for He is strong that executeth His word: for the day of the Lord is great and very terrible; and who can abide it?' (Joel 2:11).

"As Amos says, 'The habitations of the shepherds shall mourn,' it is obvious that Amos' prophecy is yet future, for the word 'habitations' (places) is in the plural form which cannot be applied to one shepherd's habitation (denomination) but to all that be in existence at that time. The term 'shepherds' means, as understood, the same as 'the ancient men which were before the house' -- the ministers. 'Testimonies for the Church,' Vol. 5, p. 211. Note that the shepherds are not themselves to mourn but their 'habitations' (their houses); that is, the membership of their churches, which fact reveals that it will be thus at the time when the sleeping multitudes in the churches awake from their spiritual insensibility and find that the shepherds whom they have implicitly trusted for their salvation and deceived all those who followed them.

"The prophet Jeremiah in the following words explains that this wailing by those who are thus deceived will be at the close of probation. For they shall say 'the harvest is past,

the summer is ended, and we are not saved.' (Jer. 8:20). That is, after the harvest, the time in which they could have been saved, they will realize that Probationary time has closed. Then 'the habitations of the shepherds shall mourn, and the top of Carmel shall wither.' Hence, before that time the top of Carmel must have been green with much pasture, otherwise there would be nothing to wither; that is, though Carmel has now plenty of pasture (present truth), when probation closes it shall be deserted ('wither'), for says the Spirit of Prophecy: 'In the time of trouble we all fled from the cities and villages.' -- 'Early Writings,' p. 34.

"Thus shall the top of Carmel wither and those who do not take heed to the word, 'To day if ye will hear His voice, harden not your hearts,' at length will be alarmed that their opportunity for accepting the truth has slipped away. Then in their hasty, frenzied effort to acquaint themselves with present truth which went forth from the top of Carmel, to their surprise they shall find that Carmel has finished its work, its inhabitants removed, and probation closed, at which time the inhabitants of 'Carmel' can but repeat, 'the harvest is past, the summer is ended, and we have nothing for thee.'

"Then it shall come pass that 'They shall wander from sea to sea, and from the north even to the east, they shall run to and fro to seek the word of the Lord, and shall not find

it. In that day shall the fair virgins and young men faint for thirst.... Behold, the days come, saith the Lord God, that I will send a famine in the land, not a famine of bread, nor a thirst for water, but of hearing the words of the Lord.' (Amos 8:12, 13, 11). Oh, what a disappointment that will be!

"'And now 'mine eyes' with the eyes of the lamenting prophet 'do fail with tears,...for the destruction of the daughter of My people; because the children and the sucklings swoon in the streets of the city.... Thy prophets [teachers] have seen vain and foolish things for thee: and they have not discovered thine iniquity, to turn away thy captivity, but have seen for thee false burdens and causes of banishment.' (Lam. 2:11, 14).

"As the Lord has never left His people in darkness, we find the work of the Shepherd's Rod clearly outlined in prophecy throughout the Bible, and the only reason that our leading brethren cannot see the truth in it and do not know 'who hath appointed it' is because they are trying to see it through dollars and cents instead of through the Spirit of Prophecy, the eyes for the church, through which only can they see the truth and the true state of their condition of spiritual blindness, poverty and wretchedness, and a need for 'eyesalve,' 'for what man knoweth the things of a man, save the spirit of man which is in him? Even so the things of God knoweth no

man, but the Spirit of God.' (1 Cor. 2:11).

"But now as 'the Spirit of truth, is come, He will guide you into all truth: for He shall not speak of Himself; but whatsoever He shall hear, that shall He speak: and He will shew you things to come.' (John 16:13), for without the Spirit of God 'no man' knoweth the things of God." -- THE SYMBOLIC CODE, Vol. 1, No. 14, (August, 1935), pp. 5-7.

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