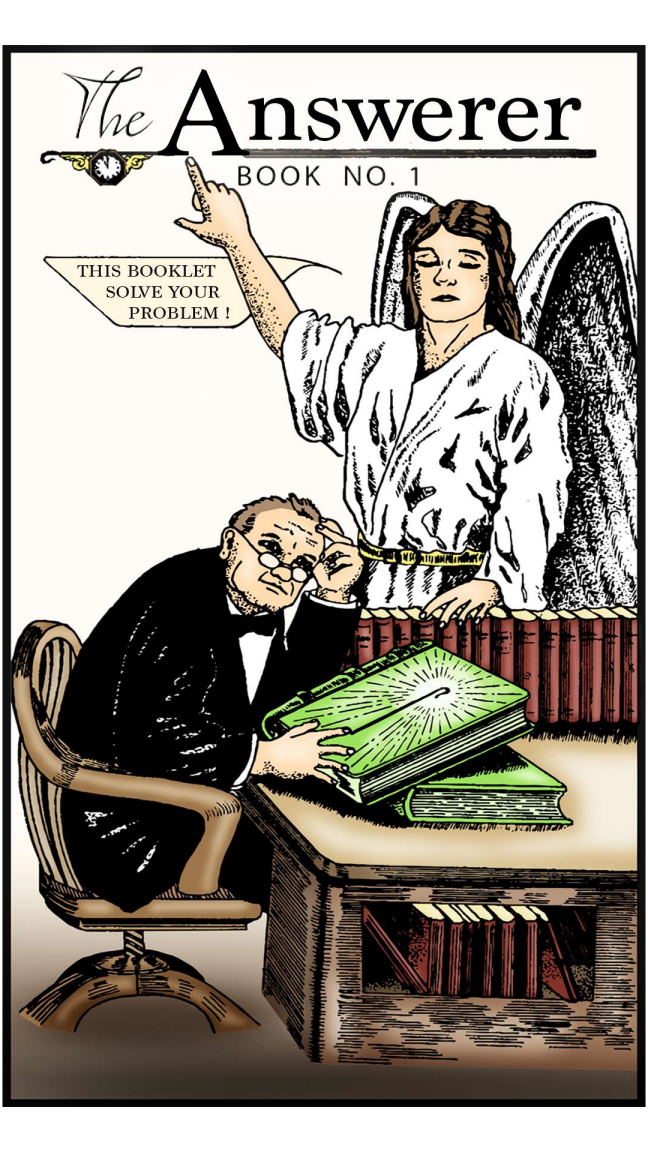
The Answerer

BOOK NO. 1



THE ANSWERER
Book No. 1

Questions and Answers on Present Truth
Topics in the Interest of the Seventh-day
Adventist Brethren and Readers

of

The Shepherd's Rod
By V.T. Houteff

This "scribe," instructed unto the kingdom
of heaven, "bringeth forth...
things new and old."
Matt. 13:52.

Now "sanctify the Lord God in your hearts: and be ready always to give an answer to every man that asketh you a reason of the hope that is in you with meekness and fear."
1 Pet. 3:15.

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That everyone who thirsteth for the truth may obtain it, this booklet of questions and answers is, as a Christian service, mailed without charge. Send for it. It levies but one exaction, the soul's obligation to itself to prove all things and hold fast that which is good. The only strings attached to this free proffer are the golden strands of Eden and the crimson cords of Calvary--the ties that bind.

Names and addresses of Seventh-day Adventists will be appreciated.

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THE ANSWERER'S INTRODUCTORY CONCERN

DO YOU KNOW?

Dear Brethren in Laodicea, do you know that prophecy positively declares that the people of God in the Laodicean church are in a critically dangerous condition and know it not? Well, Brethren, whether or not you realize it, whether or not you believe it, that precisely is the case. And if you hope to enter into eternal life, you must believe it, and that without delay. Whatever else you may believe or disbelieve, this one thing you must believe, "for it is the True Witness who speaks, and his testimony must be correct." --*Testimonies*, Vol. 3, p. 253.

And remember that above all people, the Laodiceans should not only be the last but the least inclined to criticize, for they themselves, says the True Witness, are "wretched, and miserable, and poor, and blind, and naked," without so much even as suspecting it, but instead blissfully imagining that they are "rich, and increased with goods, and" in "need of nothing." Rev. 3:17. How, then, can they be in a position truly to know anything about others!

Think, Brethren, and rouse to life! This voice, pleading with you to awake and avert the Enemy's pitfalls cannot possibly

be the Enemy's voice! Remember that the Lord "surprises us by revealing His power through instruments of His own choice, while He passes by the men to whom we have looked as those through whom light should come. God desires us to receive the truth upon its own merits,--because it is truth."--*Testimonies to Ministers*, p. 106.

"No matter by whom light is sent, we should open our hearts to receive it with the meekness of Christ.... We should all know what is being taught among us; for if it is truth, we need it."--Gospel Workers, p. 301.

"The great danger with our people has been that of depending upon men, and making flesh their arm. Those who have not been in the habit of searching the Bible for themselves, or weighing evidence, have confidence in the leading men and accept the decisions they make; and thus many will reject the very messages God sends to His people, if these leading brethren do not accept them."--*Testimonies to Ministers*, pp. 106, 107.

"He will use men for the accomplishment of His purpose whom some of the brethren would reject as unfit to engage in the work."--*The Review and Herald*, Feb. 9, 1895.

In the light of these warnings, will you not take time carefully and prayerfully to

ascertain whether or not God is leading in this reformatory work? He has promised to all who will do this, that He will not leave them in darkness but will guide them into all Truth. So will you not take Him at His Word, and try Him?

We plead with you to, for already "the agencies of evil are combining their forces, and consolidating. They are strengthening for the last great crisis. Great changes are soon to take place in our world," says Inspiration, "and the final movements will be rapid ones....The time is coming when in their fraud and insolence men will reach a point that the Lord will not permit them to pass, and they will learn that there is a limit to the forbearance of Jehovah....Those who hold the reins of government are not able to solve the problem of moral corruption, poverty, pauperism, and increasing crime. They are struggling in vain to place business operations on a more secure basis....Soon everything that can be shaken will be shaken, that those things that can not be shaken may remain....

"It is impossible to give any idea of the experience of the people of God who shall be alive upon the earth when celestial glory and a repetition of the persecutions of the past are blended. They will walk in the light proceeding from the throne of God. By means of the angels there will be

constant communication between heaven and earth."--*Testimonies*, Vol. 9, pp. 11, 13, 15, 16.

In view of these solemn realities even now looming before our eyes, no longer, Brother Sister, hide yourself in the darkness. Stand in the light, lest you stumble and fall and not be found. Come, take time, and

Let Us Reason Together.

The Laodicean church, the last of the seven churches (Rev. 2, 3), being figurative of the Christian church in her last period, our time, the message on record to her is therefore the last message to the church. So, plainly, if there is any Bible subject essential for the church to study, the message to the Laodiceans certainly is.

Although satisfied with their attainments, the Laodiceans who believe and take God at His Word will not question Him concerning their condition but will, whether they see it or not, acknowledge that they are in a "sad deception," "wretched, and miserable, and poor, and blind and naked." Having honestly made this acknowledgment, they will, in consequent obedience to the True Witness' counsel to buy of Him eyesalve which He alone can supply, anoint their eyes with it and be able to see.

Those, though, who recline in the false

security of self-complacence, will pay no attention to the warning counsel, and will as a result lose everything--be spued out! Yet how few does this dread threat alarm! How few does it impel to find out where the trouble lies and how they stand! How few, indeed, does it even trouble! And O how few incline to inquire into it for fear that it may rebuke their evil course and deprive them of some sinful pleasure which they dearly cherish! Surprisingly few yet all too truly.

Then, too, there being instilled in them great fear of false prophets, and not at all awakened in them any expectation of true ones (although there can be no false where there are no true), they are now therefore almost beyond reach. And behind their careless attitude is seen the truth that "the pains of duty and the pleasures of sin are the cords with which Satan binds men in his snares" (*Testimonies*, Vol. 5, p. 53), while behind the deeply instilled fear of false prophets, is seen the false watchman's carefulness to keep them from coming in contact with the messengers whom God has sent to them.

Our deep concern, therefore, is that there awaken an interest in you, dear Laodicean, to go to the bottom of the matter, to make sure of your salvation. So will you not be sensible and courteous enough to sit down with this lightbearer in humble,

impartial, prayerful study which must repay you many, many times over what you put into it? Remember, there is a divine law that converts every honest effort into joy, a personal experience with God, and eternal life. So will you not start now to measure yourself, no longer by what you think you are or will be but by what the Lord says you are and must be? Begin your investigation with the ensuing

Seven Questions.

1. Who is Laodicea?

2. Whom does the angel represent?

3. What is meant by being wretched and miserable and poor and blind and naked?

4. What is it to be "lukewarm"?

5. Why does God prefer one either cold or hot rather than lukewarm?

6. What is the eyesalve?

7. Should Laodicea fail to repent, how would her shame be uncovered?

The Revelation, chapters 2 and 3, describes the condition of each of the seven churches the last of which is the Laodicean. These churches, admittedly, portray the Christian church in seven different periods; the seventh, Laodicea, depicting her in the period just before the "harvest,"

the last in which the "wheat and tares" are commingled, and the one in which she is to experience the separation of the bad from among the good (Matt. 13 :30, 47-49).

Since in her every section, the church must be true to her name (it alone being her identification), we shall therefore consider the question:

Who is Laodicea?

Laodicea may be infallibly recognized amidst the many "isms" of Christendom by the work she is doing--declaring the judgment. Indeed, this mark of identification is pointed out by the very name Laodicea, compounded of the two Greek words *lao* and *dekei*, the one meaning "people," also "speak," the other meaning "judgment," the two in one meaning *the people declaring judgment*. The church therefore, which declares, "Fear God, and give glory to Him; for the hour of His judgment is come" (Rev. 14:7), is evidently the one called Laodicea. And it is almost as well known outside Seventh-day Adventist circles as within, that the Seventh-day Adventist church is endeavoring to carry the judgment message of Revelation 14:7, and is therefore unchallenged in her claim to the title, Laodicea.

Since, therefore, the Seventh-day Adventist church is the only one proclaiming

the judgment, and since each of the seven messages is addressed to the angel of the respective churches, the message to Laodicea is accordingly addressed

To the Seventh-day Adventist Angel.

According to Revelation 1:20, the "candlesticks" symbolize the churches, and the "stars" the angels (leaders) who have charge over the churches. Being the attendants of the churches, the angels are thus seen to be the ministry, whose responsibility is to have the lamps trimmed, filled with oil, and burning brightly, so that the church may give light to all about her.

Accordingly, as the Laodicean angel, him to whom the condemnatory message is sent, is symbolical of the ministry in Laodicea, he should consequently be the more anxious to discover where the trouble lies, for he is, says the Lord,

Wretched, Miserable, Poor, Blind, and Naked.

With a ministry wretched, miserable, poor blind, and naked, what church (candlestick) could possibly stay lighted? And with her light thus gone out or but flickering dimly, how could she lighten the world as God has set her to do? Through the eyes of the True Witness, therefore,

the tragedy of Laodicea is starkly seen--"sleeping preachers preaching to a sleeping people" (*Testimonies*, Vol. 2, p. 337) while a sin-benighted world plunges on hell-bent in its darkness! O what a piteous plight! And yet it is so utterly overlooked!

With both ministry and laity in such a pitiful state of darkness, it is clear to be seen that though the Laodicean church is the last in the order of the seven churches, God cannot through her lighten the world and prepare His people for the Kingdom when she is in darkness and unprepared herself. Hence the necessity of a new order, a new ministry, as predicted in *Testimonies*, Vol. 5, p. 80, and in Zephaniah 3:11, 12.

Then it will come to pass that "only those who have withstood temptation in the strength of the Mighty One, will be permitted to act a part in proclaiming it [the Third Angel's Message] when it shall have swelled into the Loud Cry."--*The Review and Herald*, No. 19, 1908.

In the light of these facts, the prophetic message to the angel of the Laodiceans must obviously be brought and proclaimed by someone other than the angel himself. But this, of course, is the very thing that neither the ministry nor the laity expect or wish to happen. For the sake of the faithful, nevertheless, it is happening.

So since God's Word says that the ministry of the Laodicean church is wretched, miserable, poor, blind, and naked, and that neither they nor the laity are aware of the fact, it lends heavy emphasis to the statements: "*Sleeping* preachers preaching to a sleeping people!" (*Testimonies*, Vol. 2. p. 337); "the message of the True Witness finds the people of God in a sad deception, yet honest in that deception."--*Testimonies*, Vol. 3, p. 253.

Although they are in this horrible predicament, one which should make them tremble and fear, and give anything to get out of, yet they continue

Lukewarm--Neither Cold Nor Hot.

When one finds himself in a climate which is neither cold nor hot, but lukewarm, a temperature desired and sought by all, there he basks as a pauper become a prince! So it is with the Laodiceans, as represented in prophecy, though their supposed riches are nothing but a death trap!

To rescue one from such a terrible deception is a task which calls for the utmost wisdom not only because the victim is blindly inured to the perilous condition he is in, while his rescuers are endeavoring to save him from perishing, but also because he considers them as his enemies, false prophets, instead of as his friends and deliverers, messengers from God!

From the life line, the saving message which they pleadingly hold forth to him, he recoils. And consequently by his attitude against them, he shouts: Away, away, I am rich and increased with goods: I have need of nothing; I have all the truth. "I am satisfied with my position. I have set my stakes, and I will not be moved away from my *position* whatever may come."--*Testimonies on Sabbath-School Work, p. 65; Counsels on Sabbath School Work*, p. 28.

In protesting that they are not wretched (not unhappy), not miserable (not troubled), not poor (not in need of truth), not blind (not benighted or illiterate), not naked (not without the righteousness of Christ), the Laodiceans are contradicting the True Witness, rejecting His counsel, and discrediting His remedy--

The Eyesalve.

As only the "salve" will heal them from their deadly Laodicean malady, hence if they fail to avail themselves of the cure (by searching for truth as for hidden treasure) and to apply it (to repent), they will be spued out. O, Brother, Sister, will you not call for the "salve"? or will you continue in your wretchedness, miserableness, poverty, blindness, and nakedness, and thus compel Him to spue you out and to

Uncover Your Shame?

That your shame, Brethren, might not appear to all, God has long forborne to expose to the world the sins which you have cherished and kept under cover. Not forever, though, will He forbear. So for your soul's sake, argue no longer that you have all the Truth; cease adding sin to sin; repent, and return to Him; He will just as gladly accept you and make a feast for you as did the father in the parable welcome back his prodigal son and make a feast for him

Be not like the Jew. But open your heart; cast out its pride, its prejudice, and its self-conceit; let these not deprive you of eternal life at such a late hour as this. If you repeat the mistake of the Jews, your shame and your loss will be as much greater than theirs as are your light and your opportunities and privileges. Yea, beyond comparison! So do not fail, we plead with you, to end your long Laodicean sickness and poverty, and no longer imagine that you are

Rich, Increased With Goods.

Never do you even so much as intimate that you have all the buildings, all the institutions, all the money, all the workers, all the converts you need! Your only boast is of having no need of more truth! This attitude, therefore, the Lord says, is the way

in which you are saying, "I am rich and increased with goods, and have need of nothing." It is the source of your trouble, and the thing which He expects you to confess and to repent of.

The angel's (the ministry's) mistaken claim of being rich and increased with goods and in need of nothing, does not make him a liar, but rather shows him to be a victim of ignorance and delusion. But his thinking that he has and knows all the Truth, makes his condition even more perilous than a liar's, for a liar knows that he is lying. O awake, Brother, Sister, awake! awake!

Do As Did Nathaniel.

Come and see!

See what? Laodiceans, rich and increased with goods, and in need of nothing, with the excuse that the need to take care of the material things of life (Luke 14:15-19) forbids their accepting the invitation?

Indeed not!

See the Laodiceans from the streets and lanes--"the poor, and the maimed and the halt, and the blind" (Luke 14:21), gladly availing themselves of the remedy!

But, alas, not all who come, remain, for "when any one heareth the word of the kingdom, and understandeth it not, then

cometh the wicked one, and catcheth away that which was sown in his heart. This is he which received seed by the way side." Be not like him, but make the effort required to understand the Truth. And others, "when tribulation or persecution ariseth because of the word," are offended. These are they "that received the seed into stony places." Neither be like them; be rooted in the Truth. "But he that received seed into the good ground is he that heareth the word, and understandeth it; which also beareth fruit, and bringeth forth, some an hundredfold, some sixty, some thirty." Matt. 13:19-23.

Though the "bad" along with the "good" are still coming (for we are yet in the period in which the wheat and the tares, the good and the bad fish commingle), you need not be of the tares or of the "bad fish." Be of the wheat, do as the "good": lay aside your own thoughts and ways, then take the Lord's, for He says: "...My thoughts are not your thoughts, neither are your ways My ways...For as the heavens are higher than the earth, so are My ways higher than your ways, and My thoughts than your thoughts." Isa. 55:8, 9.

And finally, never be like a Pharisee who can see the mote in his brother's eye, but cannot see the beam in his own (Matt. 7:3). For after all "Who art thou?" asks the Lord. Art thou thyself not a Laodicean? How "judgest" thou "another man's

servant? to his own master he standeth or falleth. Yea, he shall be holden up: for God is able to make him stand." Rom. 14:4.

Never mind the other fellow, Brethren; you have barely enough time to look after yourself. And moreover, do not measure the Truth with the rod of man, but with the Rod of God: "Hear ye the Rod, and [Him] Who hath appointed it" (Mic. 6:9), urges the Lord.

Will you not take His counsel? If you will, then without further delay, send your name and address for Present Truth literature--the feast which, though worth everything, will cost you nothing. And besides being the only cure for your Laodiceanism, it will thrill and satisfy your hungry soul with something truly rich and extraordinary!

Then all of us together "shall have spiritual eyesight to discern the inner courts of the celestial temple. We shall catch the themes of song and thanksgiving of the heavenly choir round about the throne. When Zion shall arise and shine, her light will be most penetrating and precious songs of praise and thanksgiving will be heard in the assemblies of the saints....As we apply the golden eye-salve, we shall see the glories beyond. Faith will cut through the heavy shadow of Satan, and we shall see our Advocate offering up the incense of His own merits in our behalf. When we

see this as it is, as the Lord desires us to see it we shall be filled with a sense of the immensity and diversity of the love of God."--*Testimonies,* Vol. 6, p. 368. And then we shall no longer ask:

Whose Advice Is To Be Followed?

Now we want you to know that we truly appreciate your concern for our spiritual welfare, as expressed in many of your criticisms, and we assure you that we fully realize that, be we wrong, your advice is surely as valuable to us as, be we right, our advice is to you. So we are confident that you will be agreed with us that we must settle the question,

Who Is Who?

To begin our investigation, it is necessary in fairness to both sides, to take into account the experiential knowledge of each.

In view of our long experience with the Third Angel's Message in its first part, as well as in its present addition (*Early Writing*s, p. 277), as brought in *The Shepherd's Rod*, as against yours in the first part only, we are constrained to believe that the possibility of your being wrongly led by the angel of the Laodiceans, is greater than the possibility of our being wrongly led by the Rod.

Were you in a position, such as we are in, to be fully informed in both messages,

--in both the one of 1844 and the one of today,--then the possibility of your being right and of our being wrong, as against the possibility of your being wrong and of our being right, would be about equally balanced. Inasmuch, though, as you are conversant with the former only, it is more probable that our position carries a greater percentage of possibility of being correct than does yours.

Moreover, whether the *Rod* is right or wrong "the angel of the church of the Laodiceans" is as the Lord Himself has made acutely clear, in a sad, fearful, and terrible deception (*Testimonies*, Vol. 3, pp. 253, 254, 260), and about to be spued out.

In view, therefore, of the consequent greater responsibility resting upon us, we cannot be less interested in you than you are in us. And you cannot afford to be less mindful of our advice to you than we can afford to be of yours to us.

And finally, believing that you are as honest as we are, we are confident that you will candidly and carefully weigh every word herein.

Our being, as you know, unswerving adherents of the Bible and of Sister White's writings, full-fledged Seventh-day Adventists we are sure that both the Bible and Sister White's writings support the Rod one hundred percent. All three, therefore,

we see in perfect harmony with one another with the *Rod* giving "power and force" to the message as given since 1844. (See *Early Writings*, p. 277.)

In view of our sustaining this solid conviction, you can readily understand that your rejecting the Rod on the grounds that it is out of harmony with Sister White's writings, is not at all to us the actuality it seems to you.

Then, too, having every reason to believe that our minds are fully rational, we accordingly have every reason to believe that we are no less able than others intelligently to study both the Bible and Sister White's writings. So let us, as Christians who really want to know the truth, together begin

Examining Both Your Position And Ours.

To begin with, is it not correct that the Christian's textbook is the Bible? If your answer to this fundamental question is in the affirmative, then it compels us to study Sister White's writings in the light of the Bible, not the Bible in the light of her writings. This, in fact, she herself plainly says:

"Only those who have been diligent students of the Scriptures, and who have received the love of the truth, will be shielded from the powerful delusion that

takes the world captive. By the Bible testimony [not by hers], these will detect the deceiver in his disguise.... Are the people of God now so firmly established upon His word that they would not yield to the evidence of their senses? Would they, in such a crisis, cling to the Bible, and the Bible only?"--The *Great Controversy*, p. 625.

Clearly, therefore, her work must never be interpreted in such a way as to contradict the Bible but always to clear it. If you undeviatingly follow this absolute rule of interpretation, you can never possibly have any trouble with the Rod or with any message the Lord may ever send.

Your interpretations of many of Sister White's writings, most notably, perhaps, those concerning the Kingdom, being manifestly contradictory to the prophecies of the Bible, cause the one who accepts her writings to doubt the Bible, and the one who holds to the Bible to be set against her writings, thus bringing in dispute and schism among the brethren. Such interpretations, one-sided and division-making, are therefore grievously unfair not only to the Bible and to Sister White's writings but also to yourself, and consequently to the cause of Truth.

So you will, we trust, see that while you are intentionally endeavoring to prove only the Rod wrong, you are in reality unwittingly endeavoring to prove Sister White

at odds with the Bible--a work which is scattering from Christ rather than gathering to Him.

As both your and our doctrinal positions must be in perfect harmony with the Bible, we are therefore asking you to harmonize your position on the Kingdom with Daniel 2:44; Jeremiah 51:20; Hosea 3:4, 5; Isaiah 2:1-4; Micah 4:1-6; Isaiah 11:12-16; Jeremiah 30:18, 21; 31:2-13; 32:37; Ezekiel 37:15-28.

We hold it to be a simple, self-evident truth that as the stone (Dan. 2:34) is symbolical of the Kingdom, and that as It smites the toes of the image, It necessarily must be set up before It smites them, just as Daniel said: "In the days of these kings [toe-kings: the kings of today] shall the God of heaven set up a kingdom." "In the days of these kings," cannot mean after their days. And unless the Kingdom is set up (brought into being), It cannot smite the nations.

If, moreover, Judah and Israel (both kingdoms) are not gathered together into one kingdom, as the prophecies say they will be (Ezek. 37:15-28), then how can they be His "battle-ax" (Jer. 51:20)? And how can the prophecies be fulfilled?

It is equally self-evident that the "many days" (Hos. 3:4, 5) are the long years from the time the Kingdom went down until It shall finally be set up again. Wherefore the word "return" cannot mean

anything other than that those dispersed "many days" are to go back to the land whence they were taken captive.

This, furthermore, is the only position, consistent with all relevant Bible doctrines, that gives assurance of fulfillment of the prophecy of Isaiah 2 and that of Micah 4.

Again: from Isaiah 11 we see that the Lord is to "set His hand again the second time to recover the remnant of His people" (Isa. 11:11), and that when He does so, He will prepare a way for them "like as it was to Israel in the day that he came up out of the land of Egypt." Isa. 11:16.

And Jeremiah testifies that the Lord "will bring again the captivity of Jacob's tents, and have mercy on his dwelling places; and the city shall be builded upon her own heap....and their nobles shall be of themselves and their governor shall proceed *from the midst of them*." Jer. 30:18, 21.

To Ezekiel, moreover, "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." Ezek. 37:21.

The Bible is either right or wrong. If you believe It is right, take It to heart, and take your stand upon It, at least upon such open passages as the ones herein quoted--scriptures which need no interpretation.

And certain it is that God will accept no excuse for anyone's trying to side-step them, so plain and positive are they. Neither will anyone succeed in escaping God's judgments by endeavoring on the one hand to dodge through what he thinks to be loopholes in the Rod, and by endeavoring on the other hand to set up in Sister White's writings, obstacles to take cover behind.

Such vain attempts today will leave the perpetrators no more excusable (in fact, less so) than the vain efforts of the Jews yesterday left them in their attempt to discover loopholes in Christ's work by the use of Moses' writings.

If one's excuse be that the *Rod*'s teachings are not found in Sister White's writings, no more will he be vindicated in rejecting its voice on such grounds than are the Jews for fighting and rejecting the New Testament Scriptures on the grounds that they are not found in the writings of the prophets.

If you are really a sincere and faithful believer in both the Bible and the Spirit of Prophecy, you will obey this counsel: "...if a message comes that you do not understand, take pains that you may hear the reasons the messenger may give."--T*estimonies on Sabbath-School Work*, p. 65, *Counsels on Sabbath School Work*, p. 29.

Your integrity in renouncing the sealing message on the ground that it contradicts Sister White's writings, will be tested by your response to her urging you to reason with the messenger rather than to reason with his enemies.

What to some of you may seem to set this or that teaching of the *Rod* squarely in contradiction to Sister White's writings, is not half so plausible as is that which to all appearances sets the Lord's statement in Matthew 10:23 solidly in contradiction to His promises. "Ye shall not," say the Scriptures, "have gone over the cities of Israel, till the Son of man be come." But the apostles did go preaching the gospel not only to the cities of Israel but also to "every creature which is under heaven" (Col. 1:23), and as yet the Son of man is not "come," though 1900 years have passed since that time. Christ must have spoken the truth, but it is not understood, just as many points in connection with Present Truth are not understood, and hence in most cases are misconstrued.

When Moses wrote the first part of the Bible he was not given the privilege to write the whole Truth which God intended to reveal to His people. Later in the Old Testament period came Isaiah, Jeremiah, Ezekiel, et al. Then in the New Testament period came John the Baptist, Christ, the apostles, the reformers, Miller, and Sister

White, each one in turn teaching truths which could not, however, be maintained by Moses' writings. This is the divine rule of unfolding truth. And only to one's own loss will he refuse to acknowledge that it is operative the same today as ever, even though the message today is derived entirely from the inspired writers before it.

Though there is much more to be said on these matters, suffice these lines for the present, for unless for your life's sake you respond to them, more would be only a weariness to you and a loss of time to us.

Our sincere prayer and earnest hope, therefore, is that the valuable, irretrievable time expended in this effort of good will and deep concern for your souls, will be the means of bringing you to rejoice in the glorious hope which the Rod sets before you. May your heart yet be responsive to the "Lord's voice," which still "crieth unto the city,...hear ye the Rod, and Who hath appointed it."

If you are resolved now to comply with this injunction, and with the one in *Testimonies on Sabbath-School Work*, p. 65, to take pains to hear the reason the messenger may give, and to ask questions on the message, whether with respect to the Bible or to Sister White's writings, be assured that we shall welcome hearing from you, and shall gladly do our honest best to clear whatever is involved.

QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS

WHAT IS LAODICEA'S TROUBLE?

Question No. 1:

What is wrong with Laodicea and what is the remedy?

Answer:

Describing her condition in present-day language, Inspiration declares:

"The message to the church of the Laodiceans is a startling denunciation, and is applicable to the people of God at the present time....

"The people of God are represented in the message to the Laodiceans as in a position of carnal security. They are at ease, believing themselves to be in an exalted condition of spiritual attainments....

"What greater deception can come upon human minds than a confidence that they are right when they are all wrong! The message of the True Witness finds the people of God in a sad deception, yet honest in that deception. They know not that their condition is deplorable in the sight of God. While those addressed are flattering themselves that they are in an exalted spiritual condition, the message of the True Witness breaks their security by the startling denunciation

of their true condition of spiritual blindness, poverty, and wretchedness. The testimony, so cutting and severe, cannot be a mistake, for it is the True Witness who speaks and his testimony must be correct."--*Testimonies*, Vol. 3, pp. 252, 253.

"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.

"I saw that the testimony of the True Witness has not been half heeded. The solemn testimony upon which the destiny of the church hangs has been lightly esteemed, if not entirely disregarded. "--*Early Writings*, p. 270.

"...our own course of continual backsliding has separated us from God. Pride, covetousness, and love of the world have lived in the heart without fear of banishment or condemnation. Grievous and presumptuous sins have dwelt among us. And yet the general opinion is that the church is flourishing, and that peace and spiritual prosperity are in all her borders.

"The church has turned back from following Christ her Leader, and is steadily retreating toward Egypt. Yet few are alarmed or astonished at their want of spiritual power. Doubt and even disbelief of the testimonies of the Spirit of God, is leavening our churches everywhere. Satan would have it thus. Ministers who preach self instead of Christ would have it thus. The testimonies are unread and unappreciated. God has spoken to you. Light has been shining from his word and from the testimonies, and both have been slighted and disregarded. The result is apparent in the lack of purity and devotion and earnest faith among us."--*Testimonies*, Vol. 5, p. 217.

That Laodicea is the typical name for the Seventh-day Adventist denomination, every Seventh-day Adventist knows, and yet none care to do anything about it! Instead, all are satisfied that they have *all* the truth to carry them clear through

To prolong their lukewarm condition indefinitely, the Demon power has perfected a thermos-covering composed of an impervious layer of prejudice, self-confidence, and the fear that someone is trying his best to deceive them by word or by literature. Hence most of us, as Seventh-day Adventists, do not discuss or read Bible truths that are advocated by anyone not approved by the angel of Laodicea--the conference prelates. Consequently, such ones cannot

be reached with a message from heaven today any easier than could the Jews in their day. Nevertheless, the All-knowing One commanded:

"And unto the angel of the church of the Laodiceans write; These things saith the Amen, the faithful and true Witness, the Beginning of the creation of God; I know thy works, that thou art neither cold nor hot: I would thou wert cold or hot. So then because thou art lukewarm, and neither cold nor hot, I will spue thee out of My mouth. Because thou sayest, I am rich, and increased with goods, and have need of nothing; and knowest not that thou art wretched, and miserable, and poor, and blind, and naked: I counsel thee to buy of Me gold tried in the fire, that thou mayest be rich; and white raiment that thou mayest be clothed, and that the shame of thy nakedness do not appear; and anoint thine eyes with eyesalve, that thou mayest see." Rev. 3:14-18.

So when in Revelation 2:5 the Lord sternly addresses one group of leaders, warning them that unless they repent and do their first works He will come unto them quickly and remove the candlestick out of their control, He makes that fate entirely conditional on their own response to His cutting rebuke

But later, to the Laodicean leadership (angel), He makes an even more drastic

decree, an unconditional, unequivocal, sharp and final statement, that He *will spue them out* thus bringing the Laodicean church government to an abrupt and cataclysmic climax. At this very time, then, the church is to undergo a thorough house-cleaning, a change of administration and organization, even as anciently the Kingdom was "rent from" Saul and given to David (1 Sam. 15:28).

And just as David, the eighth son of Jesse, was not chosen until the succession of his seven brothers had one by one passed in review, so the "house of David" (Zech. 12:8; *Testimonies* Vol. 5, p. 81), the church freed from "the tares," the eighth church in the New Testament succession, was not to come into being until the succession of seven had passed one by one. (See Tract No. 8, *Mt. Sion at the Eleventh Hour*.)

Clearly, the "angel" and the church here addressed, necessarily represent two parties--the ministry and the laity. But the one directly addressed and condemned is the angel, the one in charge of the laity. The True Witness' "startling denunciation," therefore, though not exempting the laity, is expressly and particularly for the sake of the ministry. So, especially should they, most of all, take heed and lay well to heart the great ethic that the Master Shepherd will let no sheep go carelessly tended, to fall into the abyss, if He can help it.

But since, as under-shepherds, they have long and grievously been thus derelict, the Lord years ago promised that He would shortly "take charge of the flock Himself."--*Testimonies*, Vol. 5, p. 80.

In a forecast of this complete change-over from the Laodicean inertia, the Spirit of Truth solemnly affirms: "God will use ways and means by which it will be seen that He is taking the reins in His own hands. The workers, will be surprised..."--*Testimonies to Ministers*, p. 300.

Again, we read that God will put aside those who are "self-sufficient, independent of God," and whom "He cannot use," and will disclose to view those "precious ones now hidden who have not bowed the knee to Baal."--*Testimonies*, Vol. 5, pp. 80, 81.

Thus even more accurately does sacred history repeat itself than does profane history. And the terrifyingly irrevocable words of the prophet Samuel to Saul, come ringing down the ages with double finality to the Laodiceans:

"The Lord hath rent the kingdom of Israel from thee this day, and hath given it to a neighbour of thine, that is better than thou. And also the Strength of Israel will not lie nor repent: for He is not a man that He should repent." 1 Sam. 15:28, 29.

The Laodicean lukewarmness--the satisfied notion of being rich and increased

with goods, of having the truth, and even of adding to it--is nothing less than pure self-complacency. It is thus that the Laodiceans are "wretched and miserable, and poor, and blind, and naked' (Rev. 3:17), mistakenly believing that they are rich and increased with goods. But critical as is this deception, it need not be fatal if only they will humble themselves and "buy" the "eyesalve" offered them that they may see their nakedness, then repent, seek forgiveness, and advance in truth. But, alas, their lukewarm (satisfied), not hot or cold (dissatisfied), state of being makes it as hard for them to acknowledge their condition as it was for the Jews in Christ's time.

WHY THE NEED OF REVIVAL AND REFORMATION?

Question No. 2:

If the church is God's dearest object upon earth (Testimonies to Ministers, p. 20) and if He is leading her, why the need of "a revival and a reformation"?

Answer:

Since the church is indeed God's dearest object on earth, He often has to admonish, rebuke, and chasten her so as to bring her to maintain the high standard which He has set for her. And though her history is but one long, sad record of sinning and repenting, sinning and repenting, yet the Lord has borne with her in the infinite patience and longsuffering of Divine love

so beautifully illustrated in the parable of the prodigal son. And finally in this love indescribable, He "gave Himself" (Gal. 1:4) for her in the person of His only begotten Son. But this supreme sacrifice notwithstanding, she has never yet fully appreciated His undying love for her. Even now, the Savior pathetically declares that He has somewhat against her, and admonishes her by strong words to repent and sit down with Him in His throne (Rev. 3:14-21), making clear the inevitable fate of all who fail to heed His counsel (Rev. 3:16). But, tragically, she has not heeded it, and so He "brings against ministers and people the heavy charge of spiritual feebleness, saying, 'I know thy works, that thou art neither cold nor hot: I would thou wert cold or hot.'"--Christ Our Righteousness, 1941 Edition, p. 121.

Thus God, in His boundless, all-discerning love for His church, "'calls for a spiritual revival and a spiritual reformation. Unless this takes place, those who are lukewarm will continue to grow more abhorrent to the Lord, until He will refuse to acknowledge them as His children.

"'A revival and a reformation must take place under the ministration of the Holy Spirit. Revival and reformation are two different things. Revival signifies a renewal of spiritual life, a quickening of the powers of mind and heart, a resurrection

from spiritual death. Reformation signifies a reorganization, a change in ideas and theories, habits and practices. Reformation will not bring forth the good fruit of righteousness unless it is connected with the revival of the Spirit. Revival and reformation are to do their appointed work, and in doing this work they must blend.'" --*Ibid*.

In these inspired statements, three facts stand out in bold relief: (1) God sends this clarion call first to the ministers, and then to the laity; (2) He makes a positive declaration that He will spue out of His mouth all who fail to give heed to it, and to enter into a "spiritual revival and a spiritual reformation"; and (3) He makes clear that such a movement means "a reorganization, a change in ideas and theories, habits and practices." Clearly, then, the church must experience a threefold change before she can ever look forth "fair as the moon, clear as the sun, and terrible as an army with banners," going "forth into all the world, conquering and to conquer."--*Prophets and Kings*, p. 725.

God is to rule in His church now as He did in Moses' time: "The government of Israel was characterized by the most thorough organization, wonderful alike for its completeness and its simplicity. The order so strikingly displayed in the perfection and arrangement of all God's created works was manifest in the Hebrew economy.

God was the center of authority, and government, the sovereign of Israel. Moses stood as their visible leader, by God's appointment to administer the laws in his name. From the elders of the tribes a council of seventy was afterward chosen to assist Moses in the general affairs of the nation. Next came the priests, who consulted the Lord in the sanctuary. Chiefs, or princes, ruled over the tribes. Under these were 'captains over thousands, and captains over hundreds, and captains over fifties, and captains over tens;' and lastly, officers who might be employed for special duties."--*Patriarchs and Prophets, p. 374*.

If "the same principles of piety and justice that were to guide the rulers among God's people in the time of Moses and of David, were also to be followed by those given the oversight of the newly organized church of God in the gospel dispensation" (*Acts of the Apostles*, p. 95), and if man cannot improve upon God's governmental rule, then why should we not pattern after it? Hence the need of "a revival and a reformation."

As restorers of every Divine institution, we are glad to announce to the readers of Present Truth, that besides the literature of "revival," they may now also obtain that of "reformation," our organizational publication, The Leviticus of The Davidian Seventh-day Adventists.

WHAT IS THE PHENOMENON OF INSPIRATION?

Question No. 3:

What is private interpretation? In what manner is one inspired? And through whom does Inspiration work?

Answer:

"All scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness: that the man of God may be perfect, thoroughly furnished unto all good works." 2 Tim. 3:16, 17.

"Knowing this first, that no prophecy of the scripture is of any private interpretation. For the prophecy came not in old time by the will of man: but holy men of God spake as they were moved by the Holy Ghost." 2 Pet. 1:20, 21.

Affirmatively stated, all Scripture (not merely a part of It) is inspired. Negatively stated, none of It is privately interpreted, for the reason that It did not come of men but of God. And It can be interpreted by men only as and when God's Spirit decrees. Accordingly, every jot and title of Scripture and Its interpretation is of Inspiration, and thus wholly profitable to guide the man of God doctrinally, to reprove and to correct him, and righteously to instruct him, unto perfection of faith and works.

Let us therefore covenant with the Lord that henceforth we shall neither accept nor advance as revealed truth any private interpretation of the Scriptures. And to keep understandingly inviolate this solemn promise to the Lord, we must first, of course, understand

The Phenomenon of Inspiration.

In Its Scriptural sense, Inspiration is defined as "a divine influence directly and immediately exerted upon the mind or soul of man" (*The New Century Dictionary*); in other words, It is a special function of the Spirit of God. It is, therefore in Its divers manifestations, set in operation, not by the working of the mind itself, but by the power of the Spirit. To get a correct understanding of this process, however, one must necessarily see it in historical perspective, operating in the midst of the human race from the beginning of creation.

In His own image God created Adam, and gave him sovereign "dominion over the fish of the sea, and over the fowl of the air, and over the cattle, and over all the earth, and over every creeping thing that creepeth upon the earth." Gen. 1:26.

Accordingly, as He made Adam the king of earth's first dominion, and all living creatures the subjects thereof, Adam's natural ability to rule them, and their natural submission to him, show that all creation,

man and beast, fowl and creeping things, were divinely influenced or endowed--inspired. So when Adam reviewed the whole animal creation as it passed before him, he spent no time in studying the nature of the creatures in order to identify them, but instantaneously gave every species its name; they, in turn, immediately recognized him as their king--gave submission to him. This Super-intelligency (such as is vouchsafed in Matthew 10:19) clearly shows that all creation was influenced by a power above and beyond its own. In short, both Adam's and the animals' understanding came by Inspiration.

Inspiration, consequently, is not limited in Its manifestations, to man alone. And sacred history reveals that neither is it limited to visions (Dan. 7:2), or dreams (Gen. 28:12), or indirect communication (Ex. 40:35; 28:30), or direct face to face conversation (Gen. 18:2) with divine beings, or to any other form of expression. Rather It comes "in divers manners." Thus wise, God "at sundry times...spake in time past unto the fathers." Heb. 1:1.

This fundamental truth was, perhaps, best exemplified in Noah's work, particularly in its climax, when special intelligence was imparted to selected members of the animal creation, so that from near and far they could find their way into the ark and keep peace one with another. (See Genesis 7:1-4.)

But having survived the flood, the descendants of Noah's family straightway forgot the priceless lesson. So it came to pass that the post-diluvians were as determined to believe that there could be a second universal flood as the antediluvians were that there could not be a first one. Thus unbelief in Noah's inspiration became as pronounced after the flood as it had been before, with the result that in the effort to gain security of life, men attempted to build the tower of Babel, the world's first skyscraper and the earliest monument to the folly of man's prodigious labors to secure his salvation without the assistance of Divine Inspiration. This insulting attitude of the builders toward the Lord's promise through Noah, so aroused His displeasure that He blotted from their memory the language which He had given them through Adam and, in its stead, inspired in them all the diverse languages of earth, with the result that the builders became confused among them selves and could no longer continue building (Gen. 11:7-9).

In this preternatural event which so radically changed the course of human society, we see another form of Inspiration revealing that while one individual or a group of individuals may deliberately work at cross-purposes with God, He can bestow His gift even on them, to frustrate their own evil designs (Gen. 11:1-9) while promoting

His eternal purpose and getting praise to His name (Ps. 76:10).

Another example of this marvelous manifestation is seen in the contravention of Balaam's evil intent. The Lord so controlled Balaam's tongue that though his mind was bent on cursing Israel, he could pronounce only blessings (Num. 22, 23, 24).

Let these "ensamples" be our constant reminder that anyone who undertakes to work against the Lord's revealed will is doomed to failure and shame

In later postdiluvian days the Lord appeared and said unto Abram: "Unto thy seed will I give this land." Gen. 12:7. Then some years afterwards "three men stood by him," and one of them said to him, "Sarah thy wife shall have a son." Gen. 18:2, 10. Thus through Divine agency, in some respects different from that which controlled Adam and Noah, was Abraham enabled (inspired) to understand what the future held for him and for his posterity.

Then, too, there was the time when Balaam (who, at the instance of King Balak, was on his way to Moab) whipped his faithful ass, which thereupon received the gift of speech, and said to his abusive master: "What have I done unto thee, that thou hast smitten me these three times?" Num. 22:28. The dumb creature, we see,

was enabled (inspired) to speak by the Power which created him. Hence, it will be well, indeed for every man to give heed to what the Lord says and does regardless how, when, where, or through whom He says or does it.

Again, years before Israel went into Egypt, God in His providence (Gen. 45:5) influenced Jacob to make a coat of many colors for his youngest son, Joseph. This seeming partiality, along with Joseph's dream and his father's interpretation of it (Gen. 37:10), provoked the jealous brothers to sell him as a slave, to be carried away into Egypt so as to prevent his supplanting them in influence or position. But there in Egypt the Lord in His own time raised him to the second throne of the realm, then brought the years of plenty, also the years of famine, as the means to remove the whole household of Jacob into Egypt.

In their desperate endeavor to be rid of Joseph so as to avoid being ruled by him, his brethren succeeded only (by stirring up the ever-attentive potential of Providence) in exalting him to the administrative throne of Egypt, and in bringing themselves down in humiliation at his feet. Here is marked evidence that he who attempts to defeat God's purposes succeeds only in defeating his own and in promoting God's.

When, as a fugitive from Egypt, Moses was attending his father-in-law's flocks in Midian, "the angel of the Lord appeared unto him in a flame of fire out of the midst of a bush: and he looked, and, behold, the bush burned with fire, and the bush was not consumed." Ex. 3:2. By this manifestation, Moses was inspired to liberate Israel from their hard Egyptian bondage. And then as the leader of the Hebrews during their forty years of wandering in the wilderness, he communed with the Lord face to face (Ex. 34:30-35), and departed with his countenance divinely irradiant. Thus his experience was anomalous to that of others before him.

Pharaoh and Nebuchadnezzar had dreams. Joseph and Daniel interpreted them (Gen. 40:8-12; 41:25-38; Dan. 2:28; 4:20, 24). Daniel the prophet, John the Revelator, and other holy men of God had visions. Each was the special recipient of Inspiration in a distinctive form, and to a greater or less degree.

From these and many other examples, we see that Inspiration works in divers ways Its wonders to perform. Through man and through beast, in fact through all creation, Its work is seen in many forms. Some have heard It in audible voice, both through agents seen (Ex. 34:30-35) and agents unseen (Ex. 3:2). Others have witnessed It through definite impressions,

dreams, visions, providences, preternatural and instantaneous speech endowments.

In all diligence, therefore, give heed to any supernatural manifestation in the church of God, irrespective of source, whether it be human or brute, small or great, black or white, rich or poor. Unbiasedly compare its work with the Scriptures, and if it is in harmony with them, if it finds its foundation and prediction there, makes men loyal to the law and to the prophets, and adds light to the present truth, accept it whatever the cost in money, property, position, friends, and relatives, for it is your very life. He who will prove faithful in this responsibility will receive a hundredfold for the sacrifice it has cost him to be true to the Lord's voice (Matt. 19:29).

But to be true, and thus to save oneself from the unpardonable sin, one must be constantly on guard. And this he can do only by prayerfully investigating the spirit that purports to come in the name of the Lord. Failing to do this, he stands in greatest peril of rejecting the pleading of the Holy Ghost (Inspiration), and thus of indifferently tossing away his very life.

"When a message comes in the name of the Lord to His people," says the Spirit of Truth, "no one may excuse himself from an investigation of its claims. No one can afford to stand back in an attitude of in-

difference and self-confidence, and say: 'I know what is truth. I am satisfied with my position. I have set my stakes, and I will not be moved away from my position, whatever may come. I will not listen to the message of this messenger; for I know that it cannot be truth.' It was from pursuing this very course that the popular churches were left in partial darkness, and that is why the messages of heaven have not reached them."--*Testimonies on Sabbath-School Work*, p. 65; *Counsels on Sabbath-School Work,* p. 28.

Inspiration makes very clear that the Lord's messenger dare not in any way improvise upon revelation (Rev. 22: 18-20), although often privileged to articulate it in his own words. Judged by the same standard, no one else dare meddle with the inspired writer's work. This rational sequence consistently concludes that when a point in one's writings is not clear, then only the writer himself should be consulted concerning it, if he is living. Otherwise, only the same Spirit of Inspiration, the original Author of the writings, can clarify whatever is involved. Indeed, "if a message comes," as Inspiration says, "that you do not understand, take pains that you may hear the reasons the messenger may give, comparing scripture with scripture, that you may know whether or not it is sustained by the Word of God."--*Testimonies on Sabbath-School Work*, pp.

65, 66; *Counsels on Sabbath-School Work*, p. 29.

In no case is it a moral and safe procedure to appeal to an opposer of one's writings to illuminate any part of them. A Democrat would not think of appealing to a Republican to illuminate the Democratic platform, or vice versa, if each wished to know the truth. Remember that Eve's placing credence in the Enemy's interpretation of the Lord's Word (an act which led both her and Adam to their transgression and fall, and to their consequent banishment from Paradise) is what brought the curse of sin and death upon all earthly creation. Rather, it is for us now to avoid this old stumbling block to the pit and thereby make it a stepping stone to the Kingdom.

Remember, too, that the practice of comparing statements stripped of their context is fundamentally disingenuous, and leads today to as many perversions and misapplications of truth as does the deliberate wresting practiced in Satan's challenge to Christ: "If Thou be the Son of God, cast Thyself down: for it is written, He shall give His angels charge concerning Thee: and in their hands they shall bear Thee up, lest at any time Thou dash Thy foot against a stone." Matt. 4:6.

From the points thus far adduced, we see clearly enough that the end-products of Inspiration fall into one of two categories--

either Inspiration of *words* or Inspiration of ideas. To illustrate specifically: an angel appears and says to one, "The Lord is at such and such a time to do thus and thus with His people. Speak unto them this message, and show it unto them from the Scriptures of truth, for the prophets have therein spoken it of old." The angel's message must be delivered with fidelity to the idea; though obviously the choice of words, aside from the quotations, is necessarily left to the messenger. Consequently, anytime he sees the possibility of making the inspired idea stand forth more clearly and powerfully, the messenger is under deepest moral obligation to revise his language. Only thus can the stream of inspired ideation become progressively more lucid and beautiful.

Still further, there are circumstances in connection with certain aspects of every message which necessitate clarification. Such clarification, however, can be no greater than the light which shines at the time. And the light may come solely from within the message itself, or, again, it may derive from a limited understanding common to the time "then present"--an understanding which the messenger himself shares.

Such a case was John the Baptist's. Inspired to declare only the coming of the King, John was squarely confronted with the question concerning the setting up of

the kingdom. He answered in keeping with the common understanding which he as well as the people had of the kingdom--that when the King arrived He would doubtless set up His kingdom and thus free His people from the Roman yoke. But when Christ finally appeared, He explained that the time for the kingdom to be set up, and for the Roman yoke to be removed from His people's shoulders, was not yet come. And the truly "wise" gave no concern to these discrepant teachings, but gladly accepted the truth in its progressive form, and went on to higher and higher spiritual attainments, whereas those who stumbled on this disparity either rejected John as a false prophet and accepted Jesus as the Christ, or accepted John as a true prophet and rejected Jesus as a false Christ, and consequently slipped farther and farther backwards and downwards until they were no longer followers of either Christ or John.

The ways of Inspiration are constant, the same yesterday, today, and tomorrow. Questions concerning revealed truth must therefore be answered in the same way today as they were in John's time. And thus now as then, the critical, the skeptical, and the doubting will find many hooks upon which to hang their doubts. But likewise now as then, the doubters will be taken in their own craftiness.

Inspiration, moreover, always brings the messengers of God into perfect harmony, never into division. This prime truth is seen beautifully illustrated in the experience of the apostle Peter, a Jew, with Cornelius, the Roman Centurion, a Gentile. The Lord knew that Peter would never receive a Gentile, and that Cornelius would never present himself to a Jew. So both were given a vision instructing them what to do. (See Acts 10.) And obeying the heavenly vision to which they had mutual respect, they without trouble drew into mutual accord.

Then there is the marvelous experience of Paul. While he was engaged in the unholy work of persecuting the Christians, the Lord met him on the road to Damascus, converted him, and gave him instructions to interview Ananias. But knowing that Ananias, who knew Paul only as a persecutor of the faithful, would never receive the latter on his own profession of conversion and friendship, the Lord gave Ananias a vision likewise, revealing to him Paul's conversion. And thus they, too, like Peter and Cornelius before, were not disobedient to their heavenly vision (Acts 26:19).

In the days of Moses, some rose up claiming that the Lord was speaking through them as well as through Moses (Num. 16:2, 3). Their agitation, however, instead of bringing order and har-

mony between themselves and Moses, brought confusion and dissension, with the tragic result that thousands lost their lives (Num. 16:32, 35, 49). Had the Lord spoken to those men, He would certainly have made known the fact to Moses. But the very absence of any such revelation, made clear to Moses that the Lord was not exalting Korah, Dathan, and Abiram as they claimed He was, but rather that they as jealous upstarts and imposters, were exalting themselves. Had Moses, as a servant of God, acceded to their demands, he most assuredly would have met with some such retribution as did the "man of God" who, persuaded by the "old prophet" to turn out of the way and eat bread with him, when the Lord had charged him not to do so, was slain by a lion. Solemn lesson! Give no heed to human voices contrary to God's. (See 1 Kings 13.)

Those, furthermore, whom the Lord promotes, ever shrink from putting themselves forward. Though David, for example, had been anointed by Samuel to be king over Israel, he never attempted to take the throne. As a matter of fact, he did not even so much as make known his elevation. And then at the risk of death at Saul's own hand, he even protected him. In all this beautiful chivalry, David showed forth the love, humility, meekness, and righteousness born (inspired) of the Spirit of God. His was the calm, kind, forbearing patience

which comes with the sure knowledge that God is in control. Knowing that the Lord had anointed him to be king, he happily waited until the Lord saw fit to put him on the throne.

From these and many other examples, we see that God not only never delegates one agent to alter, to reset, or to countermand the message with which He has charged another agent, without His first making the matter known to both, but also that He never honors with promotion those who seek to uplift and aggrandize self, but that He exalts in due season those who humble themselves under His mighty hand (1 Pet. 5:6).

As a logical corollary to the foregoing phases of the subject of Inspiration, it is to be recognized that all who become converted and submissive to the Lord are recipients of Divine illumination. For none but the Holy Spirit can convince one of the Truth, convict him of his sins, give him repentance, and empower him to obey God's laws, His statutes and His ordinances. Man himself can no more effect these transformations than the leopard can change his spots.

"If you see your sinfulness, do not wait to make yourself better. How many there are who think they are not good enough to come to Christ. Do you expect to become better through your own efforts? 'Can the

Ethiopian change his skin, or the leopard his spots? then may ye also do good, that are accustomed to do evil.' There is help for us only in God. We must not wait for stronger persuasions, for better opportunities, or holier tempers. We can do nothing of ourselves. We must come to Christ just as we are."--*Steps to Christ*, pp. 35, 36.

"You can not atone for your past sins, you can not change your heart, and make yourself holy. But God promises to do all this for you through Christ. You believe that promise. You confess your sins, and give yourself to God. You will to serve Him. Just as surely as you do this, God will fulfill His word to you. If you believe the promise,--believe that you are forgiven and cleansed,--God supplies the fact; you are made whole, just as Christ gave the paralytic power to walk when the man believed that he was healed. It is so if you believe it."--*Id*., p. 55.

Thus every true follower of Christ is inspired in his own lot--one to interpret, another to study, still another to teach, and yet still another to discern, and all to act and to sacrifice for His sake.

So also is every true Christian divinely enabled to suffer or to rejoice. Hence, whatever betide him, whether it be suffering and sorrow, or well-being and joy, the trusting child of God dare credit only the

Lord and none other for his portion. And remember that "there hath no temptation taken you but such as is common to man: but God is faithful, who will not suffer you to be tempted above that ye are able; but will with the temptation also make a way to escape, that ye may be able to bear it." 1 Cor. 10:13.

"Behold, He that keepeth Israel shall neither slumber nor sleep. The Lord is thy keeper: the Lord is thy shade upon thy right hand. The sun shall not smite thee by day, nor the moon by night. The Lord shall preserve thee from all evil: He shall preserve thy soul. The Lord shall preserve thy going out and thy coming in from this time forth, and even for evermore." Ps. 121:4-8.

Be ye therefore not murmurers as were those who "despised the pleasant land," and "believed not His Word; but murmured in their tents, and hearkened not unto the voice of the Lord. Therefore He lifted up His hand against them, to overthrow them in the wilderness." Ps. 106:24-26 .

But be like the faithful apostle: "Not that I speak in respect of want: for I have learned, in whatsoever state I am, therewith to be content. I know both how to be abased, and I know how to abound: every where and in all things I am instructed both to be full and to be hungry,

both to abound and to suffer need. I can do all things through Christ which strengtheneth me." Philip. 4:11-13.

But while there flows from the golden bowl (Zech. 4:2) that Inspiration which enables one to be a true Christian, there flows from the cauldron of hell that opposite inspiration that works to make one a false Christian. The one saves, the other destroys. Needing as much as we do to become fully conscious and respectful of the one, the Divine, we at the same time have equal need to become fully alive to its counterfeit --

Satanic Inspiration.

Tragically, this Satanic power has invariably throughout the ages been notoriously successful among the church leaderships. Unwittingly, they have all along the way been inveigled into following Satan's designs and efforts to tear down (new-model) the very work they thought to be building up.

At Christ's first advent, the leaders of the church were so inspired with the spirit of Satan that, as church history reveals, they at times acted like demons, like men who had lost their reason. Impervious themselves to the rain of Truth as it fell in that day, the priests, scribes, and Pharisees were naturally imbued with the zeal to keep the people from the showers of

Truth. So it was that they employed every possible means to pitch an umbrella, as it were, over the heads of the people, so as to prevent even a drop of the life-saving showers of the early rain from falling upon them. Consequently though drops of Truth were falling all around them as never before, they were content to remain in drought under the priests' Truth-proof umbrella.

It was in these dark hours of human history, that Truth and error, light and darkness, freedom and bondage, were joined in what perhaps was the greatest conflict of all time. Up to the Pentecost, only 120 persons out of the millions then living were rescued from the spiritual dearth throughout the land. And not until they were baptized with the Holy Ghost and filled with power on the Pentecost were they enabled to help other thirsty ones to break out of the Satanic circle.

Defeated in this effort to quench the Truth forever, Satan quickly renewed his efforts. Come the Dark Ages, and he is again seen inspiring hostilities against Truth and its adherents. Turning loose all his demons in all their fury upon the church, he brought in the "great tribulation, such as was not since the beginning of the world to this time, no, nor ever shall be." And had those days not been shortened, there would have been no flesh saved, "but for the elect's sake those days"

were shortened (Matt. 24:21, 22) by the Reformation. Accordingly, only Divine intervention prevented him from silencing the Reformation's voice and dissipating its power. Thus it has always been, is today, and will be to the bitter end.

As a result, despite all the light now shining, multitudes foolishly go on huddling under Satan's canopy, at the same time helping to pull and hold multitudes of others under with them. Nevertheless

God's Promise Stands Fast.

"Give ear, O ye heavens, and I will speak; and hear, O earth, the words of My mouth. My doctrine shall drop as the rain My speech shall distil as the dew, as the small rain upon the tender herb, and as the showers upon the grass." Deut. 32:1, 2.

"Be glad then, ye children of Zion, and rejoice in the Lord your God: for He hath given you the former rain moderately, and He will cause to come down for you the rain, the former rain, and the latter rain in the first month. And the floors shall be full of wheat, and the fats shall overflow with wine and oil....And it shall come to pass afterward, that I will pour out My spirit upon all flesh; and your sons and your daughters shall prophesy, your old men shall dream dreams, your young men shall see visions: and also upon the servants and upon the handmaids in those

days will I pour out My spirit." Joel 2:23, 24, 28, 29.

"Then shall the lame man leap as an hart, and the tongue of the dumb sing: for in the wilderness shall waters break out, and streams in the desert. And the parched ground shall become a pool, and the thirsty land springs of water: in the habitation of dragons, where each lay, shall be grass with reeds and rushes." Isa. 35:6, 7.

In spite of Satan's striving to canopy all earth with his Truth-resistant device, "in the last days it shall come to pass that the mountain of the house of the Lord shall be established in the top of the mountains, and it shall be exalted above the hills; and people shall flow unto it. And many nations shall come, and say, Come, and let us go up to the mountain of the Lord, and to the house of the God of Jacob; and He will teach us of His ways, and we will walk in His paths: for the law shall go forth of Zion, and the word of the Lord from Jerusalem.

"And He shall judge among many people, and rebuke strong nations afar off; and they shall beat their swords into plowshares, and their spears into pruninghooks: nation shall not lift up a sword against nation, neither shall they learn war any more. But they shall sit every man under his vine and under his fig tree; and none shall make them afraid: for the mouth of

the Lord of hosts hath spoken it. For all people will walk every one in the name of his god, and we will walk in the name of the Lord our God for ever and ever." Mic. 4:1-5 .

IS SATAN WHOLESALING OR RETAILING DECEPTION?

Question No. 4:

Does Satan cast a special stumbling block before the church as a body, or just attack its members individually?

Answer:

Since that tragic day in Eden when he introduced sin into the world and caused the fall of man, Satan has cast in the way of each redemptive Movement, a different stumbling block upon which multitudes have tripped and fallen. Most assuredly, therefore he must be expected to have some such distinctive danger planted in our way today. We, though, having in this age the tremendous advantage of knowing the respective pitfalls which have proved fatal to the multitudes in past Movements, shall suffer a proportionately greater condemnation and punishment if we fail to recognize ours. And what is more, if we fail, we shall witness thereby to the universe that we are the weakest of the weak. We must stand--stand against the most ingenious special trap ever set by the Evil

One! But how shall we do this if we know not what it is or where it is?

To find the danger where it really lurks, let us briefly view in retrospect previous snares, by periods in which they occurred, beginning with the first recorded church Movement:

The Noatic Movement was ordained to build the ark both as a warning of the impending deluge and as a refuge from it. The special block of stumbling which Satan cast in the way of the multitudes at that time, he devised from the fact that never in all nature had man seen anything that lent the remotest evidence to the possibility of there ever materializing such a phenomenon as rain. Accordingly, leaning upon their finite knowledge of nature and its potentialities, they scoffed and scorned Noah's science and his warning of doom, and continued their "eating and drinking, marrying and giving in marriage, until the day that Noe entered into the ark, and knew not until the flood came, and took them all away." Matt. 24:38, 39.

Their exalting human science and disregarding divine science, therefore, was the special snare which took the antediluvians. Their fate solemnly warns us carefully to avoid their mistake.

In the Abrahamic Movement, the father of the faithful was called to depart from the cities of the ancient world, in the hope

that someday the Movement would triumphantly possess the promised land. Fully aware of this fact, Satan worked mightily to sidetrack the Movement into the cities of the nations along the way. On this block of stumbling Lot fell, with the result that when the Lord finally snatched him from the destruction of Sodom, as a brand plucked from the burning, he came out the poorest of the poor.

Thus the worldly cities were the quicksands to the first postdiluvians. May we not lose all therein, as did Lot.

The Mosaic Movement was led out of Egypt to possess the land of promise, and there to become a kingdom. Cunningly suiting his temptations to their predispositions, Satan inspired those who were of age when they left the land of Pharaoh, to continuous murmuring, complaining, office-seeking and rebelling, and finally to fearing the giant inhabitants of the promised land. Failing to see that their strength was the strong hand of the Lord, they were consequently forced to wander forty long years in the desert, and there to leave parching the bones of all but two of their members who were of age when they left Egypt.

Unbelief, stiffneckedness, distrust of Divine leadership, and office seeking, therefore, were the four-headed monster that devoured the people of the Exodus. And

these will devour every Present-truth believer who strays into their lair.

The Canaan Movement under Joshua was ridded of all sinners and commissioned to possess the land, drive out the heathen, and set up an everlasting kingdom. Knowing that its continuance was contingent on their obedience to the Lord's instructions through His prophets, Satan moved upon the people to mock the messengers of God, despise His words, and misuse His prophets, "until the wrath of the Lord arose against His people, till there was no remedy" (2 Chron. 36:16), and He gave them back to captivity.

Hence to the subjects of the kingdom, the prophets were the great rock of offense--a rock upon which no age before or since has been free from stumbling. The wise today, therefore, will "despise not prophesyings." 1 Thess. 5:20.

The Apostolic Movement was brought forth to proclaim the transferring of the earthly sanctuary service to the heavenly "tabernacle, which the Lord pitched, and not man" (Heb. 8:2), and to baptize "in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost" (Matt. 28:19) all who should repent of their sins. But to frustrate its purpose, Satan set to work to fashion another deception, and with the departure of the apostles he quickly succeeded in causing the church completely to lose sight

of both the truth of the priesthood of Christ and the truth of baptism, and to establish in their stead an earthly priestcraft and infant baptism.

Thus being led to disbelieve and disregard the *sanctuary services and baptism*, their very salvation, the Christian church fell through Satan's trapdoor into error. And that door is still set to take the feet of the unwary--all who disregard or lightly esteem the ever *advancing* Truth unfolded in the special sealing message for today.

The Protestant Movements were raised up to declare and to exploit the primacy of the Bible, because the pre-reformation world was bound in darkness by uninspired man's religious rule, disallowing the common people the right to possess a Bible, and making them dependent upon his private interpretation of it. Hence came the Protestant churches in their succession, to restore the down-trodden Truth, each protesting against these abuses and usurpations of human rights, each being called forth to make the Christian world realize the need of true Inspiration and of freedom of religion, the right to own a Bible and to study for themselves, and the duty to make the Bible and the Bible only, the rule of their faith.

Being determined, though, to bring the Reformation to naught, Satan has from its beginning constantly worked to cause every

church member to revel in private interpretation of the Scriptures and in extra Biblical theories. Consequently, Protestantism today finds itself following not merely in the way of the uninspired Bible interpretations of one man but in the ways of the uninspired interpretations of thousands of men! And the result is that Christendom teems with schism and confusion unrivaled in history--evidence that the great work of the founding fathers of the Protestant Reformation has been perverted and turned into an undermining force for the frustration of God's special design for the church today.

Thus we see that the Reformation, which, originally under the direction of inspired men, lifted the church out of one morass, later under the direction of uninspired men, plunged her into another, wherein she has been floundering ever since. And unless we let the Truth extricate us from this fatal bog of confusion, we cannot defeat the Enemy of Inspiration in his tireless and powerful efforts to pervert the implements of our salvation into weapons for our destruction.

The Seventh-day Adventist Movement was appointed to declare the sanctuary work: "Fear God, and give glory to Him, for the hour of His judgment [the harvest] is come" (Rev. 14:7) to remove from the Lamb's Book of Life, the names of those who had not filled their vessels with extra

oil (Matt. 25:3), and those who had not put on the wedding garment (Matt. 22:11), also those who had not doubled their talents (Matt. 25:14-30); and also to remove the tares from among the wheat (Matt. 13:30).

This proclamation concerning the dead was to prepare the living for their impending judgment. For this reason, Satan has employed his every device to lull Adventists into being merely hearers and preachers but not doers of the Word; into tithing mint and anise and cumin, as it were, but omitting the weightier matters of the law. In short, he has caused them to become wretched and miserable and poor and blind and naked by failing on the one hand to be faithful themselves in doing what they teach others to do, and by failing on the other hand to keep themselves free from doing what they teach others not to do. And to prevent them from awakening to this "terrible deception" (*Testimonies*, Vol. 3, p. 254), he keeps them lukewarm, complacently dreaming of being rich in truth and of having need of nothing, though in fact they are in misery and in need of everything.

Clearly, then, lukewarmness and the hallucination of being rich are the faults peculiar to the Laodiceans, and are the dangers which if not recognized and removed are finally to result in God's spuing them out of His mouth (Rev. 3:16). Thus again

the Lord mercifully pleads with Present-truth believers to walk in the light and shun lukewarmness, lest they fall back into thinking themselves rich and increased with goods and in need of nothing, and again become poor and in need of everything. Thus we see that while Satan has not been able to overthrow every individual member, he has, though, been able to overthrow every Movement to date.

The Eleventh-hour Movement, being the very last, is consequently in the greatest danger of all. What urgency, then, that we keep our eyes wide open lest we, too, fall! This Movement, however, being the last gospel effort, must "give power and force" to the Third Angel's Message and "lighten the earth with his glory" (Rev. 18:1); it must triumph, though every Movement before it has failed. It is destined, not to "prophesy again" to "many nations" (Rev. 10:11), but to "all." And as it is to go to those who have not heard of His fame, and to bring to the house of the Lord all the saints "out of all nations" (Isa. 66:19, 20), it is consequently foreordained to endure. To effect this predetermined purpose, God is now taking the reins in His own hands (*Testimonies to Ministers*, p. 300), to purify the church by removing from it the tares, and to preserve it free from them henceforth, so that it may stand on Mount Zion with the Lamb (Rev. 14:1).

Indeed, in the very nature of the case, the Eleventh-hour Movement must triumph, for, being the last, the one to garner in the harvest, then should it fail, everyone in the world today would forever remain lost. Double, therefore, are the reasons that the Lord purposes it to stand. Thus the Davidians have been called to "the Kingdom for such a time as this."

"For," declares the Word, "by fire and by His sword will the Lord plead with all flesh: and the slain of the Lord shall be many....And I will send those that escape of them unto the nations....And they shall declare My glory among the Gentiles. And they shall bring all your brethren for an offering unto the Lord out of all nations." Isa. 66:16-20.

"And they [the Gentiles] shall call them The holy people, The redeemed of the Lord." Isa. 62: 12.

"But who may abide the day...? Who shall stand when He appeareth? for He is like a refiner's fire, and like fullers' soap." Mal. 3:2.

All the more reason, then, that its adherents must be tested and proved worthy. What, therefore, is the first and gravest danger confronting Present-truth believers today?

With the end of the long journey in view, the work was never so great, the time

in which to do it never so short, and the laborers never so few, as now. Self-evident, therefore, is the fact that Satan's supreme effort at this hour must be to cause the time to be wasted and the work to go undone.

Rouse, then, O Present-truth believer! Rise speedily to the task set, and "whatsoever thy hand findeth to do, do it with thy might." Eccles. 9:10. No longer let a moment be wasted, for every precious one is vital to the salvation of your own soul and to the souls of others.

WHAT SAITH THE SPIRIT UNTO LAODICEA?

Question No. 5:

Does not Laodicea in her lukewarmness present in a consummate way the dangerous condition which the apostle Paul warns against when he says: "Let him that thinketh he standeth take heed lest he fall"?

Answer:

Sacred history is repetitious with the tragic lesson that when a people go wrong, as did Israel in Elijah's and again in Christ's time, they are no longer sensible of their being wrong. Likewise repetitious is the even more tragic lesson that such a people have always misconstrued God's efforts to bring them to a realization of their errors. So once they are led astray from the teachings of the prophets, and

captivated by new and magnetic human leadership, their liberation and correction become almost impossible. (See *Prophets and Kings*, pp. 121-126.)

In varying ways, the fatal weakness which has characterized every Movement, from that of Israel to that of Laodicea, has been in "laying again the foundation of repentance from dead works." Heb. 6:1. And what is still more basic, and more urgently to the point, is that each Movement alike failed to progress from one message to the next, and to go on to reach its final goal of transcendental attainments in divine knowledge. Instead, each fell from the heights of its own early rich experience, back down to spiritual poverty, because it failed to keep pace with the Truth. Each Divinely called Movement came to a standstill where it contentedly satisfied itself that it was yet in the sanctified steps to the Mount of Perfection, that it was "flourishing, and that peace and spiritual prosperity" were "in all [its] borders" (Testimonies, Vol. 5, p. 217), when in reality, quite the opposite was the truth. So follows Laodicea, thinking she is all right when she is all wrong.

Never in the violent history of this sin-deluged world has so great a danger and so great a necessity confronted the church. In this all-enveloping peril, "what does God say in regard to His people? -- 'But this is a people robbed and spoiled; they

are all of them snared in holes, and they are hid in prison houses: they are for a prey, and none delivereth; for a spoil, and none saith, Restore.' (See also Isaiah 43.) These are prophecies that *will be fulfilled*."--*Testimonies to Ministers*, p. 96.

"What greater deception can come upon human minds than a confidence that they are right, when they are all wrong!"--*Testimonies*, Vol. 3, pp. 252, 253.

Again, it is written in Proverbs 29:18 (margin), "Where there is no vision, the people is made naked."

Here in more extensive relief is the picture of a people who have indeed lost their "vision" (the supernatural guidance afforded by the living voice of the prophetic gift resident among them), but who realize it not. More amazing still, they have evidently introduced their own inventions (idols) as substitutes for the things of God. This they have done so *gradually* that they are quite as unaware of it as they are that many have not availed themselves of the volumes of the Spirit of Prophecy--their very "eyesight." And where others have had these volumes of vision lying all around them, they have let them go either unread or unheeded and therefore "unappreciated."-- *Testimonies*, Vol. 5, p. 217. Thus it is in this sense more than in any other that they have become blind--no longer even expecting any further revealed

truth to give power and force to their message (Early Writings, p. 277). Yet they still flatter themselves that they are in the inner circle of God's favor!

"The message of the True Witness finds the people of God in a sad deception, yet honest in that deception. They know not that their condition is deplorable in the sight of God. While those addressed are flattering themselves that they are in an exalted spiritual condition, the message of the True Witness breaks their security by the startling denunciation of their true condition of spiritual blindness, poverty, and wretchedness. The testimony so cutting and severe, cannot be a mistake, for it is the True Witness who speaks, and his testimony must be correct."--*Testimonies*, Vol. 3, p. 253.

If the thinking processes of the Laodiceans were not in dire need of a complete spiritual overhauling and re-orientation, they would not "think they are all right when they are all wrong," think that they are "rich" when in reality they are desperately "poor"--destitute of truth and righteousness!

Accordingly, nothing but a message with "healing in its wings" will heal the Laodicean mind of its spiritual sickness. In this hour of the church's crisis, "those who have been timid and self-distrustful, will declare themselves openly for Christ and

his truth. The most weak and hesitating in the church, will be as David--willing to do and dare."--*Testimonies*, Vol. 5, p. 81. Why?--Because they have the promise that "there shall be a fountain opened to the house of David and to the inhabitants of Jerusalem for sin and for uncleanness.

"And it shall come to pass in that day, saith the Lord of hosts, that I will cut off the names of the idols out of the land, and they shall no more be remembered: and also I will cause the prophets and the unclean spirit to pass out of the land. " Zech. 13:1, 2.

"For in that day every man shall cast away his idols...which your own hands have made unto you for a sin...Turn ye unto Him from Whom the children of Israel have deeply revolted." Isa. 31:7, 6.

"In that day shall the Lord defend the inhabitants of Jerusalem; and he that is feeble among them at that day shall be as David; and the house of David shall be as God, as the angel of the Lord before them." Zech. 12:8.

The Spirit's Voice through Isaiah is now also crying aloud: "Awake, awake, put on thy strength, O Zion; put on thy beautiful garments, O Jerusalem, the holy city: for henceforth there shall no more come into thee the uncircumcised and the unclean... How beautiful upon the mountains are the

feet of Him that bringeth good tidings, that publisheth peace; that bringeth good tidings of good, that publisheth salvation; that saith unto Zion, Thy God reigneth!" Isa. 52:1, 7.

The same Voice through Nahum also pleads: "Behold upon the mountains the feet of him that bringeth good tidings that publisheth peace! O Judah, keep thy solemn feasts, perform thy vows: for *the wicked* shall *no more* pass through thee; he is utterly cut off." Nah. 1:15.

But in all her history, the church as a whole has never accepted a message from heaven. The call therefore comes to each individual member. Each must decide for himself. No one should allow himself to be influenced by another. And "no one has a right to shut away the light from the people. When a message comes in the name of the Lord to His people, no one may excuse himself from an investigation of its claims....It was from pursuing this very course that the popular churches were left in partial darkness, and that is why the messages of heaven have not reached them."--*Testimonies on Sabbath-School Work*, p. 65; *Counsels on Sabbath School Work*, p. 28.

"But we see that the God of heaven sometimes commissions men to teach that which is regarded as contrary to the established doctrines. Because those who were

once the depositaries of truth became unfaithful to their sacred trust, the Lord chose others who would receive the bright beams of the Sun of Righteousness, and would advocate truths that were not in accordance with the ideas of the religious leaders. And then these leaders in the blindness of their minds, give full sway to what is supposed to be righteous indignation against the ones who have set aside cherished fables. They act like men who have lost their reason. They do not consider the possibility that they themselves have not rightly understood the Word. They will not open their eyes to discern the fact that they have misinterpreted and misapplied the Scriptures, and have built up false theories, calling them fundamental doctrines of the faith."--T*estimonies to Ministers*, pp. 69, 70.

Since the Laodiceans are already in the greatest deception, then for any one of them to decline to investigate a claimant to truth for fear of being deceived in so doing, is to stultify reason. To investigate and to study is one's only salvation--his only hope of getting out of his present "sad," "terrible," "fearful" deception (*Testimonies*, Vol. 3, pp. 253, 254, 260), and his only hope of protection in keeping him from plunging into the abyss. So he must study as never before! And in so doing he will *find that this is the beginning of the very message he must have* in

order to clear the scales from his eyes and break the invisible, but none-the-less real, shackles of inertia and self-exaltation in which the Enemy holds him bound.

DOES TRUTH MAKE DIVISION?

Question No. 6:

Why do you not candidly admit that any message coming from God should not cause schism and separation among His people? Is not the fact that "The Shepherd's Rod" does cause both, sufficient proof that it cannot contain the message of the hour?

Answer:

It is certainly true that any fresh revelation of truth from God's Word *ought* never to cause division and separation. But the sad truth is that the opposite has always been the fact.

To satisfy himself the questioner need only ask himself: How many times has God sent to His church messages that did not bring both trouble and separation among His people? If the conclusions support his premise, then as Christians we must of course change our position and admit that the Rod does not contain a message from God. If, however, church history discredits his logic, then of course we shall expect him, as an honest Christian and a seeker for truth, to confess that his reasoning has not refuted the *Rod.*

Like all the heaven-sent messages preceding it, the *Rod* message is, according to Ezekiel's prophecy in chapter 9, and *Testimonies to Ministers*, p. 445, set "for the fall and rising again of many in Israel" (Luke 2:34), it is exactly calculated to bring about a sifting, a separation of the tares from among the wheat in the church membership! (See also *Early Writings*, p. 270.)

The fact that the message of the *Rod* brings a separation, is one more evidence in the proof that in this fundamental effect, at least, it is right in line with all other messages from God. This therefore adds another link to the golden chain of Truth that cannot be tarnished or broken. "The weight of evidence" is the only fair and final criterion worthy of a Christian who must ever make an investigation for himself concerning purported truth.

CHRIST OR HIS SERVANT?

Question No. 7:

How do you harmonize "Gospel Workers," p. 44, par. 2, with "The Shepherd's Rod," Vol. 2, p. 240, par. 2, presented comparatively as follows:

"The messenger is not the Lord Himself,...he is the one who shall prepare the way for the Lord."--"The Shepherd's Rod," Vol. 2, p. 240.

"Christ, the Messenger of the covenant brought the tidings of salvation."--"Gospel Workers," p. 44.

Answer:

While on page 44, *Gospel Workers* applies the title "Messenger of the Covenant" to Christ, on page 20 it applies it to Moses. In juxtaposition, these are seen as follows:

"When Moses was chosen as the messenger of the covenant, the word given him was, 'Be thou for the people to Godward.'" -- *Gospel Workers*, p. 20.		"Christ the messenger of the covenant, brought the tidings of salvation." -- *Gospel Workers*, p. 44

Whereas Gospel Workers applies the term to both Moses and Christ, Christ Himself applies it to John the Baptist. He said "unto the multitudes concerning John...But what went ye out for to see? A prophet? yea, I say unto you, and more than a prophet. For this is he, of whom it is written, *Behold, I send My messenger before thy face*, which shall prepare thy way before thee. And if ye will receive it, this is Elias, which was for to come." Matt. 11:7, 9, 10, 14.

As God had made both spoken and written covenants with His ancient people that He would send them Moses, John, and Christ, they came in fulfillment of those covenants. And each having brought a message, each in his own time was the Messenger of the Covenant. Nevertheless, the words of Malachi make plain that the Messenger of the Covenant is, in the strictest sense Elijah the prophet (Mal. 3:1-5; 4:5), the last messenger who prepares the

way of the Lord. (See *Testimonies to Ministers,* p. 475.)

In the last analysis, however, the title Messenger of the Covenant belongs to the Holy Spirit. For example, 1 Peter 3:18-20 states that Christ preached to the antediluvians by the *same "Spirit" Who "quickened" Him*. But as He preached by the Spirit in the person of Noah, not of Himself, He thereby unfolded the truth that the Holy Spirit is in all His messengers alike.

Thus "*holy men* of God spake as they were *moved by the Holy Ghost*." 2 Pet. 1:21. Briefly summarized, the term Messenger of the Covenant means the Holy Spirit (the invisible Christ) in Heaven's visible representative--be it Moses, John, Christ, Elijah, or some other.

IS THERE NEED FOR "EXTRA OIL"?

Question No. 8:

I am told that somewhere in her writings, Sister White has said: "We have all the light which we need till Jesus comes." Can you give the reference?

Answer:

We know of no such statement. Furthermore, any such declaration would be wholly contrary to everything Sister White has written on the subject, as is quickly seen from only two of her many testimonies on this point:

"The question has been asked me, 'Do you think that the Lord has any more light for us as a people?' I answer that He has light that is new to us, and yet it is precious old light that is to shine forth from the Word of truth. We have only the glimmerings of the rays of the light that is yet to come to us. We are not making the most of the light which the Lord has already given us, and thus we fail to receive the increased light; we do not walk in light already shed upon us."--*The Review and Herald,* June 3, 1890.

"We should all know what is being taught among us; for if it is truth, we need it....No matter by whom light is sent, we should open our hearts to receive it with the meekness of Christ....O, may we act as men who want light!" "The Lord sends light to us to prove what manner of spirit we are of. We are not to deceive ourselves." "We must not for a moment think that there is no more light, no more truth, to be given us."--*Gospel Workers*, pp. 301, 302, 310.

Obviously, therefore, there cannot be even so much as a suggestion in Sister White's writings that we already have all the Truth and need nothing more. But there are in the *Bible* at least two previews of a people who will mistakenly think they have need of nothing more: (1) the five foolish virgins, who *think* the oil in their

lamps is enough to give them light clear to the Kingdom, but who, being mistaken, fail to reach their goal (see Matthew 25:1-13); (2) the Laodiceans, who think they have need of nothing, although the Lord says they have need of everything, and who thus doom themselves to be spued out of His mouth. (See Revelation 3:14-18.)

Anyone who proceeds upon the assumption that Sister White has said, "We have all the light which we need till Jesus comes," is, unless he promptly surrenders the notion, dooming himself to the fate of either a foolish virgin or an unrepentant Laodicean.

THE LATTER RAIN--WHEN?

Question No. 9:

"Early Writings," p. 15, speaks about God's announcing the day and the hour of Jesus' coming, and pouring upon the saints the Holy Ghost. Does not all this take place at the time of the seven last plagues, just before the Second Advent? If so, then does it not show that the "latter rain" is to be poured out upon God's people after the close of probation?

Answer:

True, we do understand from the passage in question that toward the close of the seventh plague, God will announce the day and the hour of Christ's coming, and that He will then pour out His Spirit upon His saints. We do not, however, understand this outpouring to be either the "latter"

or the "former rain" of truth, or yet the power prophesied of in Joel 2:23, 28, but rather the final manifestation of God's Spirit not to reveal to us any more of Gospel Truth, nor to enable us to proclaim it more fully, but simply to baptize us with a fitness to behold Jesus face to face, "as He is."

HAS THE LOUD CRY BEGUN?

Question No. 10:

Sister White wrote in 1892 that the Loud Cry of the Third Angel's Message had already begun; please explain why others claim that it is yet future. And what makes it "loud"?

Answer:

There must be a marked difference between the voice of the message before the Loud Cry, and the voice of the message in the Loud Cry; otherwise it would not be called "loud."

The message swells to a Loud Cry by virtue of an "addition" which gives it "power and force."--*Early Writings*, p. 277. The only conclusion admissible, therefore, is that since the church has never accepted an additional message, and since there has never come one (other than that in *The Shepherd's Rod* publications) that would give "power and force" to the old message, the Loud Cry could not have begun at any time previous to this.

Moreover, the "abominations" in the church have not only kept back the Loud Cry but have also even silenced the fainter cry which precedes it. Indeed, "the angel of the church of the Laodiceans," being unfit even to finish the proclamation of the message in its fainter cry, must be altogether unfit to proclaim it in the Loud Cry. Obviously, if he does not now quickly repent and accept the additional message which is to begin the Loud Cry, then not only will he not help proclaim it but he will even be "spued out."

"...only those who have withstood temptation in the strength of the Mighty One," warns the Spirit of Prophecy, "will be permitted to act a part in proclaiming it [the Third Angel's Message] when it shall have swelled into the loud cry."--*The Review and Herald*, No. 19, 1908.

So while the fainter cry is proclaimed by those who have, as well as by those who have not, overcome temptation, the Loud Cry is to be proclaimed only by those who have.

Though the Loud Cry was to have begun by 1892, it was muffled when the church rejected the message of Righteousness by Faith in 1888. Thus, the scroll which contained the "additional" message that was to give "power and force" to the Third Angel's Message, for the time then being ceased unrolling. And consequently, instead

of becoming the light of the world, the church herself went into darkness. Seeing this, the Spirit of Truth made a fearful pronouncement of doom upon unrepentant Laodiceans, while giving joyous promise of future glory to all who will arise and walk in the light that proceeds from the throne.

"How will any of our brethren know when this light shall come to the people of God?" was the sweeping question then asked by Inspiration. And the inspired answer was: "As yet we have certainly not seen the light that answers to this description. God has light for His people, and all who accept it will see the sinfulness of remaining in a lukewarm condition."-- *The Review and Herald*, Oct. 7, 1890.

"In the manifestation of the power that lightens the earth with its glory, they will see only something which in their blindness they think dangerous, something which will arouse their fears and they will brace themselves to resist it. Because the Lord does not work according to their expectations and ideal, they will oppose the work. Why, they say, should we not know the Spirit of God, when we have been in the work so many years?"--*Bible Training School*, 1907. (Reprinted in *The Review and Herald*, Nov. 7 1918.) This statement plainly projects the Loud Cry into the future from 1918.

"The love of Christ, the love of our brethren, will testify to the world that we have been with Jesus and learned of Him. Then will the message of the third angel swell to a loud cry, and the whole earth will be lightened with the glory of the Lord."--*Testimonies,* Vol. 6, p. 401.

IS THE FORMER RAIN THE PENTECOSTAL POWER?

Question No. 11:

"The Shepherd's Rod" says that the former rain is the Spirit of Prophecy, and that the latter rain is the closely related pre-Pentecostal message, or "teacher of righteousness," which the church is now receiving, and that the Pentecostal "power" is still another thing. But "The Desire of Ages" says that the "former rain" was the "outpouring of the Spirit in apostolic days," and the "latter rain," the Pentecostal outpouring itself, is to occur in the last days. What is one to believe?

Answer:

Both books are endeavoring to say what the Bible says, and in order to bring harmony we must restudy the subject directly form the Bible, specifically from Joel's prophecy: "Be glad then, ye children of Zion, and rejoice in the Lord your God: for He hath given you the former rain moderately, and He will cause to come down for you the rain, the former rain, and the latter rain in the first month." Joel 2:23.

No one should fail to see that Joel's prophecy calls for double fulfillment. Although those who are promised the latter rain, are told that they have already been given the former rain, yet when the latter rain falls upon them, it brings the former rain with it, both coming upon them in the first month. The marginal rendering for the rain designates it a "teacher of righteousness." Now, if the former rain repeats and comes down with the latter rain in the same month, then the fact stands out that the former rain in the apostles' day is the one of which The Desire of Ages speaks, and that the former rain which falls in the month of the latter rain, is the one of which the Rod speaks.

In the natural realm, the former rain bursts and sprouts the seed and the latter rain brings the blade to full development. So in the spiritual realm, "the former rain" must denote a heaven-sent message to germinate the spiritual seed, and the "latter rain," a subsequent message to ripen the grain for the spiritual harvest. In thus bringing the receiver to full maturity of righteousness, the former and the latter rains represent two teachers of righteousness. In the complete application, the two latter-day rains therefore are not only the outpouring of the first pre-Pentecostal truth, the teachings of Christ in His day, the type, but are also the initial outpouring of the last pre-Pentecostal truth, the

advanced Truth in our day, the antitype. First there must be the revelation of Pentecostal truth before there can be given the Pentecostal power to proclaim it: "And it shall come to pass *afterward* [after the former and the latter rain]," says the All-knowing One, "that I will pour out My Spirit upon all flesh." Joel 2:28.

Accordingly, these two manifestations of the Holy Spirit are seen to be inseparable. The first develops a people by *teaching* them in righteousness; the second fully *matures* them, and *clothes* them with power to *proclaim* the truth in righteousness. In consequence, there is given in the first phase of the work "a teacher of righteousness" who trains an army of under-teachers of righteousness for the carrying out of the second phase.

Since there was to be a revelation of truth in the apostles', in Sister White's, and in our day *The Desire of Ages* is correct in saying that, at that time (when it was written), the former rain was the "rain" of truth in the apostles' day. But as today the former rain is not only the truth of the apostles' day but also that of Sister White's day, the *Rod* is correct in saying that her writings are "the former rain" today, and that the latter rain, as Joel shows, is directly applicable to the last message--the message of today (Joel 2:23). Thus only (with the *former* rain being the writings of Sister White, and the "*latter rain*" being

the *Rod*) can both former and latter fall at the same time, as required by Joel 2:23. And the Spirit's power, being subsequent to the former and latter rain, is therefore yet future.

WHEN IN NEED OF TRUTH, WHY BEG FOR POWER?

Question No. 12:

Being told to pray for the outpouring of the Holy Spirit, thousands upon thousands have earnestly done so, but to no avail. Why?

Answer:

From time to time many zealous individual and group Christian Movements have launched impressive prayer-marathons in a determined, persevering effort to bring about the fulfillment of the promised outpouring of the Holy Spirit, even the "latter rain." Because, though, these periodic efforts have invariably ended in heartbreaking disappointment and frustration, thousands of souls have become confused and bewildered, given up their faith completely, and perhaps sunk into infidelity.

Yet no student of the Scriptures will deny that the Bible does definitely hold forth the promise of a singularly dynamic manifestation of the Holy Spirit, to bestow upon all believers a special outpouring of power such as the apostles received on the day of Pentecost,--yes, even greater.

Then the answer to the question, Why do we not now receive It? inescapably is, Because the conditions for receiving it have not as yet been met. When they are met this sure promise of God will be instantaneously fulfilled, even as it was with the apostles.

Therefore, whatever is now keeping the Christian from receiving this greatest of the gifts, the hindrance must lie with him and not with God.

There is a promise of the Comforter, the Spirit of Truth (John 16:7-13), and a promise of the "latter rain." Joel 2-23, 28. This promised Comforter, the apostles received on the day of Pentecost, and It was to abide with them forever; that is, even with their successors. But as in the apostolic succession, men of the primitive apostolic caliber ceased, the Comforter gradually disappeared. And though He has at different times reappeared in the form of the Spirit of Truth, His Pentecostal power and presence have never since been re-imparted. This manifestation of the Spirit in Power (Joel 2:28) should not, however, be confused with the manifestation of the Spirit in Truth (Joel 2:23).

The very title, "latter rain," itself shows that this particular manifestation takes place in the "latter days"--our time. And through Zechariah the prophet, Inspiration in pointing out that there is a *set time* for

the latter rain, urges: "Ask ye of the Lord rain *in the time of the latter rain*; so the Lord shall make bright clouds, and give them showers of rain, to every one grass in the field." Zech. 10:1.

The related passage of Joel 2:23, marginal rendering, makes clear that "the latter rain," the last message, is "*a teacher of righteousness*," bringing to the recipient full knowledge of Truth, righteousness. Therefore while Christians are urgently requested to pray and agonize for the Spirit of Truth at all times, they are even more urgently instructed to pray for it now!

As in the natural state of things, the latter rain comes not only to make the wheat grow but also to bring it to its full maturity, so, by spiritual analogy, this Teacher of Righteousness must bring the saints to the full stature of men in Christ Jesus (Eph. 4:13)--fit them for the Kingdom.

But the second phase, that promised power (Joel 2:28) which comes "afterward," *after* "the latter rain," is that for which most Christians are praying without considering that there is a first phase (Joel 2:23)--the "teacher of righteousness," a final outpouring of Present Truth-which must be obtained before the final outpouring of power can be realized.

It is evident that the part which comes "afterward," the Pentecostal *power*, comes

to enable the receiver to proclaim the latter truth; and this power will not come until the church as a body "every one grass in the field" (Zech. 10:1), not a group here and a group there, has joyously assimilated for its spiritual growth all the rain that the Teacher of Righteousness, who has now come, has brought.

But the great question here confronting us is: When can "every grass" every church member *receive* this glorious Truth and power? Shall saint and hypocrite share them alike? Inspiration answers:

"By fire and by His sword will the Lord plead with all flesh: and the slain of the Lord shall be many....and I will send *those that escape* of them unto the nations....and they shall declare My glory among the Gentiles....they shall bring all your brethren...to My holy mountain Jerusalem, saith the Lord, as the children of Israel bring an offering in a *clean vessel* into the house of the Lord." Isa. 66:16, 19, 20.

So in the time *between* the "latter rain" of truth and the "outpouring" of the Spirit's power, there will be sealed a consecrated number who will escape from among the "slain of the Lord." In other words, at the first-fruit harvest, when all the sinners have been taken out of the church, and the righteous left by themselves as were the 120 disciples in the upper room, then and

only then can the Lord finally pour out His Spirit's *power* upon all, so that all (all the "escaped" ones) shall prophesy, dream dreams, and see visions.

"And it shall come to pass, that he that is left in Zion, and he that remaineth in Jerusalem, shall be called holy, even every one that is written among the living in Jerusalem: When the Lord shall have washed away the filth of the daughters of Zion, and shall have purged the blood of Jerusalem from the midst thereof by the spirit of judgment, and by the spirit of burning. And the Lord will create upon every dwelling place of mount Zion, and upon her assemblies, a cloud and smoke by day, and the shining of a flaming fire by night: for upon all the glory shall be a defense. And there shall be a tabernacle for a shadow in the daytime from the heat, and for a place of refuge, and for a covert from storm and from rain." Isa. 4:3-6.

Only after this great purge in the church (described also in the ninth chapter of Ezekiel) will the remnant be equipped to carry their fully blazing, lighted torch of Truth to all the Gentile world. Out of Zion will then go forth the law, and the word of the Lord from Jerusalem. The work will then be finished, "cut short in righteousness," and the Lord will then appear in glory--seen by every eye (Rev. 1:7).

FORTY YEARS WITHOUT REFILLING?

Question No. 13:

How can it be true that no progressive truth was given to the church during the forty-year period from 1890 to 1930, when so many of Sister White's writings were published from 1890 to 1915?

Answer:

Though many of Sister White's manuscripts were published during the period of time stated above, yet a careful check will reveal that if any new revelation of timely Bible truth, "meat in due season," was published therein, it was revealed to her before 1890. In fact, as early as 1871, she herself announced this cessation of light through the *Testimonies*: " I am authorized from God to tell you that not another ray of light through the Testimonies will shine upon your pathway, until you make a practical use of the light already given."--*Testimonies*, Vol. 2, p. 606.

So whatever Testimonies she wrote between the dates in question (1890 and 1915) were not expressly to reveal timely Bible truth, but primarily to furnish counsel, admonition, reproof, and instruction in righteousness in an endeavor to save the Laodiceans from being spued out. Any other of her writings remained, in their prophetic aspects, a mystery until the forty

years expired with the arrival of *The Shepherd's Rod.*

So long without spiritual oil, the church's Truth-containing vessel needed to be refilled with fresh oil, that her lamp might lighten her path all the way to the Kingdom, lest she fall from the strait and narrow road at the very end of her long pilgrimage. So in His great love and mercy, the Lord has sent *The Shepherd's Rod* to gather up and make a practical use of the light already given. Therefore, now, commands the Lord, "Hear ye the Rod, and Who hath appointed it." Mic. 6:9.

DOES THE SHEPHERD'S ROD SET PROPHETIC DATES ?

Question No. 14:

In the following statement, "While God clears the way for the seven last plagues by laying some of His people to sleep in the grave, He has done the same for the event to take place in 1931 (if that date be correct)," does "The Shepherd's Rod," Vol. 1, p. 219, mean to teach that the judgment of the dead closed in 1931 or thereabouts?

Answer:

In the statement in question, the *Rod* has no reference to the Investigative Judgment. The message sets no date, either exact or approximate, for the closing of the judgment of the dead, or for the beginning of the Judgment of the living. The time of the cessation of the one event and the beginning

of the other, is not to be known until the one is past and the other begun.

As to the 1931 date and the event connected with it, we have no further light at the present time than is to be found in *The Shepherd's Rod*, Vol. 1, pp. 108-114, and Vol. 2, p. 275. It was at the close of 1930 and the beginning of 1931 that the publication of the message in the *Rod* took place, revealing the truth of the 144,000 calling for a reformation. So, while it was not exactly understood beforehand what the nature of the event would be, yet when the fullness of the time came and no other event occurred but this one, it was thereby identified as the one predicted in Ezekiel 4 in connection with the end of the 430 prophetic years when the "scroll" was to unroll another turn.

(All italics ours.)

WHAT SHALL YOUR NEXT STEP BE?

Now if you have enjoyed, appreciated, and profited by this question-and-answer excursion through Book No. 1, and if you desire to continue, then send for Book No. 2. It will be mailed as a Christian service without charge or obligation.