THE SYMBOLIC CODE



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Lightening the Earth

BELIEVE AND PROSPER

The thirty-fourth chapter of Ezekiel speaks of sheep and shepherds, and in verse thirty-one the Lord explains that the sheep there spoken of are symbolical of His people, saying: "And ye My flock, the flock of My pasture, are men, and I am your God, saith the Lord God."

Therefore, the sheep referred to in this scripture are the people of God, and the pasture is His word upon which they feed. "Thus saith the Lord God; Behold, I judge between cattle and cattle, between the rams and the he goats. Seemeth it a small thing unto you to have eaten up the good pasture, but ye must tread down with your feet the residue of your pastures? and to have drunk of the deep waters, but ye must foul the residue with your feet? And as for My flock, they eat that which ye have trodden with your feet; and they drink that which ye have fouled with your feet. Therefore thus saith the Lord God unto them; Behold, I, even I, will judge between the fat cattle and between the lean cattle." (Ezek. 34:17 through 20.)

In these verses the Lord asks the question if it seems good to those who profess to be of His flock, to accept only a part of the truth He sends to them, and to tread down with their feet the residue. Then He adds that His true flock accept all that He sends to them, even that which others refuse. Hence, because some accept only that part of the message which does not cross their perverse wills, and only that which suits their taste and their fancy, therefore, saith the Lord, "I will judge between cattle and cattle."

There has ever been a class among God's people who make it their business to question and to criticize everything in the "unfolding of truth." They say, "We accept this and that, but we will not accept the other." They think it a mark of intelligence to question and to criticize. But this proud and self-esteeming class among church members, who think they are so wise and so capable of judging even the message which they have already acknowledged that God has sent them, have always met the displeasure of the Lord, and He has demonstrated to men that their so-called wisdom is nothing short of foolishness. They are so foolish that even though their case has been presented to them in the experience of others for thousands of years, they cannot discern their evil and soul destroying course. These self-appointed judges of the messages that God sends to His people, have, by their doubts and criticisms, scattered away from Christ many weak souls who are subject to being affected with the disease whenever they are exposed to it. Therefore, thus saith the Lord, "Because ye have thrust with side and with shoulder, and pushed all the diseased with your horns, till ye have scattered them abroad; therefore will I save My flock, and they shall no more be a prey; and I will judge between cattle and cattle." (Ezek. 34:21, 22.)

Moreover, the Spirit of Prophecy says: "As Jesus was rejected, so I saw that these messages have been rejected. And as the disciples declared that there is salvation in no other name under heaven, given among men, so, also, should the servants of God faithfully and fearlessly warn those who embrace but a part of the truths connected with the third message, that they must gladly receive all the messages as God has given them, or have no part in the matter."--"Early Writings," pp. 188, 189.

The spirit that worked in the Jewish leaders is still at work. At Christ's time the people pretended to be very ardent in their belief of the writings of Moses and the prophets, and found fault with their fathers who killed the prophets. But they themselves were even worse than their fathers, for they were seeking to kill the One Who was greater than all the seers. Likewise there are some professed Present Truth believers who feign to be very faithful to, and zealous for, the writings of Sister White, but who are now, as were others in her time, "eating up the good pasture"--only that part of the message which suits their taste--and treading down with their "feet the residue" of their pasture.

"'By giving place to doubts and unbelief in regard to the work of God, and by cherishing feelings of distrust and cruel jealousies, they are preparing themselves for complete deception. They rise up with bitter feelings against the ones who dare to speak of their errors and reprove their sins."--"Testimonies for the Church," Volume 5, p. 672.

"'Satan has ability to suggest doubts and to devise objections to the pointed testimony that God sends, and many think it a virtue, a mark of intelligence in them, to be unbelieving, and to question and quibble. Those who desire to doubt will have plenty of room. God does not propose to remove all occasion for unbelief. He gives evidence, which must be carefully investigated with a humble mind and a teachable spirit; and all should decide from the weight of evidence.' 'God gives sufficient evidence for the candid mind to believe; but he who turns from the weight of evidence because there are a few things which he cannot make plain to his finite understanding, will be left in the cold, chilling atmosphere of unbelief and questioning doubts, and will make shipwreck of faith.'"--Id. pp. 675, 676.

The Scriptures plainly declare that no one can possibly interpret the Word of God privately without the aid of Inspiration (2 Pet. 1:20, 21). Those who, without the Spirit of God, undertake

to interpret the messages the Lord sends to them, "will make shipwreck of faith," and will find themselves serving Satan instead of serving Christ.

Let all Present Truth believers carefully study the fourth chapter of Zechariah, and take particular notice of the method there illustrated, which God employs to reveal truth to His people. The diligent Bible student will there see that the candlestick represents the church membership (Rev. 1:20); that the tubes from the golden bowl (the writings of the Spirit of Prophecy) to the candlestick, represent the ministry ("Testimonies to Ministers," p. 188); that the olive trees are symbolical of the Old and New Testament Scriptures ("The Great Controversy," p. 267); and that the two golden pipes, which carry the golden oil from the trees to the bowl, are the only two mediums which God has employed since 1844 A.D. to interpret the Scriptures.

Moreover, we are told by the prophet Ezekiel in language unmistakable that at the establishing of the kingdom, which is to break all the kingdoms, God will have one man to teach His people: "And I will set up one shepherd over them, and he shall feed them, even My servant David; he shall feed them, and he shall be their shepherd. And I the Lord will be their God, and My servant David a prince among them; I the Lord have spoken it. And I will make with them a covenant of peace, and will cause the evil beasts to cease out of the land: and they shall dwell safely in the wilderness, and sleep in the woods. And I will make them and the places round about My hill a blessing; and I will cause the shower to come down in his season; there shall be showers of blessing." (Ezek. 34:23 through 26.)

Not one of us can even dare to compare our greatness with that of Jesus, yet He believed all the writings of the prophets, and those who consider themselves to be wise, and think it too humiliating to believe all, He calls "fools." (Luke 24:25.) God's people still err in this matter. They are stupid. They seem to be incapable of comprehending these facts, as the apostles were incapable of comprehending Jesus' teachings concerning the "kingdom" then.

There has been a multitude in all ages who, instead of being baptized in Christ and His truth, have been baptized in some man, have followed that man instead of following Christ, and have joined the multitude in the church instead of the multitude in heaven. The same condition exists in our age. Consequently when Christ speaks, the majority think the voice to be that of a stranger, and when truth unfolds, they call it error, and instead of following Christ and obeying the truth, they follow the man and reject the truth. This has been repeated, again and again, and as a result, the few faithful ones who have desired to follow Christ and His truth, have, by the foolish been cast out of the churches and compelled to start all over again.

"Now I beseech you, brethren, mark them which cause divisions and offences contrary to the doctrine which ye have learned; and avoid them. For they that are such serve not our Lord Jesus Christ, but their own belly; and by good words and fair speeches deceive the hearts of the simple." (Rom. 16:17, 18.)

Awake, brother! Awake, sister! "Shake thyself from the dust; arise, and sit down, O Jerusalem: loose thyself from the bands of thy neck, O captive daughter of Zion." (Isa. 52:2.)

"The, Lord's voice crieth unto the city, and the man of wisdom shall see thy name: hear ye the rod, and Who hath appointed it." (Mic. 6:9.)

"Trust ye not in a friend, put ye not confidence in a guide: keep the doors of thy mouth from her that lieth in thy bosom. For the son dishonoreth the father, the daughter riseth up against her mother, the daughter in law against her mother in law; a man's enemies are the men of his own house." Therefore, let us say with the wise," I will look unto the Lord; I will wait for the God of my salvation: my God will hear me," and I will strictly follow only the published messages sent to me. (Mic. 7:5, 6, 7.)

Let us exclaim from the depth of oar heart: "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. 52:7.)

"Believe in the LORD your God, so shall ye be established; believe His prophets, so shall ye prosper." (2 Chron. 20:20.)

MYSTERIOUS INCONSISTENCY

The prophet, Joel, looking forward to "the day of the Lord," makes the following forecast: "multitudes, multitudes in the valley of decision." (Joel 3:14.)

The marginal variants of "decision" are "concision" (a "cutting off") or, "threshing" (to beat out something from its husk or hull).

From these renderings, we understand, first, that just "before the coming of the great and dreadful day of the Lord" (Mal. 4:5), "multitudes" shall be in a state of deciding--deciding either for or against the message of judgment; second, that they shall find themselves confronted with the alternative choices of being threshed, beat out from the husk or hull, as wheat for the garner, or as chaff for the fire,

when "it shall come to pass in that day, that the LORD shall beat off from the channel of the river unto the stream of Egypt, and ye shall be gathered one by one, O ye children of Israel" (Isa. 27:12); and thirdly, that they shall either be "cut off" for the Lord, to "escape" the destruction of "the day of the Lord," or "cut off" from Him to "perish" in it.

Thus, as the message of "the coming of the great and dreadful day of the Lord" sounds forth to the multitudes, it finds them, as in Elijah's day, halting between two opinions--in a state of indecision as to whether Baal be God, or God be God; that is, as to whether the message, sounding in their ears, be from Satan or from God.

In this sorry plight, the message of Present Truth finds languishing the great majority of professed believers, and through the mind's morass of uncertainty, indecision, hesitancy, halting, perplexity, confusion, and unbelief, the truth must needs make its way, "like a hammer to break the flinty heart" (5T 254), and "the testimony, so cutting and severe, cannot be a mistake, for it is the True Witness who speaks, and His testimony must be correct." (3T 253.) And yet, the Laodicean condition is so deep seated that but few "accept the message and respect the messenger." (6T 420.) Many variously justify themselves in their refusal to investigate and to accept the message of Present Truth. Still others excuse themselves on the grounds of the following statement from Early Writings:

"I was shown the necessity of those who believe that we are having the last message of mercy, being separate from those who are daily imbibing new errors. I saw that neither young nor old should attend their meetings; for it is wrong to thus encourage them while they teach error that is a deadly poison to the soul, and teach for doctrines the commandments of men. The influence of such gatherings is not good. If God has delivered us from such darkness and error, we should stand fast in the liberty wherewith He has set us free, and rejoice in the truth. God is displeased with us when we go to listen to error, without being obliged to go; for unless He sends us to those meetings where error is forced home to the people by the power of the will, He will not keep us. The angels cease their watchful care over us, and we are left to the buffetings of the enemy, to be darkened and weakened by him and the power of his evil angels; and the light around us becomes contaminated with the darkness."--"Early Writings," pp. 124, 125.

Any clear and candid minded believer will quickly admit that in the foregoing quotation Sister White is warning against the "false shepherds" and churches of the world, and is not intimating, even ever so remotely, that one should not investigate purported messages of truth from within, proof positive of which fact lies in the following statements:

"As never before, we should pray not only that laborers may be sent forth into the great harvest-field, but that we may have a clear conception of truth, so that when the messengers of truth shall come, we may accept the message and respect the messenger."--"Testimonies for the Church," Vol. 6, p. 420.

"When asked to hear the reasons of a doctrine that you do not understand, do not condemn the message until you have given it a thorough investigation, and know from the Word of God that it is not tenable."--"Testimonies on Sabbath School Work," p. 59.

"When new light is presented to the church, it is perilous to shut yourselves away from it. Refusing to hear because you are prejudiced against the message or the messenger will not make your case excusable before God. To condemn that which you have not heard and do not understand will not exalt your wisdom in the eyes of those who are candid in their investigations of truth. And to speak with contempt of those whom God has sent with a message of truth, is folly and madness." Testimonies on Sabbath School Work," p. 60.

"When a message comes in the name of the, Lord to His people, no one may excuse himself from an investigation of its claims." Testimonies on Sabbath School Work," p. 65.

"We are on dangerous ground when we cannot meet together like Christians and courteously examine controverted points. I feel like fleeing from the place lest I receive the mold of those who cannot candidly investigate the doctrines of the Bible. Those who cannot impartially examine the evidences of a position that differs from theirs are not fit to teach in any department of God's cause."--"Review and Herald," August 7, 1894.

Furthermore, their fear of being deceived by the "Shepherd's Rod" is wholly unintelligent and ironical when viewed in the light of the following facts:

1. That they think little or nothing of going to the services and revival meetings of the "False Shepherds" and churches of the world, warned against in "Early Writings," pp. 124, 125.

2. That they are already in "a sad," "a terrible," and "a fearful" deception ("Testimonies for the Church," Vol. 3, pp. 253, 254, 260), and knoweth it not (Rev. 3:17; "Testimonies for the Church." Vol. 3, p. 253). "Pride, avarice, selfishness, and deception of almost every kind are in the church." ("Testimonies for the Church," Vol. 5, p. 210.)

3. That false doctrine has brought many of them

into the church. ("Testimonies to Ministers," p. 48.)

4. That many "stand in our pulpits with the torch of false prophecy in their hands, kindled from the hellish torch of Satan." ("Testimonies to Ministers," p. 409.)

5. That "as Jesus views the state of His professed followers today, He sees base ingratitude, hollow formalism, hypocritical insincerity, Pharisaical pride and apostasy." ("Testimonies for the Church," Vol. 5, p. 72.)

6. That the church has "wandered away" from "the old landmarks," "has turned back from following Christ her Leader, and is steadily retreating toward Egypt." ("Testimonies for the Church," Vol. 5, p. 217.)

7. That the real "facts concerning the real condition of the professed people of God, speak more loudly than their profession, and make it evident that some power has cut the cable that anchored them to the Eternal Rock, and that they are drifting away to sea, without chart or compass." ("Christ Our Righteousness," pp. 50, 51.)

8. "That God's people are on the enchanted ground." ("Early Writings," p. 120.)

9. That "the people to whom God has entrusted eternal interests, the depositories of truth pregnant with eternal results, the keepers of light that is to illuminate the whole world, have lost their bearings." ("Testimonies to Ministers," p. 397.)

10. That God "is a day's journey from most of" our preachers. ("Christ Our Righteousness," p. 107.)

11. That hence the sad fact of "Sleeping preachers preaching to a sleeping people!" ("Testimonies for the Church," Vol. 2, p. 337.)

12. And that finally, "the food that is being prepared for the flock will cause spiritual consumption, decline, and death." ("Review and Herald," June 18, 1901.)

With a people thus gone far away from God, unconsciously floundering in "deception of almost every kind," and dying of "spiritual consumption" while sound asleep, what a colossal and unmittigated piece of folly and irony, then, is the ostrich attitude that disallows them to investigate and to accept the "Shepherd's Rod," for fear of imbibing error!

Though fearing to cross the threshold where a "Shepherd's Rod" study is being given, saying, "in an attitude of indifference and self-confidence...: '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.'" ("Testimonies on Sabbath School Work," p. 65); or failing to accept the truth because it does not agree with their preconceived ideas, yet they have not the slightest fear or compunction in holding or attending evangelistic efforts where tribute is wont to be made to pagan institutions in order to attract the public.

Thus "the great proportion" (5T 136) are, in the words of the prophet, Ezekiel, "every man in the chamber of his imagery," committing "the wicked abominations" that "have filled the land with violence," until, says the Lord, they "have returned to provoke Me to anger: and lo, they put the branch to their nose. Therefore will I also deal in fury: Mine eye shall not spare, neither will I have pity: and though they cry in Mine ears with a loud voice, yet will I not hear them." (Ezek. 8:17, 18.)

"And I saw that the Lord was whetting His sword in Heaven to cut them down. Oh that every lukewarm professor could realize the clean work that God is about to make among His professed people!"--"Testimonies for the Church," Vol. 1, p. 190.

"The Lord will work to purify His church. I tell you in truth, the Lord is about to turn and overturn in the institutions called by His name.

"Just how soon this refining process will begin, I cannot say, but it will not be long deferred. He whose fan is in His hand will cleanse His temple of its moral defilement. He will thoroughly purge His floor."--"Testimonies to Ministers," p. 373.

Thus while the very "days of purification of the church are hastening on apace," "the great proportion" are, in the boldest sort of inconsistency and disobedience, attending all manner of religious and social gatherings, and doing their own works (5T 80), while at the same time they are studiously and devoutly keeping "themselves away from every meeting where there is an opportunity to investigate the messages that come to the people, simply because they imagine the views held by the teachers of the truth may be out of harmony with what they have conceived as truth."--"Testimonies on Sabbath School Work," p. 66.

What inconsistency! O, Brother, Sister, give your entire self to God at once, that the miracle of a "consistent Christian life" may be wrought in your lives, lest you one day find yourself condemned, bereft of life eternal, and engulfed in the general ruin of those who, trusting to intellect, genius, or talent, self-sufficiently and complacently go on in their inconsistent, falsely so-called "Christian" practices.

DOUBT, AND THE TESTIMONY OF JESUS

The human mind is not so susceptible to any other curse preying upon it, as it is to that of doubt. The reason for this lies perhaps in the fact that doubt comes to us in such beautiful appearance, parading itself in the atmosphere and garb of scholasticism, and holding itself up as a sign of intelligence, praising the doubter. The youth are an easy target for the demon's darts of doubt because of the fact that it is at their early age that they are most eager for knowledge and praise. The human race lost in the first battle when the wiley serpent succeeded in getting Mother Eve to doubt God's Word. A thirst for knowledge was quickly created by the serpent, and our youthful mother fell for his high-sounding offers.

"Satan has ability to suggest doubts and to devise objections to the pointed testimony that God sends, and many think it a virtue, a mark of intelligence in them, to be unbelieving, and to question and quibble." "Testimonies for the Church," Vol. 5, p. 675.

Some even think that they are inspired by the Spirit of God if they discover something which they can interpret in a way to cast a doubt upon some point of doctrine.

"'It is Satan's plan to weaken the faith of God's people in the Testimonies.' 'Satan knows how to make his attacks. He works upon minds to excite jealousy and dissatisfaction toward those at the head of the work. The gifts are next questioned; then, of course, they have but little weight, and instruction given through vision is disregarded.' 'Next follows skepticism in regard to the vital points of our faith, the pillars of our position, then doubt as to the Holy Scriptures, and then the downward march to perdition. When the Testimonies which were once believed, are doubted and given up, Satan knows the deceived ones will not stop at this; and he redoubles his efforts till he launches them into open rebellion, which becomes incurable, and ends in destruction."--Testimonies for the Church," Vol. 5, p. 672.

One of the chief difficulties with most of us is that we, as Seventh-day Adventists, do not know the purpose of the Testimonies. We do not understand what they really are, and what our relationship to them ought to be. Let us endeavor to discover what their importance is.

In the last book of the Bible, Chapter 12, verse 17, we find that the devil will be especially wroth with those who "have the testimony of Jesus Christ," which the author of the book tells us "is the spirit of prophecy."--Rev. 19:10. And the Apostle Peter makes it clear that the Testimony of Jesus and the Spirit of Prophecy, are the Spirit of Christ in the prophets who "testified before hand."--1 Pet. 1:11. Thus it was in the apostles' time; thus it must be now. Hence, the testimonies come from the Spirit of Him Who "spake as no man ever spake."

The books of the Spirit of Prophecy, among us since the year 1844, state definitely that we are ignorant of the Word of God--the Bible--and that for this reason the Testimonies were given. Thus we read: "If you had made God's word your study, with a desire to reach the Bible standard and attain to Christian perfection, you would not have needed the Testimonies."--"Testimonies for the Church," Vol. 5, p. 665. Therefore as only the Spirit of truth, which is the Spirit of Prophecy, can lead us into all Bible truth, we need the Testimonies as much as we need the Bible.

This, being true, explains why Satan will be wroth with those who have the Testimony of Jesus. And unless he succeeds in making us doubt the Spirit of Prophecy, he will not leave us in peace.

Long ago we were told that "doubt and even disbelief of the testimonies of the Spirit of God is leavening our churches everywhere," and, as a result, "the church has turned back from following Christ her Leader, and is steadily retreating toward Egypt."--"Testimonies for the Church," Vol. 5, p. 217.

Hence, as the church to whom the Lord had restored this precious gift was fast surrendering to a strange leadership, drifting away from "the old landmarks," her membership becoming worldly-minded and despising the Lord's call for her returning to Him, He has left the following promise on record for our warning, comfort, and hope, to be helped out of the strange hands, out of the worldly mind, and back to the old landmarks: "Somebody is to come in the spirit and power of Elijah, and when he appears, men may say: 'You are too earnest, you do not interpret the Scriptures in the proper way. Let me tell you how to teach your message.'"--"Testimonies to Ministers," pp. 475, 476.

But now, at the fulfillment of the above promise, the message of "The Shepherd's Rod" finds us as ignorant of the Testimonies as of the Bible, just as the Spirit of Prophecy found the Christian world in ignorance of the Bible in 1844.

Therefore, brethren, let us put aside all doubts, and trust implicitly in the living testimony, lest by our questionings and quibblings, we grieve away the Spirit of Christ, and thus find ourselves in fatal conflict with the Almighty, as did those whom the Scriptures call stiff-necked, impudent, hard-hearted, and rebellious.

LESSONS OF THE FIRST BORN

One of the saddest of all Bible records is that concerning the failure of those whose privilege has been that of being the first in accepting God's message; of being, so to speak, the first-born.

Cain, the firstborn child in the history of mankind, who was evidently endowed with great natural ability for his office, lost his high calling of being the priest and teacher of the household--the lawful successor of his father--because he wanted to have his own instead of God's way. The sad record of his life stands as a monument of folly, jealousy, egotism, bigotry, unbelief and unfaithfulness--speaking to us, "upon whom the ends of the world are come," louder than to any in the past.

Also, Esau, the firstborn in Isaac's home, despised his birthright, disliked restraint, and chose his own rather than God's way, thus becoming a victim to natural inclination--a servant of vanity.

When Jacob was old, he called his household, and said: "Gather yourselves together, that I may tell you that which shall befall you in the last days." And when Joseph brought his two sons, Jacob laid his right hand on the younger rather than on the first born, declaring that the younger shall be greater than the older. (Gen. 49:1; 48: 11 through 19.)

Those entitled to the priesthood were the first born of all the tribes of Israel. But as they proved unfaithful to their trust, the Lord instead chose the tribe of Levi for that service. All the earlier born in the Exodus movement, except Joshua and Caleb, lost out in the wilderness, because they failed to believe and trust in God as they were taught to do by Moses.

In Christ's day, a whole church and nation--the firstborn or the early morning laborers (the Jews)--lost their opportunity because they allowed formality, the love of self, pride of opinion, and ceremonialism to take the place of true piety and strict adherence to the spirit of the law of God--the words of the prophets. These ensamples were for lessons and warnings to every succeeding church and people from that day to this.

As a result of John's preaching, there "went out to him Jerusalem, and all Judea, and all the region round about Jordan, and were baptized of him." (Matt. 3:5.) And "Jesus made and baptized more disciples than John." (John 4:1.) But when Jesus was on trial, both of the multitudes--John's and Jesus', the ones who were first called to the message, the first born, so to speak--forsook the Lord, and there were only 120 who, on the day of Pentecost, received the power of the Spirit. Then a second multitude came into the church and took the place of the first which went out.

The ministry, the firstborn, who brought us to the Seventh-day Adventist church are also in danger, and of some of them it is already said: they have "betrayed their trust ("Testimonies for the Church," Vol. 5, p. 211), and only a "few great men will be engaged" in the closing work of the Third Angel's Message. ("Testimonies for the Church," Vol. 5, page 80.)

These things being written for our admonition, "Let us therefore fear, lest, a promise being left us of entering into His rest, any of you should seem to come short of it. For unto us was the gospel preached, as well as unto them: but the word preached did not profit them, not being mixed with faith in them that heard it." (Heb. 4:1, 2.)

"Well; because of unbelief they were broken off, and thou standest by faith. Be not highminded, but fear:... Behold therefore the goodness and severity of God: on them which fell, severity; but toward thee, goodness, if thou continue in His goodness: otherwise thou also shalt be cut off." (Rom. 11 :20 through 22.)

"Casting down imaginations, and every high thing that exalteth itself against the knowledge of God, and bringing into captivity every thought to the obedience of Christ. And having in a readiness to revenge all disobedience, when your obedience is fulfilled. Do ye look on things after the outward appearance? If any man trust to himself that he is Christ's, let him of himself think this again, that, as he is Christ's, even so are we Christ's." (2 Cor. 10:5 through 7.)

Shall we, who have first embraced the message, now fail, as did those who were called first in every age?

To "us upon whom the ends of the world are come," these concerns speak louder than to any people at any time in the past. Therefore let us cry out to God to help us take warning from the sad experiences of those who have failed, so that we may, as did the Ninevites of old, defeat the prophetic voice of history, which broadcasts the warning that, unless we take heed, the tragic doom of the firstborn, hanging ominously over our heads, will take us also.

QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS

QUESTION NO. 195:

"Should all Present Truth believers come to Mt. Carmel? If not, then who should, and who should not?"

ANSWER:

Never greater task has been assigned to any religious institution than the one which has been entrusted to Mt. Carmel. Therefore the enemy will now, as in times past, do everything possible to hinder the work and prevent the 144,000 from receiving "the seal of the living God." Says the Spirit of Prophecy:

"The institutions established there are God's instrumentalities for accomplishing his work in the earth. For this reason, Satan is on the ground, exercising his ingenuity to embarrass and hinder. He comes with his temptations to men and women connected with these institutions, whether in responsible positions or doing the humblest work, and if possible he so ensnares them with his devices that they lose their connection with God, become confused in judgment, and are unable to discern between right and wrong. He knows that the time will surely come when the spirit that has controlled the life will be made manifest; and he is glad to have the lives of these persons testify against them, that they are not co-workers with Christ.

"Many who have grown to the years and stature of manhood, are deficient in the elements that constitute a noble, manly character. God does not regard them as men. They are not reliable. Some of these are connected with our institutions. They have influence; but it is of a pernicious character, for it is seldom on the side of right. While they profess godliness, their example constantly tends to encourage unrighteousness. Skepticism is interwoven with their thoughts and expressed in their. words, and their powers are used for the perversion of righteousness, truth, and justice. Their minds are controlled by Satan, and he works through them to demoralize and bring in confusion. The more pleasing and attractive their manners, the more richly they are endowed with brilliant talents, the more effectual agents are they in the hands of the enemy of all righteousness to demoralize all who come under their influence. It will be found a hard and thankless task to keep these from becoming a ruling power, and carrying out their own purposes in encouraging disorder and loose, lax principles.

"The youth exposed to their influence are never safe unless those under whose care they are placed exercise the greatest vigilance, and they themselves have right principles firmly established. But it is a sad fact that in this age many of the young yield readily to the influence of Satan, but resist the Spirit of God; and in many cases wrong habits have become so firmly fixed that the greatest effort on the part of the managers would not result in molding their characters in the right direction."--"Testimonies for the Church," Volume 5, pp. 407, 408.

The enemy is working in numerous ways. Therefore Mt. Carmel is not accepting all who profess to believe in Present Truth.

First, there are a number of Present Truth believers who, while pretending to believe in the message and to be working in favor of it, are in fact throwing rocks at it, thereby upsetting those who are not firm in the truth.

Second, of those feeling urged to come to Mt. Carmel, many can but overburden the institution and thus side-track the real object of its endeavors. Mt. Carmel is not being built with the purpose in view of making a home there for Present Truth believers, but rather with the purpose of a training center to fit up workers to go out and teach the message.

As the institution is not yet built and equipped for service, those who come now, and who are not able to fill a place which needs to be filled, can only overburden the institution and retard its progress and completion. Only consecrated, able-bodied men are what Mt. Carmel really needs at the present time. If any others should come, then instead of their helping the workers of Mt. Carmel, the workers will have to help them, and instead of the treasury's carrying on the work at Mt. Carmel and in the field, it will have to carry on the expenses of those who should care for their own.

If ever all Present Truth believers ought to come, Mt. Carmel will let them know. The institution is now accepting only those who are experienced in some line of work, and for whom it has an opening. At the present time only such need apply for admittance.

QUESTION NO 196:

"In view of the greatness of the work and the shortness of the time, why is the work of the sealing message going as slowly as it is?"

ANSWER:

The reason that the work of the sealing message is moving as slowly as it is, is to be found in the fact that a "mixed multitude" of laborers has evidently come into the message, as God's people travel on toward the path of holiness leading to His kingdom. Thus it has been with every message, and thus it must be now.

Had there not come out of Egypt in Moses' time a mixed multitude, the Exodus movement would have gone into the promised land in less than two weeks, but because there were many following the movement who were possessed of a spirit different from that of Caleb's and Joshua's

the movement fell forty years behind schedule in entering the promised land!

Though Jesus' work at His first advent was not so extensive as now, yet it was of even greater importance and of shorter duration than the work of today, yet seemingly it made no progress whatsoever. When we consider that all forsook Him at His trial, and that Peter, the most zealous of the apostles, even cursed and swore that he was not Christ's disciple. Yet, contrary to all appearances, Jesus declared while hanging on the cross, that His work was finished, and thus He gave up the ghost. Then, too, after His resurrection, He took His journey upward, and left but a dozen half-converted apostles to carry on the work. Such were the results of John the Baptist's and Jesus' untiring efforts. Hence, out of the multitudes that were baptized by John and Jesus, there were, on the day of pentecost, but a hundred and twenty disciples of one accord to receive the outpouring of God's Spirit.

Indeed, not only small and insignificant did the work then appear to be, but also impossible to carry forward. Nevertheless, as the doubting ones among the great multitude saw an open door in Jesus' crucifixion, they separated themselves from among the faithful. And as the remaining ones of His followers lost confidence in themselves, renounced self, and sought the Lord earnestly at a time when there was not in themselves even the least hope of continuing the work, they gave the Lord an opportunity to manifest His great power and to advance the cause of God with such rapidity that in one day, with one sermon, there were converted three thousand souls. Then daily after that were added "only such as should be saved"--such as never backslid. Thus did the work of the gospel begin to grow rapidly, once the Lord got a group of people that He could trust and use.

Likewise, the 1844 movement, right after the Minneapolis Camp Meeting in 1888, would have begun the work of the Loud Cry angel, but as the result of the unbelief of many in the Testimonies of the Spirit of God, the "cry" was silenced for forty years while the movement retreated "toward Egypt." ("Testimonies for the Church," Vol. 5. p. 217.)

In the year 1930, God spoke to His people, as He spoke to Israel in the days of Joshua, but now, as then, there are among us, to discourage and dishearten, the ten spies, Korah, Dathan, and Abiram (Num. 16:1 through 3), and also those who covet the Babylonish garment, the silver, and the wedge of gold. And as a result, we also are held back, and will continue to be until the Lord manifests His power and takes away from among us the pretending ones, makes us free from sin and sinners as in the time of Korah, (Num. 16:32, 33), and as in the time of Achan, Josh. 7:24 through 26), and says to us as He said to Joshua, "Go over this Jordan, thou, and all this people, unto the land which I do give to them, even to the children of Israel." (Josh. 1:2.) "Take all the people of war with thee, and arise, go up to Ai: see, I have given into thy hand the king of Ai, and his people, and his city, and his land." (Josh. 8:1.)

Therefore, though at times we are greatly disappointed as we see the unfaithful, doubting, fault finding multitude among us; as we think of those who have forsaken the Lord; as we hear some when on trial even cursing and swearing that they are "not followers of The Shepherd's Rod;" and as we come in touch with those who apparently believe and who declare that they stand strongly for the message, but who are throwing rocks at us and at our work, we are not at all discouraged but rather made glad to stand alone for truth and righteousness when the majority forsake us. Hence, we cannot but exclaim:

Lord, help us to stand true unto Thee though the whole world forsake Thee, even though we must die like the apostles if needs be, that we may be as Daniel, Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego--standing true at the peril of our lives, so that Thou canst have the opportunity of delivering us from the lion's den, and from the fiery furnace, making Thyself known to all the world through our faithfulness. May we, as Noah, be zealous in the building of the ark while our professed brethren in the message question and criticize the work and position of others ("Testimonies for the Church," Vol. 5, p. 690)--retard the progress of the message--and while others make fun of us, and accuse us of taking too much upon ourselves. May we never say: The Lord delayeth His coming; nor, "We be not able to go up against the people; for they are stronger than we....The land, through which we have gone to search it, is a land that eateth up the inhabitants thereof; and all the people that we saw in it are men of a great stature. And there we saw the giants, the sons of Anak, which come of the giants: and we were in our own sight as grasshoppers, and so we were in their sight." (Num. 13:31 through 33.)

QUESTION NO. 197:

"How should we relate ourselves to the churches? If we have been disfellowshipped, should we continue to go to church services? And if, when in church, we are asked to say nothing suggestive of Shepherd's Rod teachings, should we acquiesce and remain silent forever? And what shall we do if they do not let us participate in the communion service?"

ANSWER:

Our relation to the church is no different than was John the Baptist's, Jesus Christ's, and the Apostles'. That is, we have a message to pro-

claim to the church, and though the church officials should order us as the Sanhedrin ordered the apostles out of the "temple," we must continue going to church. For if we stay away and become strangers to our brethren, how shall we proclaim the message to them?

However, all must realize that it is unbecoming of a Christian to cause any disturbance at any time, especially during church services. Therefore, by deporting ourselves reverently and circumspectly in church and out of church, we will give them provocation for naught save false accusations.

In Sabbath School, it is perfectly right and permissible to answer questions which arise in connection with the lesson. For such a response, no one can justly be accused of causing disturbance, as answering questions asked in class is in no wise an infraction of the constituted purpose and rules of the Sabbath School. But if anyone should be specifically requested not to answer questions, it would be better to say nothing rather than to incur any displeasure. Let your deportment win the people's confidence.

We should refuse to separate ourselves from the body, and should regularly attend Sabbath School and church services for the very obvious and singular reason that if we do not, we will have to remain wholly without privilege of public worship in the church we helped build. The chief reason, however, for our thus refusing to absent ourselves from services, is that we would become strangers to our brethren and would have to become reacquainted with them if ever we were to give the message to them, whereas if we continue going to church, then, after the congregation is dismissed, we are afforded an opportunity to speak with the brethren in the interest of the message, urging them to investigate for themselves, either by attending our studies or by reading the publications of Present Truth. Hence, if we separate ourselves by staying away from the church services, we lay ourselves open to the charge of being offshoots from the body, and ourselves forfeit the opportunity of coming in contact with the congregation. Moreover, if in this wise we separate ourselves from the organization, then in the fulfillment of Ezekiel nine, when those who have not the mark are taken away, we shall have no right to claim possession of the denomination.

In regard to our participating in the communion service, we should all take part so far as we can. If the church refuses to serve us or to let us serve others in the ordinance of humility, there is nothing more that we can do than simply to wait until this service is over. And if they ignore us when passing the bread and the wine, we are not to murmur or say anything, but to endure patiently the slight. By so demeaning ourselves, the honest ones in the congregation will see the unchristlike attitude and the folly of the church officers, and will begin "to arouse and take in the situation."

Though we may be compulsorily excluded against our will from participating in the ordinances, we nevertheless, like the unbaptized thief on the cross, shall have our names in the Book of Life, and shall enter Paradise for having done our very best. Therefore, brethren, let us be faithful in our attending church services and in our deportment, "lest, a promise being left us of entering into His rest, any of you should seem to come short of it." (Hebrews 4:1.)

THE PERFECT MAN

Christians speak much of the Golden Rule--"All things whatsoever ye would that men should do to you, do ye even so to them: for this is the law and the prophets" (Matt. 7:12)--but there is a question as to how many really comply with its requirements in the fullest sense. Are the demands of this Christian rule to be met only in kind deeds, honest business transactions, and missionary activities?

The purpose herein is to show clearly the way in which the Golden Rule is most often violated, and which most Christians perhaps do not fully comprehend in respect to the extent that it affects their own lives, the lives of their relatives, friends, associates, and church brethren. Above all, though, the aim herein is to show forth the injury which Christians are daily causing the work of God, either by their blindness to God's ways or by their failure to carry out the principle contained in the Golden Rule, by giving unbridled reign to the most unruly member of the body; namely, the tongue.

We hear much about the pestilential habit of "Gossip," which sickens us to the depths, for we as a people hear instruction without stint on the subject, but we obey it not. However, though it is not as sweet music to our ears, we must realize that the problem must be met and dealt with. We must be overcomers, with no guile in our mouths, if we are to be among those who "escape" and who are sent to "the nations" to proclaim God's "fame" and His "glory" "among the Gentiles" (Isa. 65:19, 20), and who have a part in the giving of the message in the time of the Loud Cry.

"Gossip' is just plain conversing with another to tell idle tales, to tattle, or just to chat about others.

Information which is unnecessary, or which is unnecessarily given, thou it be only absolute

fact, is another phase of conversation as equally damaging as gossip.

To love our neighbor as we do ourselves, we must remember the Golden Rule by guarding our lips, for a word once spoken, though it may be retracted, can never be recalled, albeit we may apologize and shed many tears in sorrow.

We may unwittingly drop here or there a word of information that to us at the time would mean nothing at all, but which sooner or later may stare us in the face in a most unpleasant setting and cause us untold distress, worry, and shame.

Let us for a moment closely observe a person who is successful in his or her profession. Take a nurse, for an example, to illustrate our point. She is of necessity in many cases familiarized with certain circumstances, or conditions which perhaps surround her patient. How unbecoming and how damaging to her profession should she tell even to her closest friend, matters which should be held strictly confidential to herself, not to mention to make common talk or gossip of them, or even to pass on the information! No good business person tells his private affairs. Much less others who are not concerned could "spread the tidings" and yet profess to keep the "Golden Rule".

Information must be given at times, but to "be wise as serpents and harmless as doves," it is necessary not only that we learn what is idle talk--gossip--but also that we learn why certain information should be given, by whom it should be given, and, especially, when it should be given.

Even the habit of expressing our opinion on matters which do not especially concern us, is a deep-seated cause of many evils and unpleasant consequences.

When we wish to discuss a subject, or when we venture to question others, we must guard our tongue by always bearing in mind that it must be subject to the law which the apostle Paul enjoins upon us in the following concerns. Let each one of us, before discussing any subject, ask:

Is it "true," or is it merely hearsay--"I have heard"?

Is it "honest" (margin, venerable--to be reverenced), or is it foolish jesting; and does it concern us and our work?

Is it "just"--as we would have others do to us? Does it show that we care about our brother's feelings?

Is it "pure," so that no condemnation shall stand against us?

Is it "lovely"? Would it cause us to have greater love for our brother regardless of his mistakes?

Is it "of good report," that we might thereby learn something for our experience or advancement along life's highway?

If these concerns are to be considered when asking questions of others, then it would be well for us especially to consider them when narrating to others, for the text further enjoins us to think on these things "if there be any virtue and if there be any praise."

We should be like Paul, and "press toward the mark or the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus. Let us therefore, as many as be perfect [144,000], be thus minded: and if in any thing ye be otherwise minded, God shall reveal even this unto you.' (Phil. 3:14, 15.)

God is striving now to do something for us, but He cannot until we submit our tongues to Him. The longer we put off making this surrender, the more we hinder His intentions for us as His people. And what we do not do in times of peace, we will have to do in times of trouble.

"He that will love life, and see good days, let him refrain his tongue from evil, and his lips that they speak no guile." (1 Pet. 3:10.)

Let us be careful in our speech, so that we speak nothing which we ought not (1 Tim. 5:13), "for in many things we offend all." (James. 3:2.)

Some may even think that they are doing good in God's service by giving to others private information on things which concern God's work and His workers only, whereas such presumption is indeed an offense "to all" and a great harm to God's cause. Some do not understand the fulness of the warfare between Christ and Satan, neither are they conscious when they are criticizing, gossiping, or passing out important information about the work of God, yea, even more, causing others, to form against the institution, opinions which would prejudice them against it for eternity.

"If any man offend not in word, the same is a perfect man, and able also to bridle the whole body." (James. 3:2.)

Until we can learn when to speak and when to keep silent, regardless who we are, we are still in our sins and unqualified for service in the Lord's vineyard, for we would in such a case "betray our trust," become "traitors, heady, and high-minded," considering our own conceits wiser than that which "is written," whereas our counsel, advice, criticism, discussion, and our reporting what we hear or see would be contrary to that which would be fitting to the 144,000, who are without guile in their mouth. (Rev. 14 through 5.)

"But let your communication be, Yea, yea; Nay, nay: for whatsoever is more than these cometh of evil." (Matt. 5:37.) Those who do this are as "wise as serpents, and harmless as doves." Strive to be one of the 144,000, who are without guile in their mouth.

"Be ye therefore perfect, even as your Father which is in heaven is perfect." (Matt. 5:48.)

BE CAREFUL WHAT YOU SAY.

In speaking of a person's faults,
Pray don't forget your own;
Remember those with homes of glass,
Should seldom throw a stone;
If we have nothing else to do
But talk of those who sin,
'Tis better we commence at home,
And from that point begin.
We have no right to judge a man
Until he's fairly tried;
Should we not like his company,
We know the world is wide.
Some may have faults--and who has not?
The old as well as young;
Perhaps we may, for aught we know,
Have fifty to their one.
I'll tell you of a better plan,
And find it works full well;
To try my own defects to cure,
Before of others tell;
And though I sometimes hope to be
No worse than some I know,
My own shortcomings bid me let
The faults of others go.
Then let us all, when we commence
To slander friend or foe,
Think of the harm one word may do
To those we little know.
Remember curses sometimes like
Our chickens, "roost at home."
Don't speak of others' faults until
We have none of our own.

--Joseph Kronthal.

IT DOES NOT PAY TO ARGUE.

Christians are called to be witnesses, not lawyers. Their lives are to testify to the whole universe that Christ Jesus came into the world to save, not to condemn. It is poor policy to argue about anything, but it is especially wrong to argue about religion. Let us witness instead.

Most people are more or less prejudiced, because of preconceived ideas and opinions. There are many, however, who, if dealt with tactfully, will admit that they are wrong, but no one enjoys having the fact of his wrong forced down his throat by the other fellow.

Benjamin Franklin tells how, while he was but a blundering youth, an old Quaker friend taught him a most valuable lesson. The Quaker friend said to him:

"Ben, your opinions have a slap in them for everyone who differs with you. Your friends find they enjoy themselves better when you are not around. You know so much that no man can tell you anything. Indeed no man is going to try, for the effort would lead only to discomfort. So you are not likely to ever know any more than you do now, which is very little."

This stinging rebuke forced the young man to profit by it, as is evidenced by his testimony. Says Franklin:

"I even forbade myself the use of every expression that imported a fixed opinion, such as 'certainly', 'undoubtedly', etc., and I adopted, instead, 'I conceive,' a thing to be so; or 'it so appears to me at present.' When another asserted something that I thought an error, I denied myself the pleasure of contradicting him abruptly, and of showing immediately some absurdity in his proposition; and in answering I began by observing that in certain cases or circumstances his opinion would be right, but in the present case there seemed to me some difference." --"The Reader's Digest," Jan., 1937, pp. 118, 119.

Present Truth believers would do well to consider the counsel of the old Quaker friend of Benjamin Franklin. The world, angels, and our brethren all have their eyes on us. Let us stop arguing.

TO ALL CODE READERS!

A large number of Code readers are wanting to know why they are not receiving the Code regularly, and why we are not visiting or writing to them more often. Doubtless others also are asking this same question. We are, therefore, taking the opportunity not only of herein writing to all, but also of making this long expected visitor the bearer of the ensuing letter:

Brethren:

There is a twofold reason for our not now being able to do more than we are for the believers, and that is because on the one hand the work is getting heavier each day, while on the other hand, we do not have the help we urgently need.

The great majority of Present Truth believers do not realize that we are left to keep the publishing work going; to answer hundreds of questions through the mail and through the Code; to settle the many peculiar problems among Present Truth believers; to put up necessary buildings for housing the workers and the school children; and besides to run each one of the institution's several departments--the General Office, the Mercantile dept., the farm, the culinary dept., the laundry, the sewing room, the machine shop, the utilities, the construction dept., the land improvement operations, the dispensary, the school, the nursery, etc., and all this and more with but very few and inexperienced men, sickly women, and children.

We have on file a number of applications, but none of the applicants are experienced in the lines of work which we are at present engaged in pushing forward. Consequently, should we accept any of the present applicants, they would be a greater burden upon the institution than it is already carrying; whereas those who are capable of fitting into the present program, are either working for the prince of this world, or living on charity, watching the progress of the message, with the thought of one day doing something for it if it prospers, while we work on for them, grinding ourselves away like a piece of steel on an emery wheel!

Thus, brethren, is the reason why the Code is not making its scheduled monthly appearance, and why we are not writing and visiting you at more frequent intervals. Therefore we appeal to all Present Truth believers to cry aloud to God for faithful laborers for the harvest is ripe, but the laborers are few.