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# REPLY

TO THE

# SHEPHERD'S ROD



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# A REPLY

TO

THE SHEPHERD'S ROD

"God has not passed His people by, and chosen one solitary man here and another there as the only ones worthy to be entrusted with His truth. *He does not give one man new light contrary to the established faith of the body.* In every reform men have arisen making this claim."—*Testimonies for the Church*, vol. 5, page 291.

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## Divine Warnings Against Studying Error

"If there come any unto you, and bring not this doctrine, receive him not into your house, neither bid him Godspeed: for he that biddeth him Godspeed is partaker of his evil deeds." 2 John 10, 11.

"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*. . . . While false doctrines and dangerous errors are pressed upon the mind, it cannot be dwelling upon the truth which is to fit and prepare the house of Israel to stand in the day of the Lord."—*Early Writings*, pages 124, 125.

Underscoring and italics ours unless otherwise stated. Parenthetical ( ) marks are always the writer's. Brackets [ ] are used when inclosing a word of explanation or a statement not in the quotation being given, but always in harmony with its meaning.

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## The Shepherd's Rod

*Is It New Light  
or  
Another "Offshoot"?*

This question is suggested by the following statement from the spirit of prophecy:

"God has a church upon the earth, who are His chosen people, who keep His commandments. He is leading, *not stray offshoots*, not one here and one there, *but a people*."—*Testimonies to Ministers*, page 61.

The Shepherd's Rod is not by any means the first "offshoot" from the Seventh-day Adventist denomination. There have been a number of them.

Practically all these "offshoots" had points in common. Most of them attacked the church,—the denominational organization or its leadership,—and claimed to have new light for the church; and nearly all of them vigorously contended that they were genuine Seventh-day Adventists, believing all the fundamental doctrines of the church. Nevertheless, while Sister White was living, she denounced them one by one as error and not of the Lord, and in time they have come to naught.

On the other hand, the glorious movement with which we are connected gathers strength and makes tens of thousands of converts year by year in all the world among "every nation, and kindred, and tongue, and people," in harmony with the prophetic picture, and our only safety is to stay by the ship until she lands safely in port, for the hand of a great pilot is at the helm of His advent movement.

"We have nothing to fear for the future, except as we shall forget the way the Lord has led us."—*Testimonies to Ministers*, page 31.

For several years the author of "The Shepherd's Rod" has complained that he has not been given an adequate hearing of his views before "brethren of experience." That there might be no question about their having fulfilled their duty toward one who claimed to have new light, the Pacific Union Conference Committee, in response to the request of the Fullerton church and the request and pledge of the said author, a photographic copy of which is herewith printed, appointed a committee of

Los Angeles, Calif.  
Jan. 18, 1934

To the Members of the Pacific Union Conf. Committee:

Dear Brethren:-

We, as members of the Yeheremite Church of S.D.A. of Fullerton, Calif. after counselling with Victor J. Hosteff concerning the teachings of the "Shepherd's Rod" respectfully request that you appoint a committee of ten to twelve "brethren of experience" to meet with Brother Hosteff while he stays before them the evidence for his belief in the fundamentals of his message. The subjects to be considered are - "The Harvest", "Ezekiel 5", "The Leopard Feast of Rev. 18", "Heaven Chapters 1-3" and "Matt. 20 1". In these studies Brother Hosteff is to use only the writings of the "Bible", and "The Spirit of Prophecy".

The time used is not to exceed one week.

After each study the committee selected may retire for counsel, and may then submit its evidence for mistakes in Brother Hosteff's teaching, such evidence to be drawn from the Bible and "The Spirit of Prophecy" Only.

If after the first study mistakes may be substantiated from authority mentioned above, further studies are not to be given. The same conditions are to prevail after each succeeding study.

In case the committee find error in the teaching of "The Shepherd's Rod", and are able to refute same by the teachings of the Bible and "The Spirit of Prophecy" Brother Hosteff agrees to renounce the authority of the "Shepherd's Rod", and to make public renunciation of same.

Brother Hosteff also agrees to discontinue the propagation of the "Shepherd's Rod", so far as he can control same, in the Pacific Union Conference, during the time this investigation is being made.

The conditions hereby entered into are in compliance with the instructions given in Testimony Vol. 5, page 593; Test. of S.D. York pages 16, 17.

Respectfully submitted

For "The Shepherd's Rod"

Representatives for Yeheremite Ch.

*W. J. Hosteff*  
\_\_\_\_\_  
*W. J. Hosteff*

*J. H. Kesh*  
\_\_\_\_\_  
*L. H. ...*

FACSIMILE OF AGREEMENT



twelve members which has carefully and scrupulously complied with the conditions laid down in the document. Will the author of "The Shepherd's Rod" now fulfill his pledge?

Los Angeles, Calif.  
Jan. 18, 1934.

To the Members of the Pacific Union Conf. Committee:  
Dear Brethren:—

We, as members of the Tabernacle Church of S. D. A. of Fullerton, Calif. after counselling with Victor T. Houteff concerning the teachings of the "Shepherd's Rod" respectfully request that you appoint a committee of ten to twelve "brethren of experience" to meet with Brother Houteff while he places before them the evidence for his belief in the fundamentals of his message. The subjects to be considered are—"The Harvest" "Ezekiel 9", "The Leopard Beast of Rev. 13", "Hosea chapters 1-2", and Matt. 20". In these studies Brother Houteff is to use only the writings of the 'Bible', and the "The Spirit of Prophecy".

The time used is not to exceed one week.

After each study the committee selected may retire for counsel, and may then submit its evidence for mistakes in Brother Houteff's teaching, such evidence to be drawn from the Bible and "The Spirit of Prophecy" Only.

If after the first study mistakes may be substantiated from authority mentioned above, further studies are not to be given. The same conditions are to prevail after each succeeding study.

In case the committee find error in the teaching of "The Shepherd's Rod", and are able to refute same by the teachings of the Bible and "The Spirit of Prophecy" Brother Houteff agrees to renounce the advocacy of the "Shepherd's Rod", and to make public renunciation of same.

Brother Houteff also agrees to discontinue the propagation of the "Shepherd's Rod", so far as he can control same, in the Pacific Union Conference, during the time this investigation is being made.

The conditions hereby entered into are in compliance with the instruction given in Testimony Vol. 5, page 293; Test. of S. S. Work pages 65-66.

Respectfully submitted

For "The Shepherd's Rod"  
(Signed) V. T. HOUTEFF

Representatives for Tabernacle Ch.  
(Signed) J. W. RICH  
(Signed) L. R. SOMMERVILLE.

J. W. Rich, whose signature appears on this message, is an accredited loyal minister in the Southeastern California Conference. L. R. Sommerville is one of the elders of the Fullerton church. V. T. Houteff is the author of volumes 1 and 2 of the book entitled "The Shepherd's Rod."

In response to this request, the Union Conference Committee appointed the following brethren to give Mr. Houteff the hearing

asked for: Glenn Calkins, A. G. Daniells, J. E. Fulton, G. A. Roberts, C. S. Prout, F. C. Gilbert, J. A. Burden, H. M. S. Richards, W. M. Adams, C. M. Sorensen, W. G. Wirth, J. C. Stevens.

The hearing was appointed to be held in the Hoover Street Tabernacle at 10 A. M. Monday, February 19, 1934. The Committee met at 9:30 to organize. J. E. Fulton could not be present, thereupon O. J. Graf was appointed to fill his place. A. G. Daniells was elected Chairman, and W. G. Wirth was chosen Secretary.

The hearing opened promptly at 10 o'clock, with V. T. Houteff and five or six of his friends present. Two stenographers were on hand to take a verbatim report. After an earnest prayer by Glenn Calkins, the Secretary read the request which had brought us together.

The Chairman expressed the hope that the hearing would be conducted in strict harmony with the terms of the written request. He further suggested that Mr. Houteff be given opportunity to state his views without interruption by members of the Committee, or by anyone else present. This was agreed to by a unanimous vote. The Chairman suggested to Mr. Houteff that, if he desired, he could feel free to canvass the first two of the subjects named in the request—"The Harvest" and "Ezekiel, chapter 9." This seemed agreeable to all present.

With these preliminaries arranged, V. T. Houteff began his presentation of "The Harvest," at 10:30, and concluded at 12:30.

When he had closed his two-hour study on the "Harvest," V. T. Houteff stated that it was not his desire to present his views on Ezekiel, chapter 9, until the Committee rendered a report on the views he had set forth regarding "The Harvest." This closed the hearing for the day.

It was agreed that the stenographic report of the presentation should be transcribed for the use of the Committee in reviewing the arguments of V. T. Houteff. The Committee offered to supply him with a copy to be edited and returned for the Committee's use in making the review. This was sent to V. T. Houteff, and later the reply of the Committee was read to him and some of his followers. At this time the Chairman of the Committee asked V. T. Houteff to give his response in writing rather than orally. This the Committee felt would be much more orderly and satisfactory, and was in harmony with the method followed by the Committee in making their reply to him.

## PART I

# Reply to V. T. Houteff's Statement

*of the Teachings of the Shepherd's Rod as Given by Him to  
a Committee of Twelve at the Olympic Auditorium  
February 19, 1934*

### Statement of His Conclusions

V. T. HOUTEFF, the author of "The Shepherd's Rod," by means of his interpretation of symbols, parables, Scripture references, and statements from the spirit of prophecy during the hearing and in his publications which he, while before the Committee, agreed could be used as an authentic statement of his teachings and a basis for this discussion, arrived at the following conclusions:

1. That the "harvest" of Matthew 13:24-30, 37-43, in which the tares are bound into bundles and burned and the wheat gathered into the barn, is the loud cry of the third angel's message.

"The harvest is the loud cry of the third angel's message."—*The Shepherd's Rod*, vol. 1, page 104.

2. Regarding the 144,000:

a. That the tares in the church (Matthew 13) will be burned (slaughtered, Ezekiel 9) before the latter rain and loud cry,—that is, before the close of probation; and those in the Seventh-day Adventist Church who survive the burning and slaughter are the 144,000.—*The Shepherd's Rod*, vol. 1, pages 104, 224, 228, 229; vol. 2, page 102.

b. That the shutting out of the five foolish virgins from the marriage (Matthew 25:1-13) represents the burning of the tares (Matthew 13), and the slaughter (Ezekiel 9), of Seventh-day Adventists who do not accept the teachings of the Shepherd's Rod. About one half of the Seventh-day Adventists are to be shut out (slaughtered) at the beginning of the loud cry; that is, before the close of probation. The five wise virgins represent the 144,000 who survive the slaughter at the beginning of the latter rain.—*The Shepherd's Rod*, vol. 2, page 182; vol. 1, page 30.

c. That after the burning (slaughter, Ezekiel 9) of the tares (false brethren) in the church and during the latter rain and loud

cry, the church will be pure and perfect, "not having spot, or wrinkle, or any such thing."—*The Shepherd's Rod,* vol. 2, page 264.

d. That the sealing of the 144,000 is *completed* before the loud cry.—*The Shepherd's Rod,* vol. 1, page 35.

All who have made a study of the Shepherd's Rod must agree that their most vital teachings rest upon the claim that the separation and burning of the tares of Matthew 13 and the slaughter of Ezekiel 9 take place in the Seventh-day Adventist Church *before* the latter rain and the loud cry. The author of "The Shepherd's Rod" has repeatedly admitted that if he is wrong in this, he has no message, and will renounce his teachings. Therefore, if it can be shown that these events of "burning" and "slaughter" come after the loud cry,—after the close of probation,—the most vital teachings of the Shepherd's Rod will be shown to be error.

Let us turn to a brief consideration of these claims of the Shepherd's Rod in the light of the Bible and the spirit of prophecy.

#### **Is the Harvest of Matthew 13:24-30, 37-43 the Loud Cry of the Third Angel's Message?**

The Shepherd's Rod answers "Yes."

"The harvest is the loud cry of the third angel's message."—*The Shepherd's Rod,* vol. 1, page 104.

We would not for a moment underestimate the importance and the power of the latter rain and the loud cry of the third angel's message. We are not unmindful of these cheering promises that the Lord has given us with respect to the power that will attend the closing work of the third angel's message:

"And after these things I saw another angel come down from heaven, having great power; and the earth was lightened with his glory. And he cried mightily with a strong voice, saying, Babylon the great is fallen, is fallen, and is become the habitation of devils, and the hold of every foul spirit, and a cage of every unclean and hateful bird." Revelation 18:1, 2.

"God rebukes His people for their sins, that He may humble them, and lead them to seek His face. As they reform, and His love revives in their hearts, His loving answers will come to their requests. He will strengthen them in reformatory action, lifting up for them a standard against the enemy. His rich blessing will rest upon them, and in bright rays they will

reflect the light of heaven. Then a multitude not of their faith, seeing that God is with His people, will unite with them in serving the Redeemer."—*Mrs. E. G. White, in Review and Herald, February 25, 1902. (Quoted in "Christ Our Righteousness," pages 156, 157.)*

"The outpouring of the Spirit in apostolic days was the 'former rain,' and glorious was the result. But the 'latter rain' will be more abundant."—*"The Desire of Ages," page 827.*

"The warning of the third angel, which forms a part of the same three-fold message, is to be no less widespread. It is represented in the prophecy as proclaimed with a loud voice, by an angel flying in the midst of heaven; and it will command the attention of the world.

"In the issue of the contest, all Christendom will be divided into two great classes,—those who keep the commandments of God and the faith of Jesus, and those who worship the beast and his image and receive his mark."—*"The Great Controversy," page 450.*

"Servants of God, with their faces lighted up and shining with holy consecration, will hasten from place to place to proclaim the message from heaven. By thousands of voices, all over the earth, the warning will be given. Miracles will be wrought, the sick will be healed, and signs and wonders will follow the believers. Satan also works with lying wonders, even bringing down fire from heaven in the sight of men. Thus the inhabitants of the earth will be brought to take their stand.

"The message will be carried not so much by argument as by the deep conviction of the Spirit of God. The arguments have been presented. The seed has been sown, and now it will spring up and bear fruit. . . . Now the rays of light penetrate everywhere, the truth is seen in its clearness, and the honest children of God sever the bands which have held them. Family connections, church relations, are powerless to stay them now. Truth is more precious than all besides. Notwithstanding the agencies combined against the truth, a large number take their stand upon the Lord's side."—*"The Great Controversy," page 612.*

To the fulfillment of these promises consecrated Seventh-day Adventists have, through the years, looked with courage and hope; in fact, we know full well that without this outpouring of God's Spirit it would be impossible for us to complete the work of this message in the world.

However, when the Shepherd's Rod makes the claim that the harvest of Matthew 13 refers to this loud cry of the third angel's message, we find it necessary to take a decided stand against such teaching, for we not only fail to find evidence in the Bible and the spirit of prophecy to support such a claim, but, on the other hand, we find positive statements placing the harvest of Matthew 13 after the close of probation—never before. It matters little

in this discussion whether the events associated with this harvest come soon after the close of probation, or later. The vital fact that we must determine is whether this harvest comes *before* or *after* the close of probation.

A brief survey of the teachings of the Bible on the subject of the harvest should be helpful at this point. The Bible, as we shall soon see, points clearly to the fact that the great harvest of God's kingdom is divided into two parts. The first, the harvest of grace, continues through many centuries. Under it the faithful are brought into the kingdom of God. It is the work of the gospel. This harvest reaches its climax with a great ingathering of souls during the latter rain, and ends with the close of probation. It is this harvest to which Christ must have referred when He said:

"Say not ye, There are yet four months, and then cometh harvest? behold, I say unto you, Lift up your eyes, and look on the fields; *for they are white already to harvest.*" John 4:35.

"Then saith He unto His disciples, The harvest truly *is* plenteous, but the laborers are few; pray ye therefore the Lord of the harvest, that He will send forth laborers into His harvest." Matthew 9:37, 38.

During the time of this harvest of grace Satan is also garnering his harvest.

"Satan works through the elements also to garner his harvest of unprepared souls. He has studied the secrets of the laboratories of nature, and he uses all his power to control the elements as far as God allows." —*The Great Controversy*, page 589.

Let us not forget, however, that these souls who have been gathered both in the harvest of grace and in the harvest of Satan have received neither their reward nor their punishment. The saints have received only the earnest of their inheritance. Those who have died have, with David, not "ascended into the heavens," but rest in their graves. Acts 2:34.

The second part of the harvest, that of rewards and punishments, is yet to come. We find a vivid description of this part of the harvest in the fourteenth chapter of Revelation.

"And I looked, and behold a white cloud, and upon the cloud one sat like unto the Son of man, having on His head a golden crown, and in His hand a sharp sickle. And another angel came out of the temple, crying with a loud voice to Him that sat on the cloud, Thrust in Thy sickle, and reap: for the time is come for Thee to reap; for the harvest of the earth

is ripe. And He that sat on the cloud thrust in His sickle on the earth; and the earth was reaped." Revelation 14:14-16.

This reaping of the harvest unquestionably takes place *after* the close of probation. The first sentence of this quotation makes that plain. "And I looked, and behold a white cloud, and upon the cloud one sat like unto the Son of man." Surely by no stretch of the imagination or private interpretation could this event be placed anywhere but after the close of probation. It undoubtedly refers to the reaping of the righteous and their receiving their reward.

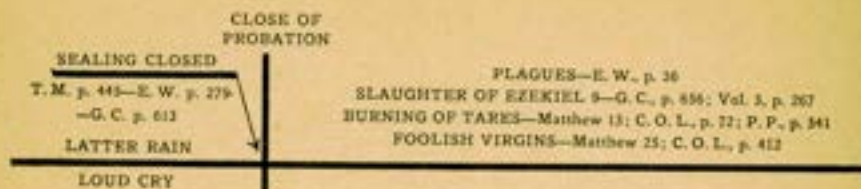
Let us now read the verses that follow:

"And another angel came out of the temple which is in heaven, he also having a sharp sickle. And another angel came out from the altar, which had power over fire; and cried with a loud cry to him that had the sharp sickle, saying, Thrust in thy sharp sickle, and gather the clusters of the vine of the earth; for her grapes are fully ripe. And the angel thrust in his sickle into the earth, and gathered the vine of the earth, and cast it into the great winepress of the wrath of God. And the winepress was trodden without the city, and blood came out of the winepress, even unto the horse bridles, by the space of a thousand and six hundred furlongs." Revelation 14:17-20.

Is it not clear beyond question that this reaping refers to the harvest of the wicked, in which they receive their punishment, and that this harvest, too, we are compelled to place after the close of probation? So we have before us a picture of the two parts or phases of the great harvest, the harvest of the gospel of grace which ends with the close of probation, and the harvest of rewards and punishments which takes place after the close of probation.

The question remains, To which of these parts of the harvest does the harvest of Matthew 13:24-30, 37-43 belong? Fortunately the Bible and the spirit of prophecy speak definitely and clearly in answer to our question. Let us read carefully every word of this wonderful parable.

"Another parable put He forth unto them, saying, The kingdom of heaven is likened unto a man which sowed good seed in his field: but while men slept, his enemy came and sowed tares among the wheat, and went his way. But when the blade was sprung up, and brought forth fruit, then appeared the tares also. So the servants of the householder came and said unto him, Sir, didst not thou sow good seed in thy field? from whence then hath it tares? He said unto them, An enemy hath done



### CHART I

This chart, which is a diagram of the teachings of the Bible and the spirit of prophecy, placing the various events in their relation to the close of probation, shows clearly two outstanding errors of the Shepherd's Rod:

1. The Shepherd's Rod places the completion of the sealing of the 144,000 at the beginning of the latter rain; the spirit of prophecy places it at the close of the latter rain, just as probation closes.

2. The Shepherd's Rod places the slaughter of Ezekiel 9, the separation and burning of the tares of Matthew 13, and the shutting out of the foolish virgins, before the latter rain and loud cry. It will be seen from the references given that the Bible and the spirit of prophecy place these events after the latter rain and the close of probation.

The author of "The Shepherd's Rod" has repeatedly admitted that if he is wrong on these points, he has no message and no truth to give.



this. The servants said unto him, Wilt thou then that we go and gather them up? But he said, Nay; lest while ye gather up the tares, ye root up also the wheat with them. Let both grow together until the harvest: and in the time of harvest I will say to the reapers, Gather ye together first the tares, and bind them in bundles to burn them: but gather the wheat into my barn. . . .

"He answered and said unto them, He that soweth the good seed is the Son of man; the field is the world; the good seed are the children of the kingdom; but the tares are the children of the wicked one; the enemy that soweth them is the devil; the harvest is the end of the world; and the reapers are the angels. As therefore the tares are gathered and burned in the fire; so shall it be in the end of this world. The Son of man shall send forth His angels, and they shall gather out of His kingdom all things that offend, and them which do iniquity; and shall cast them into a furnace of fire: there shall be wailing and gnashing of teeth. Then shall the righteous shine forth as the sun in the kingdom of their Father. Who hath ears to hear, let him hear." Matthew 13:24-30; 37-43.

Twice do the words of Christ give us the time when the harvest of this parable is fulfilled. First in the 39th verse He said: "The harvest is the end of the world." Would it not be doing violence to and be wresting the plain, simple statement of our Lord to contend that the loud cry is the end of the world? In the 41st and 42d verses Christ said: "The Son of man shall send forth His angels, and they shall gather out of His kingdom all things that offend, and them which do iniquity; and shall *cast them into a furnace of fire: there shall be wailing and gnashing of teeth.*" Again we ask, Could the "furnace of fire" and "wailing and gnashing of teeth" be made to apply to the loud cry or to any event preceding it? Still more light comes from the spirit of prophecy. See Chart I on opposite page.

"The tares and the wheat are to grow together until the harvest; and the harvest is the end of probationary time."—*Christ's Object Lessons*, page 72.

"The wheat and tares grow together until the harvest, the end of the world."—*Id.*, page 75.

These clear statements made by Christ and those that come to us from the pen of the servant of the Lord should leave no question regarding the fact that the "harvest" of this parable is the harvest of reward and punishment,—the same as the one described in Revelation 14:14-20, which certainly takes place after the close of probation.

The evidence from the Bible and the spirit of prophecy that will be presented in connection with our discussion regarding the 144,000, which will now follow, makes this conclusion still more certain.

#### **The 144,000 and the Burning of the Tares**

Regarding the 144,000, the Shepherd's Rod teaches that the tares in the church are burned (slaughtered, Ezekiel 9) before the latter rain and the loud cry, that is, before the close of probation, and those in the Seventh-day Adventist Church who survive the burning or slaughter are the 144,000.

"Note that the separation takes place just at the beginning of harvest; also that the tares are gathered in *first* [italics author's]. The separation marks the beginning of harvest. The harvest is the loud cry of the third angel's message. (Revelation 18:1.)"—*"The Shepherd's Rod," vol. 1, page 104. See also pages 228, 229; Chart, vol. 1, page 224; vol. 2, page 102.*

We have in this quotation one of the principal teachings of the Shepherd's Rod. The claim made here that the 144,000 are the members of the Seventh-day Adventist Church who survive the burning or slaughter, and that this separation of the tares from the wheat takes place at the beginning of the latter rain is based purely on inference, and is in direct conflict with this plain statement of the spirit of prophecy:

"The tares and the wheat are to grow together until the harvest; and the harvest is the end of probationary time."—*"Christ's Object Lessons," page 72.*

See Chart I, page 14.

Observe that this statement from the spirit of prophecy does not say that the harvest is the beginning of the loud cry, but it does say that the harvest is "*the end of probationary time.*" Is it not a clear case of wresting the spirit of prophecy to claim that it teaches the separation of tares and wheat at the beginning of the loud cry, when Inspiration so clearly states that "the harvest is the end of probationary time"? More evidence is to follow:

"The Feast of Tabernacles was not only commemorative, but typical. It not only pointed back to the wilderness sojourn, but, as the feast of harvest, it celebrated the ingathering of the fruits of the earth, and pointed forward to the great day of final ingathering, when the Lord of the harvest shall send forth His reapers to gather the tares together in bundles for the fire, and to gather the wheat into His garner. *At that time the wicked will all be destroyed.*"—*"Patriarchs and Prophets," page 541.*

The question we wish answered is this: When are the tares separated from the wheat and burned, and the wheat gathered into His garner? The Shepherd's Rod answers, At the beginning of the loud cry when all but 144,000 Adventists are slaughtered or burned. But the statement quoted above from "Patriarchs and Prophets" says that "the tares will be gathered together in bundles for the fire," at the time when "the wicked will *all* be destroyed." The Shepherd's Rod claims that the burning of the tares is a special burning of unfaithful Adventists at the beginning of the latter rain. This statement from the spirit of prophecy says clearly that the tares are destroyed at the time "the wicked will *all* be destroyed."

The only question which remains for us to answer is this: When is it that "the wicked will *all* be destroyed"? Is it before the beginning of the latter rain or after the close of probation? The teachings of the Bible and the spirit of prophecy permit of only one answer; namely, After the close of probation.

In this connection it is important to note that the Feast of Tabernacles came five days *after* the Day of Atonement (Leviticus 23:27-34), and it is agreed that the end of the Day of Atonement in type marks the close of probation.

The truth which we are presenting will be brought out still more clearly as we give attention to a direct contradiction between the Shepherd's Rod and the spirit of prophecy.

### The Shepherd's Rod

"The wheat gathered at the commencement of the harvest and at the separation from the tares in the church, is called the first fruits of the harvest."—*"The Shepherd's Rod,"* vol. 2, page 102.

"The harvest is the loud cry of the third angel's message."—*"The Shepherd's Rod,"* vol. 1, page 104.

### The Spirit of Prophecy

"When the mission of the gospel is completed, the judgment will accomplish the work of separation. . . ."

"Both the parable of the tares and that of the net plainly teach that there is no time when all the wicked will turn to God. The wheat and the tares grow together until the harvest. The good and the bad fish are together drawn ashore for a final separation.

"Again, these parables teach that there is to be no probation after the judgment. *When the work of the gospel is completed, there immediately follows the separation between the good and the evil, and the destiny of each class is forever fixed.*"—*"Christ's Object Lessons,"* pages 122, 123 (old edition).

Notice "The Shepherd's Rod" states that the separation of the tares and the wheat comes "at the commencement of the harvest," or "the loud cry." The spirit of prophecy states that the separation takes place *after* "the work of the gospel is completed." And surely not even the leaders of the Shepherd's Rod will claim that "the work of the gospel is completed" before the loud cry. It would seem almost impossible for language to tell us more clearly that the separation takes place *after* "the work of the gospel is completed," that is, after the close of probation, rather than *before* the latter rain and the loud cry, as claimed by the Shepherd's Rod.

#### **The 144,000 and the Shutting Out of the Five Foolish Virgins**

The Shepherd's Rod teaches that the shutting out of the five foolish virgins from the marriage (Matthew 15:1-13) represents the slaughter (Ezekiel 9) and the burning of tares (Matthew 13), of Seventh-day Adventists who do not accept the teachings of the Shepherd's Rod. About one half of the denomination are to be shut out (slaughtered) at the beginning of the loud cry, that is, before the close of probation. The five wise virgins, it is claimed, represent the 144,000 who survive the slaughter at the beginning of the loud cry.

"Thus again it proves that the 144,000 are the **five wise virgins** [bold type author's]; and the foolish ones are they who shall fall under the destroying weapons in the hand of the 'five men.'"—*The Shepherd's Rod*, vol. 2, page 182.

"Those who are sealed (marked)—[parenthesis author's]—and escape the ruin are the ones who will constitute the number which prophecy declares to be 144,000. Our denomination numbers about 300,000. This means the denomination will be divided in half and suggests the ten virgins, five of whom were wise and five were foolish."—*The Shepherd's Rod*, vol. 1, page 30.

Again our problem is to determine at what time the shutting out of the five foolish virgins takes place. From the quotations given above, it is evident that the Shepherd's Rod places this shutting out at the beginning of the latter rain and loud cry. The words of Christ are very illuminating on this question.

The parable of the ten virgins begins with these words, "Then shall the kingdom of heaven be likened unto ten virgins." True, these words come at the beginning of the 25th chapter of Matthew; but since chapter divisions are man-made, we are justified

in looking into the latter part of the preceding chapter for an indication of the time referred to by the word "then."

The last two verses of the preceding chapter and the first of the 25th chapter of Matthew read as follows:

"The lord of that servant shall come in a day when he looketh not for him, and in an hour that he is not aware of, and shall cut him asunder, and appoint him his portion with the hypocrites: there shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth. Then shall the kingdom of heaven be likened unto ten virgins, which took their lamps, and went forth to meet the bridegroom." Matthew 24:50, 51; 25:1.

When is it that the servant shall be cut asunder and be appointed "his portion with the hypocrites"? When is there to be "weeping and gnashing of teeth"? Is it at the beginning of the latter rain? Surely not. And the bald assumption, without proof, on the part of the Shepherd's Rod, placing this time of weeping and wailing and gnashing of teeth at the beginning of the latter rain, does not make it so. The Bible often places this description of the agony of the wicked at the time of their destruction; and this we know is after the close of probation. ("Patriarchs and Prophets," page 541.)

Now the question arises, Does the spirit of prophecy place the parable of the ten virgins and the shutting out of the five foolish ones from the marriage supper in a special closing of probation for the church before the loud cry, as claimed by the Shepherd's Rod, or at the time of "the great final test" "at the close of human probation"?

"The ten virgins are watching in the evening of this earth's history. . . . All apparently wait for Christ's appearing. But five are unready. Five will be found surprised, dismayed, outside the banquet hall."—"Christ's Object Lessons," page 412 (old edition).

Immediately preceding this quotation we find this sentence: Read it carefully.

"The great final test comes at the close of human probation when it will be too late for the soul's need to be supplied."—*Ibid.*

Again the unquestionable evidence points to the fact that *the unfaithful in the church* (five foolish virgins) meet "the great final test," not at a special closing of probation for the church at the beginning of the loud cry, but "at the close of human probation." See Chart I, page 14.

Surely there is no need for us to go astray and become confused in a fog of erroneous doctrines when the Lord has given us such clear and simple statements pointing the way to truth.

### **Will the Church Be Pure and Perfect Before and During the Loud Cry?**

The Shepherd's Rod answers "Yes."

"Thus the church in the time of the 'loud cry' is to be a pure and holy church, without spot, or wrinkle, or any such thing; a church without guile."—*"The Shepherd's Rod,"* vol. 2, page 264.

Ever since the early days of the Seventh-day Adventist denomination, faithful members have looked forward to a shaking during which time the church would be greatly purified. Two of the outstanding causes of this shaking, or cleansing, process are: first, the rejection of the Laodicean message.

"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. . . . Some will not bear this straight testimony. They will rise up against it, and this is what will cause a shaking among God's people."—*"Early Writings,"* page 270.

Another outstanding cause of the shaking is the acceptance of false doctrines and theories.

"God's Spirit has illuminated every page of Holy Writ, but there are those upon whom it makes little impression, because it is imperfectly understood. *When the shaking comes, by the introduction of false theories, these surface readers, anchored nowhere, are like shifting sand. They slide into any position to suit the tenor of their feelings of bitterness.*"—*"Testimonies to Ministers,"* page 112.

"God will arouse His people; if other means fail, *heresies will come in among them, which will sift them, separating the chaff from the wheat.*"—*"Testimonies for the Church,"* vol. 5, page 707.

This shaking will greatly purify the church and prepare it for a mighty work during the loud cry of the message. In passing, it is well to note that it is the shaking that purifies the church before the latter rain and the loud cry, not the slaughter of Ezekiel 9 or the separation and burning of the tares of Matthew 13, as claimed by the Shepherd's Rod.

After most diligent search of both the Bible and the spirit of prophecy, we find nothing, worthy of the name of evidence, to

substantiate the view that the church will be purified by slaughter and burning before the latter rain and the loud cry. On the other hand, we find that the Bible and the spirit of prophecy, as has been shown in preceding studies, definitely place these acts of destruction at or after the close of human probation. But when we turn to the writings of the Shepherd's Rod we find assumption, inference, and the "windings and twistings and turnings" of "error."—*Testimonies to the Church,* vol. 3, page 425.

We now turn to a consideration of the question of the absolute purity and perfection of the church before the latter rain.

The spirit of prophecy leaves no question as to the fact that every individual who receives the latter rain must first have his life purified.

"It is left with us to remedy the defects in our characters, to cleanse the soul temple of every defilement. Then the latter rain will fall upon us as the early rain fell upon the disciples on the day of Pentecost."—*Testimonies for the Church,* vol. 5, page 214.

But it does not follow that *all* the church members of the visible organization, as we know it, will be pure and perfect at the beginning or during the latter rain and the loud cry. On this point we must positively disagree with the teachings of the Shepherd's Rod, for we find that *some* false brethren (tares) will remain in the church until "the close of time." To determine what is truth regarding this question, we shall offer as evidence plain, definite, and clear statements from the Bible and the spirit of prophecy.

Christ's words are, "Let both [tares and wheat] grow together until the harvest." Matthew 13:30.

*"The harvest is the end of the world."* Matthew 13:39.

Turning to the spirit of prophecy, we find these words:

"The tares and the wheat are to grow together *until the harvest*; and the harvest is the end of probationary time."—*Christ's Object Lessons,* page 72 (old edition).

It would require a good deal of "twisting and turning" to make this statement say that the end of probationary time is the beginning of the latter rain. (See Chart I, page 14.)

Let us notice another statement from the same book:

"He has said that false brethren will be found in the church *till the close of time.*"—*Id.*, page 73.

Does "the end of the world" refer to the beginning of the latter rain? Surely not. The Lord has given still more light on this question.

"From whence then hath it tares? But we need not be thus disappointed, for the Lord has not warranted us in coming to the conclusion that the church is perfect; and *all our zeal will not be successful in making the church militant as pure as the church triumphant.*"—"Testimonies to Ministers," page 47.

"Although there are evils existing in the church, and *will be until the end of the world*, the church in these last days is to be the light of the world that is polluted and demoralized by sin."—*Id.*, page 49.

"Are we hoping to see the whole church revived? *That time will never come.*"—*Mrs. E. G. White, in Review and Herald, March 22, 1887. Quoted in "Christ Our Righteousness," page 147.*

The author of "The Shepherd's Rod" may try to explain away these divinely inspired statements by saying that this condition of some false brethren (tares) remaining in the church refers to the time before the latter rain; but here again he must be disappointed. The Lord tells us in no uncertain language that there will be those among us *during* the time of the latter rain who neither "receive it" nor "recognize" it when the latter rain falls.

"Unless we are daily advancing in the exemplification of the active Christian virtues, *we shall not recognize* the manifestations of the Holy Spirit in the latter rain. It may be falling on hearts all around us, *but we shall not discern or receive it.*"—"Testimonies to Ministers," page 507.

Notice what the spirit of prophecy says concerning those in the church who are far from perfect during the loud cry:

"Unless those who can help in — are aroused to a sense of their duty, they will not recognize the work of God when the *loud cry* of the third angel shall be heard. When light goes forth to lighten the earth, instead of coming up to the help of the Lord, they will want to bind about His work to meet their narrow ideas. Let me tell you that the Lord will work in this last work in a manner very much out of the common order of things, and in a way that will be contrary to any human planning. *There will be those among us* who will always want to control the work of God, to dictate even what movements shall be made when the work



goes forward under the direction of the *angel who joins the third angel* in the message to be given the world."—*Id.*, page 300.

Observe that during the loud cry "*there will be those among us*" who "will always want to control the work of God, to dictate even what movements shall be made," and these "will not recognize the work of God, when the *loud cry* of the third angel's message shall be heard." Surely these have not attained perfection and purity of character, but rather are the tares (false brethren) who, the spirit of prophecy tells us, "*will be found in the church till the close of time.*"—"Christ's Object Lessons," page 73.

Now it is true that there are some statements in the Bible and in the spirit of prophecy that indicate that there will be a pure and perfect company of God's children before the close of probation. From the definite statements of the spirit of prophecy given above, we know that the organized visible church cannot possibly be the church that is pure and perfect.

So the question arises, How can these statements that seem to call for a pure church before the close of probation be harmonized with the unmistakably clear statements that say "*that false brethren will be found in the church till the close of time*"? We find an explanation of this apparent contradiction in "Christ's Object Lessons," which brings to us a beautiful harmony and a beautiful truth.

"Sinners who make a pretension of piety mingle for a time with the true followers of Christ, and the semblance of Christianity is calculated to deceive many; but in the harvest of the world there will be no likeness between good and evil. Then those who have joined the church, but who have not joined Christ, will be manifest."—Page 74 (*old edition; new edition, page 73*).

From previously quoted statements we have learned that the harvest of the tares and the wheat takes place, *not before, but after* the close of probation. It is evident from this statement quoted from "Christ's Object Lessons," page 74, that there will be, even to the end, those who have "joined the church, but . . . have not joined Christ." Yet the church or the movement of which they are professed members is recognized by God as His earthly church. This is proved by the following statement concerning the Seventh-day Adventist movement made by the servant of the Lord two years before her death.

"I am encouraged and blessed as I realize that the God of Israel is still guiding His people, and that He will continue to be with them, even to the end."—*"Life Sketches,"* pages 437, 438.

And why does God own, use, and bless this church? Surely not because false brethren (tares) are in it, but rather because in this church are those who have "joined Christ," and these are in reality the only ones He recognizes as His.

This is the company within the church that, as individuals, will finally gain the victory over every besetment, receive the latter rain, give the loud cry of the message, be sealed, triumph gloriously, and, as the true wheat, be gathered into the garner. Sharing outward church fellowship with these faithful ones will be those who are "false brethren." Many will be shaken out, some by "the straight testimony called forth by the counsel of the True Witness to the Laodiceans" ("Early Writings," page 270), and some by "false theories" ("Testimonies to Ministers," page 112), by judgments, tribulations, persecutions. It is also evident that even some who belong to the company in the church who had "joined Christ" will be shaken out from that company, "for they had no deepness of earth." Matthew 13:5, 6, 20, 21.

So we find that the church on earth which God owns as His movement has in it, and will have to the end, two classes,—those who have "joined Christ" (the wheat) and those who have joined only the church (tares). The trials and tests of the last days will greatly purify the church as a whole by shaking out many of the tares. But though greatly purified, the church, as we know it, will have in it both wheat and tares to the end of the world. We must not, however, overlook the important fact that within this church will be the company that, as individuals, will get the victory over every sin, receive the latter rain, give the loud cry, be sealed, go through the time of trouble, and become the church triumphant. These are His own children, whose names are found in God's great church book,—the book of life.

So we find that the statement in the spirit of prophecy: "*Then those who have joined the church, but who have not joined Christ will be manifest,*" brings to view the church, as we know it, with some tares (false brethren) in it till the close of time, and the church, as God knows it, whose members have "joined Christ" and who after the shaking constitute the pure church that God calls for.

We may, therefore, safely conclude that when the Bible or the spirit of prophecy calls for a mighty work by a mighty church under the latter rain, reference is made to the earthly church which has been greatly purified by the shaking, but with some false brethren (tares) still remaining in it; but when an absolute perfection is called for, reference is made to those in the church after the shaking who have "joined Christ."

We find the same truth illustrated in the experience of the apostolic church after the outpouring of Pentecostal power. In fact, only a part of the church was present at the time of the outpouring of the Holy Ghost. The disciples in Galilee were not present. The blessing did not come as a result of a slaughter or after a slaughter of the unfaithful, but after earnest seeking of God in the upper room. And even then the church was not perfect.

After Pentecost so prominent a member as the apostle James failed to follow the dictates of the Holy Spirit when he advised Paul to comply with ceremonial customs and traditions. Note these words from the spirit of prophecy:

"But while James assured Paul that the decision of the former council (Acts 15) concerning the Gentile converts and the ceremonial law still held good, the advice given was not consistent with that decision which had also been sanctioned by the Holy Spirit. The Spirit of God did not prompt this advice. *It was the fruit of cowardice.*"—*Sketches From the Life of Paul,* page 212.

Again: "This concession was not in harmony with his [Paul's] teachings, nor with the firm integrity of his character. *His advisers were not infallible.* Though some of these men wrote under the inspiration of the Spirit of God, yet when not under its direct influence they sometimes erred. It will be remembered that on one occasion Paul withstood Peter to the face because he was *acting a double part.*"—*Id.,* page 214.

Surely one who thus yielded to the spirit of "cowardice" could not be described as being without "spot, or wrinkle, or any such thing."

### **The 144,000 and the Slaughter of Ezekiel 9**

The Shepherd's Rod teaches that the slaughter of Ezekiel 9 is a slaughter of Seventh-day Adventists who reject the teachings of the Shepherd's Rod, that this slaughter is real and imminent, and will take place just before or at the beginning of the loud cry,

that the name of the Seventh-day Adventist Church is "polluted" and "cursed," and will give way to "a new name" and a new organization, and that the spewing out of the lukewarm Laodiceans is the slaughter of Ezekiel 9.

"And unto the angel of the church of the Laodiceans write; . . . 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 [italics author's] thee out of my mouth.' Rev. 3:14-16. Note that the existence of the present name—'Seventh-day Adventist' is conditional, otherwise the name will be spued out of His mouth. . . . 'And ye shall leave your name for a curse unto my chosen [the 144,000]: For the Lord God shall slay thee [italics author's], and call his servants by another name.' Isa. 65:15."—*The Shepherd's Rod*, vol. 1, pages 100, 101.

"Thus, the church is reorganized under a new name. The old name, being polluted, could no longer be retained. There is no one to go by the old name, for the ones who were not worthy of having the new name have perished under the figure of the five men with the slaughter weapons of Ezekiel 9. The name only remains for a curse."—*Id.*, page 155.

"While Laodiceans are shaken out (spued) by destruction, God takes charge of the flock Himself."—*Id.*, page 222.

This represents one of the principal doctrines of the Shepherd's Rod. It was referred to by the author of "The Shepherd's Rod" when he appeared before the committee of twelve; and since he agreed at that time that his published writings should be accepted as an authentic statement of his teachings, it would seem appropriate that we discuss this question at this time, especially in view of the fact that the Shepherd's Rod teaches that the slaughter of Ezekiel 9 and the burning of the tares, which he discussed before the committee, refer to the same experience.

"Thus the silence of half an hour points forward to this great event for the church of God. Its fulfillment would bring us to the time of the harvest, or as it is called, the Loud Cry of the Third Angel's Message of Revelation 18—the last message for the world. Thus, while the five men with the slaughter weapons are taking away those represented by the tares within the church, there will be silence in heaven for about half an hour (seven days)."—*The Shepherd's Rod*, vol. 2, page 217.

That we may have the subject clearly before us, let us read carefully the ninth chapter of Ezekiel:

"He cried also in mine ears with a loud voice, saying, Cause them that have charge over the city to draw near, even every man with his destroy-

ing weapon in his hand. And, behold, six men came from the way of the higher gate, which lieth toward the north, and every man a slaughter weapon in his hand; and one man among them was clothed with linen, with a writer's inkhorn by his side: and they went in, and stood beside the brazen altar. And the glory of the God of Israel was gone up from the cherub, whereupon he was, to the threshold of the house. And he called to the man clothed with linen, which had the writer's inkhorn by his side; and the Lord said unto him, Go through the midst of the city, through the midst of Jerusalem, and set a mark upon the foreheads of the men that sigh and that cry for all the abominations that be done in the midst thereof.

"And to the others He said in mine hearing, Go ye after him through the city, and smite: let not your eye spare, neither have ye pity: slay utterly old and young, both maids, and little children, and women: but come not near any man upon whom is the mark; and begin at My sanctuary. Then they began at the ancient men which were before the house. And He said unto them, Defile the house, and fill the courts with the slain: go ye forth. And they went forth, and slew in the city.

"And it came to pass, while they were slaying them, and I was left, that I fell upon my face, and cried, and said, Ah Lord God! wilt Thou destroy all the residue of Israel in Thy pouring out of Thy fury upon Jerusalem? Then said He unto me, The iniquity of the house of Israel and Judah is exceeding great, and the land is full of blood, and the city full of perverseness: for they say, The Lord hath forsaken the earth, and the Lord seeth not. And as for Me also, Mine eye shall not spare, neither will I have pity, but I will recompense their way upon their head. And, behold, the man clothed with linen, which had the inkhorn by his side, reported the matter, saying, I have done as Thou hast commanded me."

It is evident that this chapter is a symbolic prophecy of a real experience that will begin at the sanctuary. It is also evident that the sealing of God's people "that sigh and that cry for all the abominations that be done in the midst thereof" (verses 3, 4) takes place before the close of probation. But when the Shepherd's Rod teaches that the slaughter also takes place before the close of probation,—yes, before the latter rain and the loud cry,—then we must take decided exception to this doctrine, for careful investigation and study force us to the conclusion that this teaching not only is based on bald assumption and "private interpretation," but is in direct conflict with the spirit of prophecy.

One of the first questions that should be answered is this: Is Jerusalem always and exclusively a type of the church, or may it also be a symbol of the world? Let the spirit of prophecy answer the question for us.

"Christ saw in Jerusalem a symbol of the world hardened in unbelief and rebellion, and hastening on to meet the retributive judgments of God."—*The Great Controversy*, page 22 (old edition).

"The Saviour's prophecy concerning the visitation of judgments upon Jerusalem is to have another fulfillment, of which that terrible desolation was but a faint shadow. In the fate of the chosen city we may behold the doom of a world that has rejected God's mercy and trampled upon His law."—*Id.*, page 37.

Is it not evident from these quotations that while Jerusalem is a type of the church, it is also a symbol of the world?

Concerning the sealing of those who sigh and cry, which we all agree takes place before the close of probation, the spirit of prophecy makes the following statement:

"The class who do not feel grieved over their own spiritual declension, nor mourn over the sins of others, will be left without the seal of God."—*Testimonies for the Church*, vol. 5, page 211.

In passing, it may be interesting to note that nearly all the "offshoot" movements that have left the Seventh-day Adventist denomination are much more concerned about the shortcomings of the church than they are about "their own spiritual declension."

Before passing to the main question under consideration, let us notice the marked disagreement between the Shepherd's Rod and the spirit of prophecy as to what constitutes the spewing out of the lukewarm Laodiceans. In the quotation given above, "The Shepherd's Rod" states that the "spewing out" is the slaughter of Ezekiel 9; but here is what the spirit of prophecy gives us as the meaning of "spewing out":

"To those who are indifferent at this time Christ's warning is, 'Because thou art lukewarm, and neither cold nor hot, I will spew thee out of My mouth.' Rev. 3:16. The figure of spewing out of His mouth means that He cannot offer up your prayers or your expressions of love to God. He cannot endorse your teachings of His word or your spiritual work in anywise. He cannot present your religious exercises with the request that grace be given you."—*Testimonies for the Church*, vol. 6, page 408.

Now we come to another basic doctrine of the Shepherd's Rod. In fact, the author has repeatedly admitted that their entire message stands or falls on the correctness or the incorrectness of their interpretation and placing of the slaughter of Ezekiel 9.

The Shepherd's Rod places this slaughter at the beginning of the latter rain or the loud cry, that is, before the close of probation. Where does the spirit of prophecy place this important event? We turn to the chapter entitled "Desolation of the Earth" in "The Great Controversy," which clearly describes events that take place after the close of probation. See Chart I, page 14.

On page 656 we find this highly significant statement that should settle this important question for every Seventh-day Adventist who accepts the spirit of prophecy as his guide:

"For six thousand years the great controversy has been in progress; the Son of God and His heavenly messengers have been in conflict with the power of the evil one, to warn, enlighten, and save the children of men. *Now all have made their decision*; the wicked have fully united with Satan in his warfare against God. The time has come for God to vindicate the authority of His downtrodden law. Now the controversy is not alone with Satan, but with men. The Lord hath a controversy with the nations; 'He will give them that are wicked to the sword.'

"The mark of deliverance has been set upon those 'that sigh and that cry for all the abominations that be done.' *Now the angel of death goes forth, represented in Ezekiel's vision by the men with the slaughtering weapons*, to whom the command is given: 'Slay utterly old and young, both maids, and little children, and women; but come not near any man upon whom is the mark; and begin at My sanctuary.'"

It might be said in answer to this quotation from the chapter entitled "Desolation of the Earth" that the chapter arrangements do not necessarily follow the order of events. We concede to a certain extent that this might be true; however, two facts stand out very clearly. One is that the chapter entitled "Desolation of the Earth" could not possibly be placed before the latter rain. The other fact cannot be disputed. The statement, "*Now the angel of death goes forth*," represented in Ezekiel's vision, applies when "*NOW ALL have made their decision*."

When have all made their decision? Surely not before the latter rain and the loud cry. For if they had, there could be no ingathering of souls during the loud cry. The author of "The Shepherd's Rod" answers these plain, definite evidences from the spirit of prophecy by saying that page 656 of "The Great Controversy," being a subscription book, tells the world, not Adventists, when its destruction shall take place; but that Seventh-day Adventists have a special close of probation and a special slaughter at the beginning of the latter rain and the loud cry. But, true

to the general teachings of "The Shepherd's Rod," this claim is based on assumption. No proof is offered. But even this assumption on the part of the author of "The Shepherd's Rod" must be taken from him, for long before "The Great Controversy" was published as a subscription book, an early edition was written for Adventists and to Adventists. In these old editions we find the same chapters in the same order. In the 1887 edition, and the same is true of older editions, on page 473 in the chapter entitled "Desolation of the Earth" we find this statement:

"The mark of deliverance has been set upon those 'that sigh and that cry for all the abominations that be done.' Now the angel of death goes forth, represented in Ezekiel's vision by the men with the slaughtering weapons, to whom the command is given: 'Slay utterly old and young, both maids and little children, and women; but come not near any man upon whom is the mark; and begin at My sanctuary.'"

In the face of such clear, plain evidence as has been presented it would seem impossible for the leader of the Shepherd's Rod to continue to teach that sinners in the Seventh-day Adventist Church experience a special slaughter at the beginning of the loud cry. Yet so thoroughly is he wedded to his preconceived theories that in spite of these clear, positive statements from the spirit of prophecy, he still clings to his private interpretations. We shall, therefore, quote another reference that it would seem impossible to misinterpret or to explain away; a statement that definitely disproves the claim that sinners in the Seventh-day Adventist Church will fall in a special slaughter at the beginning of the latter rain and the loud cry.

"They (those who sympathize with sinners in the church) will never receive the mark of God's sealing approval. *They will fall in the general destruction of the wicked, represented by the work of the five men bearing slaughter weapons.* Mark this point with care: Those who receive the pure mark of truth, wrought in them by the power of the Holy Ghost, represented by a mark by the man in linen, are those 'that sigh and that cry for all the abominations that be done' in the church. Their love for purity and the honor and glory of God is such, and they have so clear a view of the exceeding sinfulness of sin, that they are represented as being in agony, even sighing and crying. *Read the ninth chapter of Ezekiel.*"—*"Testimonies for the Church," vol. 3, page 267.*

This statement leaves no question as to whether it applies to the world or to sinners in the Seventh-day Adventist Church.



There can be no question that the slaughter of Ezekiel 9 is under consideration.

And when does "the general destruction of the wicked" take place? We are confident that no Seventh-day Adventist will believe that "the general destruction of the wicked" takes place before the latter rain and the loud cry, that is, before the close of probation. On the other hand, the teachings of the Bible and the spirit of prophecy compel us to believe that this "general destruction" takes place after the close of probation; when "all have made their decision."—*The Great Controversy*, page 656.

And this settles for us, beyond a question, the time when sinners in the church are to be destroyed, for we have in this statement from page 267 of Volume 3 which we have just quoted, this definite declaration: "They (sinners in Zion) will fall in the general destruction of the wicked, represented by the work of the five men bearing slaughter weapons." There can be no doubt about the fact that the unfaithful brethren (tares) in the Seventh-day Adventist Church do not fall in a special destruction or slaughter at the beginning of the latter rain, but in "the general destruction of the wicked" after the close of probation. All the "windings and twistings and turnings" of "error" ("Testimonies for the Church," vol. 3, page 425) cannot change this monumental truth. It will stand forth like the eternal hills long after the Shepherd's Rod is forgotten.

#### **When Will the Sealing of the 144,000 Be Completed?**

The Shepherd's Rod answers, "Before the loud cry of the third angel's message."

"The sealing of the 144,000 cannot extend to the close of probation, for they must be sealed long before that time, and it must close before the loud cry of the third angel's message."—*The Shepherd's Rod*, vol. 1, page 35.

There are some things about the 144,000 that we do not know. God has not seen fit to clearly give us this information.

"The secret things belong unto the Lord our God: but those things which are revealed belong unto us and to our children forever, that we may do all the words of this law." Deuteronomy 29:29.

There are, however, some truths concerning the 144,000 which have been clearly revealed in the Bible and the spirit of

prophecy; and these revealed truths fortunately are the most vital ones,—those that we need to know and understand.

There are three important facts pertaining to the 144,000 which the Lord has seen fit to make very plain:

1. That which should appeal to us most of all is the fact that they develop a most wonderful Christian character. "In their mouth was found no guile: for they are without fault before the throne of God." Revelation 14: 5.

There is nothing that we know about the 144,000 that should more definitely challenge and inspire our determination to live wholly consecrated godly lives than does this description of their character; and in this we must all agree.

2. We have thus far in our study also learned that the spirit of prophecy makes very clear the fact that the 144,000 are not the survivors of a laughter ("The Great Controversy," page 656), of a burning of tares ("Patriarchs and Prophets," page 541), nor of a shutting out of five foolish virgins ("Christ's Object Lessons," page 412) before the latter rain and the loud cry; for, from the references just given, we learn very definitely that these events take place "*at the close of human probation*" ("Christ's Object Lessons," page 412) when "*all have made their decision*" ("The Great Controversy," page 656) "*when the work of the gospel is completed*" ("Christ's Object Lessons," page 123).

3. We now turn our attention to the question of the time when the sealing of the 144,000 is *completed*. The quotation from "The Shepherd's Rod" given above very plainly states that the sealing of the 144,000 is completed *before* the loud cry. What says the spirit of prophecy? See Chart I, page 14.

Let us read carefully a very significant statement from "Early Writings," the importance of which it would be difficult to overestimate:

"I was pointed down to the time when the third angel's message was closing. The power of God *had* rested upon His people; they *had* accomplished their work, and *were prepared* for the trying hour before them. They *had* received the latter rain, or refreshing from the presence of the Lord, and the living testimony *had been revived*. The last great warning *had sounded* everywhere, and it *had* stirred up and enraged the inhabitants of the earth who would not receive the message.

"I saw angels hurrying to and fro in heaven. An angel with a writer's inkhorn by his side returned from the earth, and reported to Jesus that his work was done, and the saints were numbered and sealed. Then I saw

Jesus, who had been ministering before the ark containing the Ten Commandments, *throw down the censor*. He raised His hands, and with a loud voice said, *'It is done.'* And all the angelic host laid off their crowns as Jesus made the solemn declaration, *'He that is unjust, let him be unjust still; and he which is filthy, let him be filthy still; and he that is righteous, let him be righteous still; and he that is holy, let him be holy still.'* *Every case had been decided for life or death.*"—Pages 279, 280.

Three important facts are brought to view in this quotation :

1. We are dealing with a time when the latter rain and the loud cry are in the past. This is apparent from such statements as these: *"They had accomplished their work."* *"They had received the latter rain."* *"The last great warning had sounded everywhere."* These significant statements can leave no question but that we are now dealing with time *after* the latter rain and the loud cry.

2. At this time the servant of the Lord "saw angels hurrying to and fro in heaven. An angel with a *writer's inkhorn by his side* returned from the earth, and reported to Jesus that his work was done, and the saints were numbered and sealed."

The question now arises, Does this scene of the angel with the writer's inkhorn refer to the sealing of the 144,000? Again we will let the spirit of prophecy answer our question. In the following quotation the subject of the sealing of the 144,000 is under discussion.

"The angels of God do His bidding, holding back the winds of the earth, that the winds should not blow on the earth, nor on the sea, nor on any tree, until the servants of God should be sealed in their foreheads. . . . *This sealing of the servants of God is the same that was shown to Ezekiel in vision.*"—*Testimonies to Ministers,* pages 444, 445.

Some might raise a question as to the length of time it takes an angel to fly from earth to heaven; but this should not confuse us, for it is evident that the sealing angel did not leave earth until "the saints were numbered and sealed;" and from Daniel's experience we learn that angels pass from earth to heaven and from heaven to earth very rapidly.

"And whiles I was speaking, and praying, and confessing my sin and the sin of my people Israel, and presenting my supplication before the Lord my God for the holy mountain of my God; yea, whiles I was speak-

ing in prayer, even the man Gabriel, whom I had seen in the vision at the beginning, being caused to fly swiftly, touched me about the time of the evening oblation." Daniel 9:20, 21.

3. Immediately following the return of the sealing angel, the servant of the Lord saw "Jesus, who had been ministering before the ark containing the Ten Commandments, throw down the censer. He raised His hands, and with a loud voice said, 'It is done.'" Probation had closed. Notice how definitely the *completion* of the sealing of Ezekiel 9 is associated with the "close of human probation"—when "*every case had been decided for life or death*,"—not at the time of a special close of probation, and special slaughter for the church before the loud cry as taught by the Shepherd's Rod.

It should not now be difficult to establish the time of the completion of the sealing of the 144,000. The evidence is too clear and too definite for us to make a mistake. The sealing of the 144,000 could not possibly be completed in the light of this quotation until *after* "they *had* received the latter rain" and *after* "the last great warning *had* sounded everywhere."

The Shepherd's Rod tells us that the sealing of the 144,000 is *completed* before the latter rain. The spirit of prophecy reveals that it is *not completed* until after the latter rain and just before Christ throws down the censer and probation closes. Which shall we accept? Surely, the spirit of prophecy.

It is clearly obvious from the facts presented that, since the 144,000 are not a numbered and sealed company before the latter rain, but rather just before the close of probation, they could not, as a sealed company, bring in an innumerable multitude during the latter rain as taught by the Shepherd's Rod.

### Time Setting

The Shepherd's Rod not only errs in placing the *completion* of the sealing of the 144,000 *before* the latter rain, but makes the further mistake of setting the time when the sealing of the 144,000 *began*.

"'Our own course of action will determine whether we shall receive the *seal of the living God, or be cut down by the destroying weapons* [italics author's].' If we were to *mark out the exact time of the beginning of this sealing*, we would say it began some time during 1929."—*"The Shepherd's Rod,"* vol. 1, page 32.

Observe the stinging rebuke administered to such time setting by the spirit of prophecy :

"Let all our brethren and sisters beware of anyone who would set a time for the Lord to fulfill His word in regard to His coming, or in regard to any other promise He has made of special significance."—*"Testimonies to Ministers,"* page 55.

"Time has not been a test since 1844, and it will never again be a test."—*"Early Writings,"* page 75.

In a leaflet entitled "The Warning Paradox," copyrighted by V. T. Houteff in the year 1933, we find on pages 59, 60 this challenging statement :

"If the ministry can prove us wrong on the 144,000, which is the message of the hour, or even on any one topic in our publications, we agree to retract our position and destroy all of our three volumes. We have made this appeal time and again. Therefore, let God's people arise and demand from those who are working against them and the message an answer of these things. Call their attention to the subject of 144,000; do not let them lead you away into something else; and if they cannot prove it error, then let them follow the good example of God's faithful servants in ages past—stand on the side of present truth regardless of what it may cost. Heaven will be cheap enough at any price."

We have accepted this challenge, and for evidence have offered not our own interpretation of symbols, but clear, direct statements from the Bible and the spirit of prophecy.

Notice the statement is made that the 144,000 is "the message of the hour." Such a statement as this seems hard to understand when we keep in mind the wonderful truths that the Lord has given us to proclaim to the world during these last days. It would seem impossible for well-informed Seventh-day Adventists to turn from such messages as "Fear God; . . . for the hour of His judgment is come," "Babylon is fallen," "Come out of her, My people," "Keep the commandments of God, and the faith of Jesus," and in their place accept the idea regarding the 144,000 as taught by the Shepherd's Rod, as the message of the hour.

In what we have just said, we do not wish to minimize the importance of the standard of righteousness to be attained by the 144,000, and the urgent need of our attaining that standard.

Why do the followers of the Shepherd's Rod place so much emphasis upon the 144,000? It is because they believe and teach that the sealing of the 144,000 began in 1929, and will soon be

completed when probation for the Seventh-day Adventist Church will come to an end; that the burning of the tares (false brethren in the church), the slaughter of Ezekiel 9 of the unfaithful in the church, and the shutting out of the five foolish virgins, are all to take place in the Seventh-day Adventist Church in the very near future,—before the latter rain and the loud cry; and that after this destruction, only 144,000 Seventh-day Adventists will remain from the slaughter, and these, they claim, are to give the loud cry of the message.

If all of these contentions could be substantiated with clear, definite statements from the Bible and the spirit of prophecy, we would be compelled to agree with them that, as far as Seventh-day Adventists are concerned, the question of the 144,000 would be a very important one. However, we have shown by many "infallible proofs" that the burning of the tares takes place when "the wicked will *all* be destroyed" ("Patriarchs and Prophets," page 541), that the shutting out of the foolish virgins takes place "at the close of human probation" ("Christ's Object Lessons," page 412), that the slaughter of Ezekiel 9 comes after the close of probation when "*all* have made their decision" ("The Great Controversy," page 656), and that instead of sinners in Zion having a special close of probation and a special slaughter before the latter rain, "they will fall in the *general destruction* of the wicked, represented by the work of the five men bearing slaughter weapons" ("Testimonies for the Church," vol. 3, page 267).

It must be admitted that since the divine evidence shows that these events of burning and destruction come after the close of probation, and the sealing of the 144,000 is not completed until the close of the latter rain and the loud cry, very little remains of what the Shepherd's Rod claims "is the message of the hour."

So we still find our feet firmly planted on the platform of the fundamentals of the third angel's message. These events of destruction which the Shepherd's Rod claims are so imminent, we find from the Bible and the spirit of prophecy come after the close of probation; but the message of the hour and the task now before us are the acceptance and the giving of the third angel's message to a world hastening on to destruction; and this message the Lord has promised us will, as our godliness deepens, swell into a loud cry, the world will be warned, and His faithful children be prepared to meet Him when He comes. Yes, the third angel's message is still the message of the hour.

"The third angel's message is sounding; it is infallible. . . . It is as certain that we have the truth as that God lives; and Satan, with all his arts and hellish power, cannot change the truth of God into a lie. While the great adversary will try his utmost to make of none effect the word of God, truth must go forth as a lamp that burneth."—*"Testimonies for the Church,"* vol. 4, page 595.

### **Our Appeal to V. T. Houteff**

We have accepted your challenge to prove the Shepherd's Rod doctrine wrong. We have complied with the instruction given in "Testimonies on Sabbath School Work," pages 65, 66, calling for us to give careful and patient hearing to those who claim to have new light for God's people.

The committee of twelve which met you at the Olympic Tabernacle February 19, 1934, listened attentively, respectfully, and patiently to your presentation, and granted as much time as you desired. You accepted the personnel of the committee of twelve when, in compliance with your signed agreement of January 18, 1934, you presented your views on "the harvest" before this committee.

Now there comes to you a challenge not issued by us but by the simplest principles of honor and honesty; for you signed a statement, the last paragraph of which reads as follows:

"The conditions hereby entered into are in compliance with the instruction given in Testimony Vol. 5, page 293; Test. of S. S. Work, pages 65-66."

The statement referred to on page 293 of "Testimonies for the Church," vol. 5, reads as follows:

"There are a thousand temptations in disguise prepared for those who have the light of truth; and the only safety for any of us is in receiving no new doctrine, no new interpretation of the Scriptures, without first submitting it to brethren of experience. Lay it before them in a humble, teachable spirit, with earnest prayer; and *if they see no light in it, yield to their judgment; for 'in the multitude of counselors there is safety.'*"

Will you comply with this instruction, as you promised in your signed agreement? This is the challenge that comes to you, not from us, but from the instruction given in the spirit of prophecy and by your own signed agreement.

Now that it has been shown that the teachings of the Shepherd's Rod are not in harmony with the Bible and the spirit of

prophecy, we urge you and your followers to renounce the error, and come back on to the platform of truth. We invite you to rejoin us in the great work of giving the last message of mercy to a world lost in sin and rushing on to destruction.

A. G. DANIELLS, *Chairman*

W. G. WIRTH, *Secretary*

G. A. ROBERTS

C. S. PROUT

J. C. STEVENS

H. M. S. RICHARDS

GLENN CALKINS

C. M. SORENSON

F. C. GILBERT

W. M. ADAMS

J. A. BURDEN

O. J. GRAF

Elder W. H. BRANSON, Vice President of the General Conference for North America, and Elder J. L. Shaw, Treasurer of the General Conference, met with the Committee, and were present when this reply was read to V. T. Houteff. Both of them join with and approve of the position taken by the Committee in this reply.



## PART II

# Is the Seventh-day Adventist Church One of Seven Fallen Churches, and One of the Heads of the Leopardlike Beast of Revelation 13?

THE Shepherd's Rod answers "Yes."

It further teaches that the Seventh-day Adventist Church began its fall, or decline, in 1890, and completed the falling away in the year 1929 or 1930, the time when the Shepherd's Rod began to be taught, and when the temporal power of the papacy was restored by the Italian Government under Mussolini, February 11, 1929.

"Before the 1260 years ended in 1798, the four Protestant denominations were already in existence; namely, Lutheran, Presbyterian, Methodist, and Christian. But after 1798 came the First-day Adventists; and the Seventh-day Adventists from 1844 to 1929 completed his [leopard beast's] seven heads. As Protestantism fell by the declaration of the Second Angel's Message after 1844, and as the symbol of Revelation 13 in 1930 revealed that the Seventh-day Adventists 'wondered after the beast' (world), these two incidents healed the wound, and drew the blasphemy over all seven heads. Thus, the complete fulfillment of the symbolical prophecy revealed the truth of the beast. As all other sects are but offshoots from these seven bodies, the heads included all Christendom up to 1930."—*The Shepherd's Rod*, "vol. 2, chapter entitled 'The Leopardlike Beast,' page 107.

"While the six Protestant and the one Catholic head make the Biblical number 'seven,' meaning all Christendom, God has the same prophecy confirmed by the prophet Ezekiel [seeds of Ezekiel 4:5, 6, 9, 12], and carried out by the reformers since Luther's time; namely, Luther, Knox, Wesley, Campbell, Miller, and Sister White. . . . These six great reformers on the Protestant side established the six great denominations represented by the six heads, and the Catholic church (the mother of

Protestantism), the seventh, thus including all Christendom in her polluted state."—*"The Shepherd's Rod,"* vol. 1, chapter entitled "Summary of the 144,000, the Deadly Wound Is Healed," page 220; see also *"The Shepherd's Rod,"* vol. 1, pages 101, 155, 221.

"Therefore, subtract from 1930, the forty prophetic years [Ezekiel 4:6] and you have 1890, the time when the church began to decline."—*Id.*, page 222. See also chart on page 221.

This far-reaching claim on the part of the Shepherd's Rod that the Seventh-day Adventist denomination is a fallen church, and in 1929 or 1930 became one of the heads of the leopardlike beast, is, if true, of tremendous importance to every loyal Seventh-day Adventist. The question naturally arises: Upon what evidence or upon what process of reasoning or argument does the Shepherd's Rod base these conclusions? A careful study of both Volume 1 and Volume 2 of *"The Shepherd's Rod"* reveals the fact that these conclusions are based upon the author's interpretation of the leopardlike beast of Revelation 13:1-10 and his interpretation of the fourth chapter of Ezekiel.

To make our study a little more clear and concrete, it may be helpful to think of these claims of the Shepherd's Rod regarding the fall of the Seventh-day Adventist Church as a platform supported by four pillars, or contentions, as follows:

1. That the leopardlike beast of Revelation 13 is not the papacy, but fallen Christendom.

2. That the papal head was given its deadly wound in the year 1500 A. D. by Luther instead of by the French army in 1798.

3. That the six seeds which Ezekiel ate (Ezekiel 4:9) for 390 years after they had been placed in "one vessel" and baked into bread represents six different religious doctrines of Protestant churches.

4. That, in symbol, Ezekiel began to eat these doctrines (seeds) in the form of a cake, beginning in 1500 A. D. See Ezekiel 4:5, 6, 9, 12.

Let us now turn to a careful examination of these four pillars, or contentions, upon which the platform, or conclusion, regarding the fall of the Seventh-day Adventist Church rests.

### The Leopardlike Beast of Revelation 13

The first claim, or pillar, is that the leopardlike beast does not represent the papacy. Here at the very beginning, the Shepherd's Rod comes into direct conflict with the spirit of prophecy, as is shown by the following parallel quotations from "The Shepherd's Rod" on the one hand and the spirit of prophecy on the other:

#### The Shepherd's Rod

"The idea concerning the symbolical application of the false prophet of Revelation 19:20, the woman on the scarlet-colored beast of Revelation 17, the leopardlike beast of Revelation 13, the scarlet-colored beast of Revelation 17, and the nondescript beast of Daniel 7, as being symbols of the papacy, is unbiblical and also illogical."—"The Shepherd's Rod," vol. 2, page 148.

"The idea that the papacy is called the beast is altogether wrong."—"The Shepherd's Rod," vol. 2, page 151.

#### The Spirit of Prophecy

"The third angel's warning is, 'If any man worship the beast and his image, and receive his mark in his forehead, or in his hand, the same shall drink of the wine of the wrath of God.' 'The beast' mentioned in this message, whose worship is enforced by the two-horned beast, is the first, or leopardlike beast of Revelation 13,—the papacy."—"The Great Controversy," page 445.

"Then to learn what the image is like, and how it is to be formed, we must study the characteristics of the beast itself,—the papacy."—*Id.*, page 443.

So at the very start we find it necessary to choose between the Shepherd's Rod and clear, definite statements from the spirit of prophecy. Genuine Seventh-day Adventists will take their stand on the spirit of prophecy, and feel compelled to reject the contradictory teaching of the Shepherd's Rod. And so we find that the first pillar crumbles under the weight of investigation and in the light of plain statements from the spirit of prophecy.

## The Receiving of the Deadly Wound

We next turn our attention to the claim that the deadly wound was given the papal head of the leopardlike beast in the year 1500 A. D. by Luther instead of by the French army in 1798. Here again the Shepherd's Rod is in direct and complete disagreement with very clear statements of the spirit of prophecy. This is shown by the following parallel quotations:

### The Shepherd's Rod

"The exile of pope Pius VI, in 1798, and his death at Valence, France, August 19, 1799, is *not* [italics author's] the receiving of the wound, no more than the death of any other pope before or after."—*The Shepherd's Rod*, vol. 1, page 215.

### The Spirit of Prophecy

"I saw one of his heads as it were wounded to death; and his deadly wound was healed; and all the world wondered after the beast." *The infliction of the deadly wound points to the downfall of the papacy in 1798.*—*The Great Controversy*, page 653 (new edition).

"This period, as stated in preceding chapters, began with the supremacy of the papacy, A. D. 538, and terminated in 1798. *At that time*, the pope was made captive by the French army, the *papal power received its deadly wound*, and the prediction was fulfilled, 'He that leadeth into captivity shall go into captivity.'—*Id.*, page 501.

Could contradiction and disagreement be more complete?

When the attention of the author of "The Shepherd's Rod" was called to this direct contradiction, he did not deny it, but claimed that his interpretation should be accepted because Sister White did not have the complete light on the subject.

Surely no one claims that Sister White has given us all the light that will ever come to God's people; but we do maintain *most decidedly* that when additional light comes to us, it will be in harmony with what has already been given in the Bible and the spirit of prophecy, rather than in such a complete disagreement as we have here.

"God has not passed His people by, and chosen one solitary man here and another there as the only ones worthy to be entrusted with His truth. *He does not give one man new light contrary to the established faith of the body.* In every reform men have arisen making this claim."—*Testimonies for the Church*, vol. 5, page 291.

See Chart II, page 44.

Before leaving this part of our discussion, let us see what further light comes to us from the pages of history as well as the spirit of prophecy.

The chart found on page 221 of "The Shepherd's Rod," vol. 1, gives the date 1500 A. D. as the time when the deadly wound was given the papal head. It is claimed that Luther at that time gave the deadly wound. What says the historian?

From the Encyclopedia Britannica, article entitled "Luther," we learn that Luther was born in the year 1483 A. D.; hence he was only a youth of seventeen years in the year 1500 A. D. Aside from the fact that we would hardly expect a youth of such tender years to deliver a deadly wound to such a power as the papacy, we find something of much greater significance. In the year 1517 A. D., when Luther published his protest against indulgences, he was still a good son of the church. Notice the following statement from one of America's foremost historians:

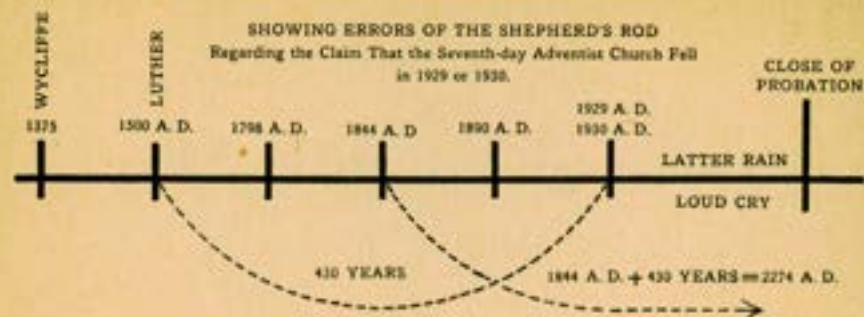
"When Luther published his protest against indulgences [1517 A. D.], he spoke as a good son of the church, without the remotest idea of separating from it."—*Dr. Ferdinand Schwill, in "Political History of Modern Europe," page 68.*

This same fact is confirmed by the spirit of prophecy.

"Luther, though still a papist of the strictest sort, was filled with horror at the blasphemous assumptions of the indulgence mongers."—*"The Great Controversy," page 128.*

The context of this statement from "The Great Controversy" shows that it applies just before Luther posted his ninety-five theses on the door of the cathedral in 1517 A. D. In view of these clear evidences, from both history and the spirit of prophecy, it would seem almost unbelievable that the Shepherd's Rod should claim that Luther delivered a deadly blow to the papacy in the year 1500 A. D., when seventeen years later he was "still a papist of the strictest sort."

We freely concede that the work done by Luther in later years helped to prepare the way for the giving of the wound in 1798; but so did the work of Wycliffe, one hundred twenty-five years earlier. Observe what the spirit of prophecy says concerning the work of Wycliffe:



**CHART II**

1. The Shepherd's Rod teaches that Luther gave the papal head its deadly wound in 1500 A. D. The spirit of prophecy says this was done in 1798.—"The Great Controversy," pages 579, 439.

2. The Shepherd's Rod teaches that the 430 years of Ezekiel 4 began in 1500 A. D., when it says that Ezekiel began to eat bread made of six seeds, and closed with the fall of the Seventh-day Adventist Church in 1929 or 1930. To be consistent with its own (the Shepherd's Rod's) interpretation of the "seeds" and "vessel" of Ezekiel 4, the 430-year period could not begin before 1844 A. D. because the "vessel" (the S. D. A. Church) did not exist before that date. Hence the Seventh-day Adventist Church could not fall before 2274 A. D. Thus we see how absurd and self-contradictory is their entire interpretation. Yet on such unsound interpretation and reasoning does the Shepherd's Rod base its claim that the Seventh-day Adventist Church fell in 1930 and became one of the heads of the leopardlike beast of Revelation 13.

Of course, we reject this entire Shepherd's Rod interpretation of these dates, seeds, and symbols.

"Wycliffe's words were fulfilled. *He lived to place in the hands of his countrymen the most powerful of all weapons against Rome; to give them the Bible, the Heaven-appointed agent to liberate, enlighten, and evangelize the people. . . . In giving the Bible to his countrymen, he had done more to break the fetters of ignorance and vice, more to liberate and elevate his country, than was ever achieved by the most brilliant victories on fields of battle.*"—*The Great Controversy*, page 88.

And history records that Wycliffe's country—England—in later years became the most powerful defender and protector of the Protestant cause. Historical and inspired facts force us to the conclusion that Wycliffe's work did much more toward the downfall of Rome than anything Luther did before 1517 A. D.

We now have before us three possible dates for the inflicting of the deadly wound.

First, the days of Wycliffe, 1375 A. D., when he placed "in the hands of his countrymen the most powerful of all weapons against Rome,"—the Bible, about one hundred twenty-five years before Luther.

Second, the year 1500 A. D., when Luther was a boy of seventeen years and when for seventeen years longer he was "still a papist of the strictest sort."

Third, the year 1798, when the French army took the pope captive.

We must make our choice from one of these dates. Fortunately, we are not left to our own wisdom, for the spirit of prophecy tells us plainly which of the three is the correct date.

"The inflicting of the deadly wound points to the abolition of the papacy in 1798."—*The Great Controversy* (new edition), page 653.

"This period, as stated in preceding chapters, began with the supremacy of the papacy, A. D. 538, and terminated in 1798. *At that time, the pope was made captive by the French army, the papal power received its deadly wound, and the prediction was fulfilled, 'He that leadeth into captivity shall go into captivity.'*"—*Id.*, page 501.

We must confess that we find it very difficult to understand why the Shepherd's Rod should choose the year 1500 A. D. for the inflicting of the deadly wound upon the papacy when this is so completely out of harmony with the statements of history and the spirit of prophecy.

Thus two of the four pillars supporting the contention of the Shepherd's Rod that the Seventh-day Adventist Church is one

of the heads of the leopardlike beast have crumbled under the attack of history and very definite statements from the spirit of prophecy. We now turn our attention to the third pillar:

**The Claim of the Shepherd's Rod That the Six Seeds of Ezekiel 4:9 Represent the Principal Religious Doctrines of Six Different Protestant Churches**

The Shepherd's Rod claims that the six seeds of Ezekiel 4:9 represent the principal religious doctrines of six different Protestant churches, as follows: wheat, faith as taught by Luther; barley, spirit, by Knox; beans, grace, by Wesley; lentils, baptism by immersion, by Campbell; millet, 2300 days, by William Miller; spelt, Sabbath in connection with the sanctuary, by Mrs. E. G. White. See chart, "The Shepherd's Rod," vol. 1, pages 133, 134.

Thorough examination has been made of both volumes of "The Shepherd's Rod," and diligent search has been made through the Bible and the spirit of prophecy, but no evidence can be found supporting these interpretations. Only one Scriptural reference, Judges 7:13, 14, is given by "The Shepherd's Rod," and that with respect to barley as a symbol of the Spirit; and when we read this reference, we find the story of Gideon and the Midianites.

"I dreamed a dream, and, lo, a cake of barley bread tumbled into the host of Midian, and came unto a tent, and smote it that it fell, and overturned it, that the tent lay along." Judges 7:13.

When so irrelevant a scripture as this is offered to prove the symbolic interpretation of the six seeds, we must conclude that the interpretation is based upon assumption rather than upon evidence. We would not give much attention to this strange interpretation of the seed symbols were it not for the fact that this interpretation is one of the pillars upon which rests the Shepherd's Rod claim that the Adventist Church is a fallen church and one of the heads of the leopardlike beast.

We have found that this pillar is one of assumption and not of evidence; therefore, it, too, must be rejected.

We now have but one pillar left to support a very far-reaching conclusion.



**Regarding Ezekiel's Eating the Six Seeds in the Form of a Cake  
for 390 Years Beginning in the Year 1500 A. D.**

See Chart II, page 44.

Let us carefully read the verses in the fourth chapter of Ezekiel upon which the Shepherd's Rod bases its claims that the Seventh-day Adventist Church is a fallen church and one of the heads of the leopardlike beast.

"For I have laid upon thee the years of their iniquity, according to the number of the days, *three hundred and ninety days*: so shalt thou bear the iniquity of the house of Israel. And when thou hast accomplished them, lie again on thy right side, and thou shalt bear the iniquity of the house of Judah *forty days*: . . . *I have appointed thee each day for a year.*" "Take thou also unto thee wheat, and barley, and beans, and lentils, and millet, and fitches [margin, spelt], and put them in *one vessel*, and make *thee bread thereof*, according to the number of the days that thou shalt lie upon thy side, *three hundred and ninety days shalt thou eat thereof.*" "And thou shalt eat it as barley cakes." Ezekiel 4:5, 6, 9, 12.

For the purpose of demonstrating that the Shepherd's Rod interpretation of these verses is positively erroneous and inconsistent, we shall consider, on the *basis of their own interpretation*, the seeds and the "one vessel" of the ninth verse.

We quote from "The Shepherd's Rod":

"We now come to the last variety of the cereals: "spelt" (Sabbath), in connection with the judgment. Is it not a fact that the Seventh-day Adventist denomination believes in all these truths: The wheat (faith); barley (Holy Spirit); beans (grace); lentils (immersion); millet (2300 days); spelt (Sabbath, with the sanctuary truth)? It will be noticed the Lord said, '*Put them in one vessel.*' He did not say in two, or more, but in ONE [*italics author's*]. There are no other people besides Seventh-day Adventists who believe in the 2300 days (cleansing of the Sanctuary), and it is this denomination (vessel) which teaches all the six doctrines as represented by the six varieties of food. Thus the prophecy meets its fulfillment in our day, and we are amazed with the difficulty to comprehend the great wisdom of the Lord our God."—"The Shepherd's Rod," vol. 1, pages 121, 122.

Notice carefully the Bible says: "Put them [the seeds] in one vessel, and make thee bread thereof, . . . three hundred and ninety days [years] shalt thou eat thereof." Ezekiel 4:9. "And thou shalt eat it as barley cakes." Verse 12.

Mark these important facts: The six seeds are to be put "*in one vessel.*" The six seeds are to be made into bread, "*Make thee*

*bread thereof,*" and "*Thou shalt eat it as barley cakes.*" Then notice also this important fact: The Shepherd's Rod, in the quotation from Volume 1, page 121, teaches that "spelt (Sabbath with the sanctuary truth)" has been taught by "*no other people besides Seventh-day Adventists.*" Now observe carefully each word, for we are about to arrive at some very important conclusions,—conclusions from which there is no logical escape, conclusions which indelibly place the mark of error upon the Shepherd's Rod.

When did the "vessel" (Seventh-day Adventist denomination, according to the Shepherd's Rod) come into existence?

Not before 1844.

When was the last doctrine, "spelt" (the Sabbath with the sanctuary truth), first taught or believed by Seventh-day Adventists (vessel)?

Not before 1844.

Now, still following the Shepherd's Rod symbolical interpretation, could Ezekiel possibly begin eating the "bread" "as barley cakes" made of six seeds that had been "put in one vessel" before the last grain or doctrine was present or before the "vessel" (Seventh-day Adventist denomination) was in existence?

Impossible.

Then could the three hundred ninety years, during which time Ezekiel was to eat the bread baked of six grains which had been "put in one vessel," possibly begin before the year 1844?

Surely not.

Therefore, even if this strange interpretation of the Shepherd's Rod were correct, the three-hundred-ninety-year period could not begin earlier than 1844.

In the sixth verse of Ezekiel 4 forty days (years) are added to the 390, making a total of 430.

Now, if the symbolic interpretations of the Shepherd's Rod were correct, when would the Seventh-day Adventist Church come to its fall and become one of the heads of the leopardlike beast of Revelation 13?

There can be but one answer: In the year 2274 A. D. For 1844 A. D. plus 390, plus 40, equal 2274 A. D.

So the futility and self-contradiction of the interpretations of the Shepherd's Rod become apparent. The last pillar upon which rested the claim that the Seventh-day Adventist Church fell in 1930 has broken down.

The significance of this demonstrated error of the Shepherd's Rod becomes more important in view of the fact that the author of "The Shepherd's Rod" claims infallibility for his writings, and has adopted the slogan, "All truth or no truth." Observe the following statement from a circular letter dated August 31, 1931, and signed by the author of "The Shepherd's Rod":

"We must conclude that the 'Rod' contains all truth, or there is no truth in it save the quotations of truth. Therefore, if we admit one truth revealed by the 'Rod,' then we must accept it all as truth. . . . Therefore, we take the position that the message in the 'Rod' is free from error in so far as the idea put forth is concerned."

On page 59 of a leaflet entitled "The Warning Paradox," copyrighted in 1933 by V. T. Houteff, we find this significant challenge and pledge:

"If the ministry can prove us wrong on the 144,000, which is the message of the hour, or even on any one [italics author's] topic in our publications, we agree to retract our position and destroy all of our three volumes."

We have both proved and demonstrated that there is basic error in the teachings of "The Shepherd's Rod." Will the author now resort to the "deceptive policies" and "windings and twistings and turnings" of "error" ("Testimonies for the Church," vol. 3, page 425) in an endeavor to dodge the issue, or will he step forward honestly and honorably and make good his pledge: "*We agree to retract our position and destroy all of our three volumes.*"—"The Warning Paradox," page 59.

May the Lord help all who have been deceived by the Shepherd's Rod to see the error of its teaching, and give them the courage to renounce it.

## PART III

### Other Warnings

WE make these suggestions to those who have become interested in the teachings of the Shepherd's Rod:

#### 1. **Accept Only Genuine Proof.**

Before you accept such teachings, insist upon proof, evidence, not reasonings, not assumptions, not inferences, not private interpretation of symbols, but plain and definite statements from the Bible or the spirit of prophecy, such as we have offered you.

#### 2. **The Sealing of Ezekiel 9 Comes Before Close of Probation, Slaughter After.**

In reading references offered by the Shepherd's Rod to substantiate their views regarding the ninth chapter of Ezekiel, note carefully the difference between the sealing and the actual slaughter. The sealing, we all agree, takes place before the close of probation, the slaughter takes place after the close of probation at the time of "the *general* destruction of the wicked" when the wicked will *all* be destroyed. See "Testimonies for the Church," vol. 3, page 267. See Chart I, page 14.

#### 3. **Individuals, Not the Church, Close Their Own Probation Before the End.**

We recognize that individuals, by continually resisting the Holy Spirit, finally commit the sin against the Holy Ghost, and thereby close their own probation. This has been done all through the ages, but this in nowise justifies us in accepting the view that the church, as a church, experiences a special close of probation before the latter rain.

#### 4. **Judgments of Various Kinds Before the Close of Probation Do Not Refer to the Slaughter of Ezekiel 9.**

Both the Bible and the spirit of prophecy teach that earthquakes, storms, pestilences, and other judgments will be experienced before probation's close. But such statements as these do not justify us in accepting the view that the slaughter of Ezekiel 9 falls upon the church before the latter rain.

**5. The Slaughter of Ezekiel 9 Begins With Ancient Men, but This Is After the Close of Probation.**

It is true that the slaughter of Ezekiel 9 falls first upon the church and its false shepherds (ancient men), but from evidence which has been presented from the spirit of prophecy, it is clear that this takes place after the close of probation when "all have made their decision." See "The Great Controversy," page 656. See Chart I, page 14.

**6. Be Sure to Look Up References Quoted by the Shepherd's Rod.**

To illustrate the unreliability of the use of quotations by the author of "The Shepherd's Rod," we quote from page 14 of "The Dardanelles of the Bible," a leaflet copyrighted by V. T. Houteff in the year 1933:

Therefore "while the investigative judgment is going forward in heaven, . . . there is to be a special work of purification, of putting away of sin, among God's people upon earth. . . . Then the church which our Lord at His coming is to receive to Himself will be 'a glorious church, not having spot, or wrinkle, or any such thing.'"—"*The Great Controversy*," page 425.

Next we quote this reference without omission, as it appears in "The Great Controversy." The sentence in capital letters is the vital one omitted in the quotation as given in "The Dardanelles of the Bible."

"While the investigative judgment is going forward in heaven, while the sins of penitent believers are being removed from the sanctuary, there is to be a special work of purification, of putting away of sin, among God's people upon earth. **THIS WORK IS MORE CLEARLY PRESENTED IN THE MESSAGES OF REVELATION 14. WHEN THIS WORK SHALL HAVE BEEN ACCOMPLISHED, THE FOLLOWERS OF CHRIST WILL BE READY FOR HIS APPEARING. THEN SHALL THE OFFERING OF JUDAH AND JERUSALEM BE PLEASANT UNTO THE LORD, AS IN THE DAYS OF OLD, AND AS IN FORMER YEARS.**' Then the church which our Lord at His coming is to receive to Himself will be 'a glorious church, not having spot, or wrinkle, or any such thing.'"—"*The Great Controversy*," page 425.

Notice how completely the meaning is changed by the omission of the sentences in capital letters. When the sentences in capital letters are omitted, the word "then" in the last sentence

of the quotation is made to refer to the time when the church is being purified during the investigative judgment, that is, *before* the close of probation. When the sentences in capital letters are included, as they should be, the word "then" refers to the time "*when this work shall have been accomplished,*" that is, after the investigative judgment is completed,—after the close of probation.

#### **7. Christ Instructs His Followers Not to Force Their Presence Where They Are Not Wanted.**

The practice of both the leaders and the followers of the Shepherd's Rod for several years in using their attendance at our Sabbath school and church services as an occasion to disturb and proselyte, to lead new and inexperienced members astray, should reveal to all their unchristian spirit, especially in view of the fact that they attempt to force their presence even after they have been requested again and again to remain away.

Such practice is completely out of harmony with the instruction of Christ:

"But into whatsoever city ye enter, and they receive you not, go your ways out into the streets of the same." Luke 10:10.

Christ never forced His presence where He was not wanted. He instructs His disciples to follow His example.

#### **8. Separations Do Not Always Refer to Slaughter and Burning.**

It is generally agreed that there are separations that take place before the close of probation. Christ speaks of a separation or division that He brought to the world in His day.

"Suppose ye that I am come to give peace on earth? I tell you, Nay; but rather division: for from henceforth there shall be five in one house divided, three against two, and two against three. The father shall be divided against the son, and the son against the father; the mother against the daughter, and the daughter against the mother; the mother-in-law against her daughter-in-law, and the daughter-in-law against her mother-in-law." Luke 12:51-53.

A similar separation is seen whenever the truth is preached. The gospel net separates its draught of fish from the other fish in the sea, but there are among those brought in by the gospel net bad fish as well as good; and some of the bad remain until

after "the work of the gospel is completed."—"Christ's Object Lessons," page 123.

The shaking before the close of probation is a separating process; so is the work of the third angel.

"Fearful is his work; Awful is his mission. He is the angel that is to select the wheat from the tares, and seal, or bind, the wheat for the heavenly garner."—"Early Writings," page 118.

This sealing also separates; but note this carefully. The separation is not made by destruction or slaughter. Before the close of probation man does not know who are sealed, but God knows His own.

Mark this with care. There is a separation that is very real, literal, and apparent to all. This is the separation that is the burning of the tares, the slaughter of the unfaithful, that takes place not before the latter rain but "*when the work of the gospel is completed*" ("Christ's Object Lessons," page 123); when "the wicked will all be destroyed" ("Patriarchs and Prophets," page 541) "in the *general destruction of the wicked*" ("Testimonies for the Church," vol. 3, page 267).

#### 9. God Warns Against the Exceeding Deceitfulness of Error.

"But the fact that a movement to establish error is connected with a work which is in itself good, is not an argument in favor of the error. We may disguise poison by mingling it with wholesome food, but we do not change its nature. On the contrary, it is rendered more dangerous, as it is more likely to be taken unawares. *It is one of Satan's devices to combine with falsehood just enough truth to give it plausibility.*"—"The Great Controversy," page 587.

"The mind in which *error has once taken possession* can never expand freely to truth, even after investigation. The old theories will claim recognition. The understanding of things that are true and elevated and sanctifying will be confused. Superstitious ideas will enter the mind, to mingle with the true, and these ideas are always debasing in their influence. . . . Cleave to the word, 'It is written.' Cast out of the mind the dangerous, obtrusive *theories* which, if entertained, *will hold the mind in bondage*, so that the man shall not become a new creature in Christ. *The mind must be constantly restrained and guarded.*"—"Medical Ministry," page 89.

"God has not passed His people by, and chosen *one solitary man* here and another there as the only ones worthy to be entrusted with His truth.

HE DOES NOT GIVE ONE MAN NEW LIGHT CONTRARY TO THE ESTABLISHED FAITH OF THE BODY. IN EVERY REFORM MEN HAVE ARISEN MAKING THIS CLAIM."—*Testimonies for the Church,* vol. 5, page 291.

#### 10. God Has Promised to Lead His People to the End.

In this reply we have repeatedly admitted that there are false brethren in our church, nor do we claim perfection for our leaders. We know they are not always right, unfortunately they are subject to human limitations as are the rest of us. We accept the rebukes, admonitions, and warnings that have come to us from the Bible and the spirit of prophecy.

Yet we have these reassuring words from the servant of the Lord written three years after the Shepherd's Rod claims the Seventh-day Adventist Church began its fall:

"The church, enfeebled and defective, needing to be reprov'd, warn'd, and counseled, is the only object upon earth upon which Christ bestows His supreme regard."—*Testimonies to Ministers,* page 49.

And twenty-three years after the time when the Shepherd's Rod claims our denomination began to fall, only two years before her death, came this message from the Lord's servant:

"When in the night season I am unable to sleep, I lift my heart in prayer to God, and He strengthens me, and gives me the assurance that He is with His ministering servants in the home field and in distant lands. I am encouraged and blessed as I realize that the God of Israel is still guiding His people, and that He will continue to be with them, even to the end."—*Life Sketches,* pages 437, 438.

#### 11. Undermining of Confidence in Leaders First Steps in Apostasy.

We would be falling short of doing our full duty if we did not call the attention of leaders and followers of the Shepherd's Rod to warnings the Lord has given against the spirit of criticism toward our brethren and leaders.

"But a heart where the peace of Christ is not, is unhappy, full of discontent; the person sees defects in everything, and he would bring discord into the most heavenly music. A life of selfishness is a life of evil. Those whose hearts are filled with love of self will store away evil thoughts of their brethren and will talk against God's instrumentalities. Passions kept warm and fierce by Satan's promptings, are a bitter fountain, ever sending forth bitter streams to poison the life of others.



"Let each one who claims to follow Christ, esteem himself less, and others more. Press together, press together! In union there is strength and victory; in discord and division there is weakness and defeat. These words have been spoken to me from heaven. As God's ambassador, I speak them to you."—*Testimonies for the Church*, vol. 5, page 488.

Notice the successive steps that lead to apostasy and destruction, as given in the following quotation from the spirit of prophecy:

"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."—*Testimonies for the Church*, vol. 5, page 672.

#### **12. Shepherd's Rod Forces Already Dividing.**

The disintegrating and dividing effect of erroneous teachings has already appeared in the ranks of the Shepherd's Rod. A substantial number of them, some of them former leaders, have because of errors they have found in "The Shepherd's Rod," left the former leadership of V. T. Houteff and are meeting by themselves as a separate company. This runs true to form, and is in line with the history of preceding offshoots who have left us.

#### **13. Shepherd's Rod Virtually a Separate Organization.**

The Shepherd's Rod claims not to be organizing a new or a separate movement, yet their leaders accept tithe for their own support and to propagate their own peculiar teachings; and, furthermore, during February and March of 1934 they held a general meeting of their followers. Not many were present, yet it was a representative meeting of adherents from different places.

#### **14. God Instructs Us Not to Study Error or Go Where It Is Taught.**

Since error is found in the Shepherd's Rod, and it is in open disagreement with the Bible and the spirit of prophecy, the only safe course is to reject its teaching and to discontinue its study. It should not be necessary to drink a whole barrel of contaminated water to find out whether or not it is good. The warnings

of the Bible and the spirit of prophecy concerning our attitude toward erroneous doctrines should be heeded:

"If there come any unto you, and bring not this doctrine, receive him not into your house, neither bid him Godspeed: for he that biddeth him Godspeed is partaker of his evil deeds." 2 John 10, 11.

*"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. . . . While false doctrines and dangerous errors are pressed upon the mind, it cannot be dwelling upon the truth which is to fit and prepare the house of Israel to stand in the day of the Lord."*—*Early Writings*, pages 124, 125.

#### **15. Controversy Regarding Who Constitute 144,000 to Be Avoided.**

The Lord has warned us against entering "into controversy" regarding who constitute the 144,000. The reason why the Committee has discussed the 144,000 at all is that the teachings of "The Shepherd's Rod" on the subject are so completely out of harmony with the spirit of prophecy, and because silence on the subject in the past has been interpreted by the leaders of the Shepherd's Rod as inability to meet their erroneous doctrines. (See their challenge as quoted on page 35 of this Reply.) We urge our people to give heed to the instruction found in the following quotation from the spirit of prophecy:

"Christ declared that when He comes some of His waiting people will be engaged in business transactions. Some will be sowing in the fields, others reaping and gathering in the harvest, and others grinding at the mill. It is not God's will that His elect shall abandon life's duties and responsibilities and give themselves up to idle contemplation, living in a religious dream. They are to be 'not slothful in business, fervent in spirit, serving the Lord.'"

"Christ says that there will be those in the church who will present fables and superstitions, when God has given grand, elevating, ennobling truths, which should ever be kept in the treasure house of the mind. *When men pick up this theory and that theory, when they are curious to know something it is not necessary for them to know, God is not leading them.* It is not His plan that His people shall present something which they have to suppose, which is not taught in the word. *It is not His will*

*that they shall get into controversy over questions which will not help them spiritually, such as who is to compose the 144,000.* This those who are the elect will in a short time know without question.

"My brethren and sisters, appreciate and study the truths God has given for you and your children. *Spend not your time in seeking to know that which will be no spiritual help.* 'What shall I do to inherit eternal life?' This is the all-important question, and it has been clearly answered. 'What is written in the law? how readest thou?'" Luke 10:26. MS.-26-1901.

It is clearly evident from the quotation given above that much truth will be given the elect in the great hereafter which God has not seen fit to reveal and which it is unnecessary for us to know now. Deuteronomy 29:29. It is also evident from this quotation that the question of "who is to compose the 144,000" is not essential to our spiritual welfare, and we are admonished, "Spend not your time in seeking to know that which will be no spiritual help."

Let us now most earnestly give attention to the cleansing of the soul temple which will prepare us for the trying times just before us.

## PART IV

# Counsel Concerning New or Advanced Light—Colossians 2:2-10.

### Doctrine

"TAKE heed unto thyself, and unto the doctrine; continue in them: for in doing this thou shalt both save thyself, and them that hear thee." 1 Timothy 4:16.

"If any man will do His will, he shall know of the doctrine, whether it be of God, or whether I speak of Myself." John 7:17.

"'Sound doctrine' is Bible truth—truth that will promote piety and devotion, confirming God's people in the faith."—*"Gospel Workers,"* page 311.

"Whosoever transgresseth, and abideth not in the doctrine of Christ, hath not God. He that abideth in the doctrine of Christ, he hath both the Father and the Son. *If there come any unto you, and bring not this doctrine, receive him not into your house, neither bid him Godspeed. For he that biddeth him Godspeed is partaker of his evil deeds.*" 2 John 9-11.

"Now I beseech you, brethren, mark them which cause divisions and offenses contrary to the doctrine which ye have learned; and avoid them." Romans 16:17.

"Our watchword is to be, 'To the law and to the testimony: if they speak not according to this word, it is because there is no light in them.' Isaiah 8:2. We have a Bible full of the most precious truth. It contains the alpha and the omega of knowledge."—*"Gospel Workers,"* page 309.

### Greater, or New Light

"Whatever may be man's intellectual advancement, let him not for a moment think that there is no need of thorough and continuous searching of the Scriptures for greater light. As a people we are called individually to be students of prophecy. We must watch with earnestness that we may discern any ray of light which God shall present to us. We are to catch the first gleamings of truth; and through prayerful study, clearer light may be obtained, which can be brought before others."—*"Testimonies for the Church,"* vol. 5, page 708.

"New light will ever be revealed on the word of God to him who is in living connection with the Sun of Righteousness. Let no one come to the conclusion that there is no more truth to be revealed. The diligent, prayerful seeker for truth will find precious rays of light yet to shine forth from the word of God."—*"Testimonies on Sabbath School Work,"* page 53.

### **New Light Will Not Destroy Old Truths**

"We must not for a moment think that there is no more light, no more truth, to be given us. We are in danger of becoming careless, by our indifference losing the sanctifying power of truth, and composing ourselves with the thought, 'I am rich, and increased with goods, and have need of nothing.' Revelation 3:17. While we must hold fast to the truths which we have already received, we must not look with suspicion upon any new light God may send."—*"Gospel Workers,"* page 310.

"Let none seek to tear away the foundations of our faith,—the foundations that were laid at the beginning of our work, by prayerful study of the word and by revelation. Upon these foundations we have been building for more than fifty years. Men may suppose that they have found a new way, that they can lay a stronger foundation than that which has been laid; but this is a great deception. 'Other foundation can no man lay than that is laid.' 1 Corinthians 3:11. In the past, many have undertaken to build a new faith, to establish new principles; but how long did their building stand? It soon fell; for it was not founded upon the Rock."—*Id.*, page 307.

"I beseech those who are laboring for God not to accept the spurious for the genuine. *Let not human reasoning be placed where sanctifying truth should be.* Christ is waiting to kindle faith and love in the hearts of His people. *Let not erroneous theories receive countenance from the people who ought to be standing on the platform of eternal truth. God calls upon us to hold firmly to the fundamental principles that are based upon unquestionable authority.*"—*Id.*, page 308.

### **God's Church Stands as His Exponent of Truth**

"God has not passed His people by, and chosen one solitary man here and another there as the only ones worthy to be entrusted with His truth. *He does not give one man new light con-*

trary to the established faith of the body. In every reform men have arisen making this claim. Paul warned the church in his day, 'Of your own selves shall men arise, speaking perverse things, to draw away disciples after them.' The greatest harm to God's people comes through those who go out from among them speaking perverse things. Through them the way of truth is evil spoken of."—*Testimonies for the Church,* vol. 5, page 291.

"The church is God's agency for the proclamation of truth, empowered by Him to do a special work; and if she is loyal to Him, obedient to all His commandments, there will dwell within her the excellency of divine grace. If she will be true to her allegiance, if she will honor the Lord God of Israel, there is no power that can stand against her."—*Acts of the Apostles,* page 600.

#### **If One Has New Light, Seek Counsel**

"I saw that the shepherds should consult those in whom they have reason to have confidence, those who have been in all the messages, and are firm in all the present truth, before they advocate new points of importance, which they may think the Bible sustains. Then the shepherds will be perfectly united, and the union of the shepherds will be felt by the church. Such a course I saw would prevent unhappy divisions, and then there would be no danger of the precious flock being divided, and the sheep scattered without a shepherd."—*Early Writings,* pages 61, 62.

"It is a mistake to withdraw from those who do not agree with our ideas. This will not inspire our brethren with confidence in our judgment. It is our duty to counsel with our brethren, and to heed their advice. We are to seek their counsel, and when they give it, we are not to cast it away, as if they were our enemies."—*Special Testimonies, Series B, No. 9-31.*

#### **If the Brethren See No Light in It, Yield to Their Judgment**

"Where no counsel is, the people fall: but in the multitude of counselors there is safety." Proverbs 11:14.

"There are a thousand temptations in disguise prepared for those who have the light of truth; and the only safety for any of us is in receiving no new doctrine, no new interpretation of the Scriptures, without first submitting it to brethren of experience. Lay it before them in a humble, teachable spirit, with earnest

prayer; and if they see no light in it, yield to their judgment; for 'in the multitude of counselors there is safety.'—"*Testimonies for the Church*," vol. 5, page 293.

#### **God Will Reveal New Light to His Chosen Ones**

"If God has any new light to communicate, He will let His chosen and beloved understand it, without their going to have their minds enlightened by hearing those who are in darkness and error.

"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.*"—"*Early Writings*," page 124.

#### **Certain Scriptures Better Remain Undiscussed**

"Men of ability have devoted a lifetime of study and prayer to the searching of the Scriptures, and yet there are many portions of the Bible that have not been fully explored. *Some passages of Scripture will never be perfectly comprehended until in the future life Christ shall explain them. There are mysteries to be unraveled, statements that human minds cannot harmonize. And the enemy will seek to arouse argument upon these points, which might better remain undiscussed.*"—"*Gospel Workers*," page 312.

#### **Much So-Called Light Opens Way for Satan's Arts**

"We are living in an age of great light; but much that is called light is opening the way for the wisdom and arts of Satan. Many things will be presented that appear to be true, and yet they need to be carefully considered with much prayer; for they may be specious devices of the enemy. *The path of error often appears to lie close to the path of truth. It is hardly distinguishable from the path that leads to holiness and heaven. But the mind enlightened by the Holy Spirit may discern that it is diverging from the right way. After a while the two are seen to be widely separated.*"—"*Testimonies for the Church*," vol. 8, pages 290, 291.

### Satan Makes Men Very Zealous; Must Be Met and Opposed

"God is not the author of confusion, but of peace. But Satan is a vigilant, unsleeping foe, ever at work upon human minds, seeking a soil in which he can sow his tares. *If he finds any whom he can press into his service, he will suggest ideas and false theories, and make them zealous in advocating error.*"

"False teachers may appear to be very zealous for the work of God, and may expend means to bring their theories before the world and the church; but as they mingle error with truth, their message is one of deception, and will lead souls into false paths. *They are to be met, and opposed, not because they are bad men, but because they are teachers of falsehood, and are endeavoring to put upon falsehood the stamp of truth.*"—"Testimonies to Ministers," pages 54, 55.

### Quote "Testimonies" to Support Theories a Work of Deception

"It will be found that those who bear false messages will not have a high sense of honor and integrity. *They will deceive the people, and mix up with their error the 'Testimonies' of Sister White, and use her name to give influence to their work. They make such selections from the 'Testimonies' as they think they can twist to support their positions, and place them in a setting of falsehood, so that their error may have weight, and be accepted by the people. They misinterpret and misapply that which God has given to the church to warn, counsel, reprove, comfort, and encourage those who shall make up the remnant people of God.*"

"By this misusing of the 'Testimonies,' souls are placed in perplexity, because they cannot understand the relation of the 'Testimonies' to such a position as is taken by those in error; for God intended that the 'Testimonies' should always have a setting in the framework of truth.

"Those who advocate error, will say, 'The Lord saith,' 'when the Lord hath not spoken.'"—"Testimonies to Ministers," pages 42, 43.

"Those who start up to proclaim a message on their own individual responsibility, who, while claiming to be taught and led of God, still make it their special work to tear down that which God has been for years building up, are not doing the will of God. *Be it known that these men are on the side of the great deceiver. Believe them not. They are allying themselves with the enemies*



of God and the truth. They will deride the order of the ministry as a system of priestcraft. From such turn away, have no fellowship with their message, however much they may quote the 'Testimonies' and seek to intrench themselves behind them. Receive them not; for God has not given them this work to do."

"This class of evil workers have selected portions of the 'Testimonies,' and have placed them in the framework of error, in order by this setting to give influence to their false testimonies. When it is made manifest that their message is error, then the 'Testimonies' brought into the companionship of error, share the same condemnation."—*Id.*, pages 51, 52.

#### **Avoid All Side Issues; Watch and Pray**

"In our work no side issues must be advanced until there has been a thorough examination of the ideas entertained, that it may be ascertained from what source they have originated. *Satan's angels are wise to do evil, and they will create that which some will claim to be advanced light, will proclaim as new and wonderful things, and yet while in some respects the message is truth, it will be mingled with men's inventions, and will teach for doctrines the commandments of men.* If there was ever a time when we should watch and pray in real earnest, it is now. . . . My brethren, I warn you to make straight paths for your feet, lest the lame be turned out of the way."—*Id.*, page 229.

"Beware of false prophets, which come to you in sheep's clothing, but inwardly they are ravening wolves." Matthew 7:15.

"I have not sent these prophets, yet they ran: I have not spoken to them, yet they prophesied." Jeremiah 23:21.

"Study to show thyself approved unto God, a workman that needeth not to be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth. But shun profane and vain babblings: for they will increase unto more ungodliness. And their words will eat as doth a canker." 2 Timothy 2:15-17.

## Safe Rules for Bible Interpretation

THE Bible is an infallible guidebook. This axiomatic truth seems to be contradicted by the many discordant creeds, doctrines, and theories in the religious world, all claiming to be taught in the Bible. This confusion suggests something fundamentally wrong in the use of the Bible, and that is the method of Bible interpretation.

The psalmist says, "Thy word is a lamp unto my feet, and a light unto my path." Psalm 119:105. But the word is not this of itself, apart from the office of the Holy Spirit, whose work is to lead into all truth. And in order for one to be led into all truth by the Holy Spirit, there are certain rules that he must follow. One of the reasons why there are so many conflicting opinions as to what the Bible teaches, and why it is appealed to in support of "every wind of doctrine," is that there is a violation of these rules of interpretation. The Holy Spirit obviously does not preserve from error one who violates God-given rules. If the Spirit did, plainly there would not be such a jargon of creeds, beliefs, ideas, and fanciful theories as exist to-day.

The following rules of interpreting the Bible are followed by careful students of the Bible:

*RULE 1. The Bible should be taken literally, just as it reads.*

In "The Great Controversy" we read, "The whole Bible should be given to the people just as it reads." "If men would but take the Bible as it reads, if there were no false teachers to mislead and confuse their minds, a work would be accomplished that would make angels glad, and that would bring into the fold of Christ thousands upon thousands who are now wandering in error."—Pages 521, 599.

There are at least two general exceptions to this rule: First, when a plain symbol or figure is used as in the symbolic prophecies of Daniel and the Revelation, and, second, when the sense demands a metaphorical meaning, as in Matthew 5:29, 30, or as in a parable. We should be careful not to carry too far the symbols of the book of Revelation. For example, because a woman is used in Revelation to symbolize a church, we should not conclude that wherever a woman is used in other prophecies of the

Bible she is a symbol of a church or the church. We should be governed by the sense of the context.

RULE 2. *Beware of spiritualizing the Bible.*

Violating this rule, as is done by the Christian Scientist and the Swedenborgian, brings great confusion, and by spiritualizing the Scriptures one can make them teach almost anything.

RULE 3. *Rightly divide the word of truth.* 2 Timothy 2:15.

The Scriptures must be divided in studying to arrive at truth, but rightly, that is, in such a way that it is still a unit. In other words, it must explain itself, not contradict itself. It is manifestly wrongly dividing the word to take a verse, or a part of a verse, or a portion of Scripture, because the wording of it suits our purpose, out of its setting, and make use of it in such a way that it contradicts the context and other plain portions of the Scripture.

RULE 4. *Be cautious in making a double or twofold application of Scripture.*

This is the parent of a thousand errors. One is justified in making a double application of a scripture as far as the Bible and the spirit of prophecy justify it; but one should exercise caution in going further. Going further, one is very liable to be guilty of private interpretation against which the Bible itself warns. In this double application, for example, some make Jerusalem mean the church of God in these last days, and hence all promises to Jerusalem, reproofs, rebukes, denunciations, and fate, are applied to the church. But it is well to remember, first, in reading the Scriptures, that oftentimes these things were meant for Jerusalem alone, and second, that Jerusalem cannot be always taken to represent the church of God; for Jerusalem apostatized and was rejected, and hence it can be taken to represent the world. In "The Great Controversy" we read, "Christ saw in Jerusalem a *symbol of the world* hardened in unbelief and rebellion, and hastening on to meet the retributive judgments of God."—Page 22. And in "Testimonies for the Church," vol. 5, page 212, the abominations in Jerusalem of Ezekiel's vision (chapters 8 and 9) are made to typify abominations "*in the land*" as well as in the church. "The seal of God will be placed upon the foreheads of those only who sigh and cry for the abominations done *in the land*;" while on page 210 this is spoken of as

"the great wickedness *everywhere* prevalent." Hence we should not confine the interpretation of Jerusalem to the church alone.

Israel's coming out of Egypt is in the Scriptures used typically of remnant Israel's coming out of Babylon in these last days; but if one should interpret every incident in the history of Israel's Exodus from Egypt as typical of incidents and experiences in remnant Israel, the result would doubtless be many absurd, ridiculous, fantastic, and far-fetched interpretations. This is one of the dangers of double interpretation. We may go as far as the Bible and the spirit of prophecy, but no further.

The ceremonial law is the gospel in types, figures, and shadows; but to press for a type and an antitype relation in and for every small detail would surely lead one astray, and it would be akin to making every pin, tache, and tenon of the Mosaic sanctuary have a spiritual meaning. One Bible student has said: "It is abundantly evident that the tabernacle and, after it, the temple, were intended to stand as conveying by symbols great ideas in the scheme of redemption, to the minds of the people. . . . Yet it is plainly a mistake to attempt to find some typical or allegorical meaning in every separate part of it, many of the things being ordered for convenience, as in every other structure." And another has remarked: "No one acquainted with the history of interpretation can doubt that a vast injury has been done by a fanciful mode of explaining the Old Testament, by making every pin and pillar a type and every fact in its history an allegory. Nothing is better fitted to bring the science of interpretation into contempt, nothing more dishonors the Bible, than to make it a book of enigmas. The Bible is a book of sense."

RULE 5. *Beware of private interpretations.* 2 Peter 1:20.

There is great danger in this. One conjures up a theory, or adopts a certain hypothesis, and then studies the Bible with these theoretical and hypothetical spectacles upon his eyes, and bends and twists the Scripture, particularly those parts that are worded to suit, to that theory and hypothesis, taking portions entirely out of their setting and evident meaning, and making fanciful and far-fetched interpretations of them, to bolster up some preconceived theory. This is private interpretation. It is dangerous. And the careful and conscientious Bible student will shun it.

"In order to sustain erroneous doctrines or unchristian practices, some will seize upon passages of Scripture separated from the context, perhaps

quoting half of a single verse as proving their point, when the remaining portion would show the meaning to be quite the opposite. With the cunning of the serpent, they intrench themselves behind disconnected utterances construed to suit their carnal desires. Thus do many willfully pervert the word of God. Others, who have an active imagination, seize upon the figures and symbols of Holy Writ, interpret to suit their fancy, with little regard to the testimony of Scripture as its own interpreter, and then they present their vagaries as the teachings of the Bible."—*The Great Controversy*, page 521.

**RULE 6.** *Don't try to make a parable or a symbol run on all fours, and press for a meaning for every detail of a parable.* One learned commentator has said: "Let it be remembered that by the consent of all (except the basely interested) no metaphor is ever to be produced in proof of a doctrine. In the things that concern our eternal salvation, we need the most pointed and *express evidence* on which to establish the faith of our souls." And still another has truthfully remarked: "The parables may not be made the first sources of doctrine. Doctrines otherwise and already grounded, may be illustrated, or indeed further confirmed by them, but it is not allowable to constitute doctrine first by their aid. They may be the outer ornamental fringe, but not the main texture of the proof. For from the literal to the figurative, from the clearer to the more obscure, has ever been recognized as the law of Scripture interpretation. This rule, however, has often been forgotten; and controversialists, looking around for arguments with which to sustain some *weak position*, one for which they can find no other support in Scripture, often invent for themselves supports in these."

We have an illustration of the necessity of applying this principle of interpretation in the parable of the rich man and Lazarus. If we should endeavor to find a significant meaning for every detail of this parable, we would arrive at erroneous conclusions regarding the state of the dead.

**RULE 7.** *Respect the gift of teaching in the church.*

This is one of the Holy Spirit's methods to bring us into all truth and into "the unity of the faith." Ephesians 4:11-13. Study the case of the Ethiopian eunuch and Philip as related in the eighth chapter of Acts. Study also the case of Saul and Ananias as given in Acts 9. The gift of teaching in the church is one of the gifts of the Holy Spirit, and He works through that gift

to preserve the unity of the faith, and hence this counsel is given in the spirit of prophecy.

"There are a thousand temptations in disguise prepared for those who have the light of truth; and the *only safety* for any of us is in *receiving no new doctrine, no new interpretation* of the Scriptures, without first submitting it to brethren of experience. Lay it before them in a humble, teachable spirit, with earnest prayer; and if they see no light in it, *yield to their judgment*; for 'in the multitude of counselors there is safety.'" —*Testimonies for the Church*, vol. 5, page 293.

RULE 8. *A few examples of the many private interpretations found in "The Shepherd's Rod."*

The publications of the Shepherd's Rod, consisting of two small volumes and two tracts, are built almost entirely upon private interpretation of the Bible, and we might add, of the Testimonies. We shall call attention to a few examples among very many to prove this:

(a) "The Shepherd's Rod," vol. 1, pages 18, 19. The seven years of famine in Egypt are a type of New Testament times, while the seven years of plenty are typical of Old Testament times.

(b) Vol. 1, page 69. Pharaoh represents the apostolic church.

(c) Vol. 1, page 75. Jacob is a type of Elder James White.

(d) Vol. 1, page 76. The land of Goshen typifies the United States.

(e) Vol. 1, page 77. The new Pharaoh represents the leaders in the Seventh-day Adventist Church and that they have left off following Christ.

(f) Vol. 1, page 86. The midwives typify our church school teachers.

(g) Vol. 1, page 88. The drowned male children typify the men in our denomination who are not furnished with work in the denomination or by the denomination.

(h) Vol. 1, page 90. Moses is a type of the professors in our schools.

(i) Vol. 1, page 106. Joseph's marrying the daughter of an idolatrous priest is a type of Christ marrying a church made up of idolatrous nations.



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