

## **BE YE WISE AS SERPENTS – HARMLESS AS DOVES.**

DEAR BROTHER RUSSELL: – I appeal to you for some assistance. I have had within the last four months quite an experience; and, being only a "babe" in the truth, I need help. My query is respecting MILLENNIAL DAWN. The Lord has used it graciously in bringing me into his family, – and into great joy and peace. I was not until lately a Christian; because nothing in Christianity drew me; but, rather, the contradictory doctrines of the various denominations repelled me, and caused me to doubt the Book (the Bible) from which so many conflicting views could be drawn. About a year ago I became a "Salvationist," but now I am simply a Christian.

But when I had read the DAWN series (and I shall always feel grateful to the dear friend and Brother, who brought it to my attention), I found what my soul had long unwittingly hungered and thirsted after; – I found the divine plan of the ages; – I found harmony in God's Word; – I found the plan of God therein revealed in fullest accord with my highest and noblest reasoning faculties and sympathies; I found it full of love, full of justice and full of wisdom.

Joyfully I exclaimed, – These DAWN volumes are the Bible keys which God himself has sent to his people; that now, at last, after centuries of darkness and perplexity, we may "see light in his light," and praise and glorify his name, and get fully free from the bondage of error, and enjoy the true liberty of the sons of God!

As you know, I entered the colporteur work; – I gave myself zealously to that work (selling over a thousand DAWNS in eleven weeks), because I believed that thus I was preaching the gospel

more successfully and more acceptably to God than in any other way. But now I have stopped; because doubts have been aroused in my mind (and these by a brother colporteur) as to whether or not the DAWNS are what I hoped, – *God-given* "Bible Keys."

The cause of my loss of confidence lay in the fact that the brother-colporteur referred to, while quite earnest in the sale of DAWN, gave me to understand that he differed with its teachings on several points, and in some meetings, which we attended, he seemed to ignore the DAWN entirely. When one older than I in "this way" manifested such lack of confidence in the DAWNS, it shook my confidence, and I said to him, "Were not the DAWNS and WATCH TOWER the channels through which God brought the knowledge of his plan of the ages to your attention? And, if so, why are you ashamed to confess the agency which God thus honored and used to bless you? And if you know more truth than the DAWN and the TOWER present, and in conflict with their teachings, why do you circulate them?" The answer was that I would make of you a pope; and that even some parts of the Bible are errors.

But I was honest and in earnest, and concluded to sell no more DAWNS until I felt sure that they present the truth; – more of it than any other book I could circulate, and more than I myself could teach in any other manner. It was about this time that the Adversary brought me in contact with the so-called *Spirit of the Word* which for a few days threatened to ensnare me. But I soon discovered that not the spirit of God's Word but the spirit of error forwarded its teachings. It [R1535 : page 167] is altogether off the foundation, – the ransom. It teaches, too, that God is the only real sinner, and man his innocent dupe. Its hope is that, after 6000 years of mischief and sin and trouble making, God will, during the Millennial age, change; and in his efforts to undo the wrongs of the past and present he will save everybody everlastingly, – even the devil. I learned that Mr. Adams had first gotten the truth from you (and I

could see traces of the plan of the ages throughout his writings), and that he had as he supposed *improved* upon your writings: but to me his improvements had spoiled everything they mixed with.

I turned again to the DAWNS and TOWERS, and again the peace and joy and confidence began to come. Brother Adamson's article in the March 15th TOWER helped me, and then the May 1st TOWER on "The Twelve Apostles," seemed just the food my soul needed. [R1536 : page 167] It, with the second chapter of DAWN, Vol. I., refreshed my confidence in the Bible as indeed the Word of God – specially given and specially presented for our comfort and strength in this day of doubts and skepticism and many "uncertain sounds." And this gave me increased confidence in the DAWNS and TOWERS; and I said to myself: The same God who sent by his spirit his message by the prophets and his expositions by the apostles surely had something to do with the preparation of the MILLENNIAL DAWN and WATCH TOWER teachings; for they, and they alone of all the books of earth, fully harmonize the teachings of the Bible and make clear "the mystery" which God declared he would make clear in the close of the Gospel age. (Rev. 10:7) As evidence that there is an intelligent Creator, I am reminded of the old proof, sometimes given to Atheists, viz., the finding of a watch. The perfect adaptation of its wheels to each other and to the hands and dial proves that the watch had a designer, just as the perfect adaptation of Nature's various parts proves that there is an intelligent Creator. This same illustration, it seems to me, fits the DAWN: the fact that no other view harmonizes the entire Bible and rejects none of it, and the fact that the DAWN does this, would seem to my mind to prove that the DAWN had, either directly or indirectly, God's direction and providential leading in its preparation.

I note, Brother Russell, how carefully and modestly you disclaim any special revelations, any special inspirations, etc., in connection with these writings: how, on the contrary, you claim

that all such revelations, etc., ended with the twelve apostles, and that all subsequent light comes through their writings; and that the fact that the much fuller light now shining upon the divine plan is simply because God's *due time* has come for solving "the mystery;" that some channel must be used; and that if you had not been faithful to the opportunity some one else would have been used to hand forth the "meat in due season" to the household of faith.

Now, excuse the question, please, – Does the Brother I mention know more about the plan of God than you do? Or do you know anything wrong with the DAWNS, that you could correct if writing them to-day? As I said at first, I am but a "babe" in Christ and in the truth, but I desire the truth – the clearest truth to be obtained, and want to spend myself entirely in its service. Help me, I pray, to get settled again on a sure, firm foundation; for I have no desire to deceive myself or others.

Your brother in love, fellowship and His service,

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### **IN REPLY.**

[This dear Brother has since gotten quite rid of his perplexities, and is again hard at work in the harvest-field selling DAWN. We publish the above, and our answer, for the sake of others; advising all the dear reapers to be cautious lest the "babes" be even unintentionally choked. – EDITOR.]

DEAR BROTHER\_\_\_\_\_: – I am much pleased with your earnest spirit; and I fully agree with your sentiment that, in consecrating our time, influence and all to the Lord and his truth, it is our duty to use every reasonable means to know just what is Truth. You did perfectly right in stopping your sale of DAWN when in doubt about its truthful representation of God's great plan. Honesty toward God and toward fellow men demanded this of you,

as of all in this harvest work, or in any work in which the laborer becomes ostensibly God's instrument. For this reason we seek to have, among the DAWN and TOWER colporteurs, only such as are in the work for the Truth's sake *only*.

But, dear Brother, God would have you learn that, while the sympathy and companionship of fellow-servants are pleasant and desirable, it is needful for each of his servants to have on a personal armor that he may be able always to give an answer concerning his *own hope* (regardless of the hopes and doubts of others) with meekness. (1 Pet. 3:15.) Being only a "babe" in the truth and in the Lord, it is not surprising that you lacked the full vigor and full armor of a "*man in Christ,*" well instructed unto every good work, and fully able to rightly divide the Word of truth. Indeed, this may yet be quite a lesson for you to learn, – that [R1536 : page 168] you do not know *much*; that you are not yet a graduate, but merely a pupil in the school of Christ. Even the Apostle confessed that *now* we see as through an obscured glass, – now we know only in part. (1 Cor. 13:12.) And the more we all grow in the grace of the Lord, the humbler and more teachable we surely will become. It will be less and less a question of what channel the Lord may use, so long as we are sure that what we receive is his message from his Word.

But you are quite right in looking for more refreshment through the former channel of blessings; – until you are convinced either that the entire matter was a delusion and a deception, blessings and all, or else that the channel has become corrupted at a certain point, beyond which it is unfit for refreshment. And in the latter case it would be your duty to point out the corrupting error of life or doctrine – to the teacher, first; and then, if still seen to be error, you should boldly but lovingly declare, with your proofs, what you find to all whom you may esteem to be in danger. But if great humility is essential to acceptance with the Lord as teacher, remember that it will require the same spirit of meekness and

humility to be properly and acceptably a teacher of teachers. Such a course is indicated in our Lord's Word, and is sure to bring good results to all the meek sheep concerned.

Now, dear Brother, begin again; and, taking your BIBLE and the DAWNS, study the Plan of the Ages in the light of God's Word, and become rooted and grounded and built up in the present truth. (Col. 2:7.) When thus convinced of God's Word, the doubts and fears of others, on subjects thus proved and fully tested for yourself by the only standard, will not affect your faith, but strengthen you. But let not your strength rest in yourself, – in your own wisdom and knowledge which would merely puff you up and speedily make you unfit for present usefulness, as well as unworthy of the future Kingdom glories, promised to the faithful meek. Neither must you lean upon the DAWN and the TOWER as infallible teachers. If it was proper for the early Christians to prove what they received from the apostles, who were and who claimed to be inspired, how much more important it is that you fully satisfy yourself that these teachings keep closely within their outline instructions and those of our Lord; – since their author claims no inspiration, but merely the *guidance* of the Lord, as one used of him in feeding his flock.

I trust, dear Brother, that, as you examine these publications, that may seem to you to be true of the author which the Apostle Paul said of himself: "We preach not ourselves, but Christ, – the power of God and the wisdom of God. Whether successful or not, others must judge, and especially the Lord; but I ever seek to hold forth the Word of Life. (Phil. 2:16.) True, it has been held forth in *my* hands (powers), but never as *my* Word. Hence in no sense have I, as a pope, *taken the place* of Christ before his Church.

Indeed, time and again I have seen that the teachings of those who make utterances of their own, but in the name of Christ, by claimed inspiration, or special revelations, or boasted wisdom

(which is the real spirit of popery), and without proof from the Scripture, are received by many. And I am confident that the DAWN and TOWER would have many more friends and believers if they followed this (popery's) course; – for as some one has said, "People prefer to be humbugged." But such a course I dare not follow; I must be true to the Lord and declare his Word, and let him take charge of the consequences.

The world will be deceived, and merely so-called Christians also; because error will come in the way that will appeal to their expectations – boastfully: but God is now seeking a special "little flock" which always hearkens to the voice of the Chief Shepherd, and flees from all undershepherds who do not echo his words and have his spirit of meekness and simplicity. – Phil. 3:16-18.

And now about brother-colporteurs: I know from your previous letters that you owe very much to some of them for kindly Christian assistance in the truth and in colporteur methods. I feel sure that to some extent you have misapprehended their no doubt well-meant remarks; but I regret that any of them should be so unwise in their utterances, even though their hearts were entirely right in the matter. I have too much confidence in them all to suppose that any would remain in this harvest work if he had lost confidence in the *tools* with which the work is being prosecuted; – the DAWN and TOWER through which they learned of "the harvest" and found an entrance into it. When you become better acquainted with them, you will, I believe, fully concur with me that they are a very noble, self-sacrificing and humble band of the Lord's disciples; and will love them every one, as I do.

The only explanation I can offer of the language you quote is that possibly he thought you were in danger of loving the servant who showed you the truth more than the Lord who gave it to you through the servant. And let us hope it was zeal for the Lord that led him to the other extreme. **[R1536 : page 169]**

The remark, that "all of the Bible is not true," may merely have meant that some very ancient manuscripts of the Bible, found within the last fifty years, show that a few verses here and there in our common English Bible are really no part of the Bible proper, as it came from the apostles, but were added by unknown parties somewhere between the fifth and tenth centuries. (Of these are Mark 16:9-20; John 21:25; Matt. 23:14; and parts of 1 John 5:7,8 and of Rev. 20:5; besides a few of very [R1537 : page 169] minor importance, affecting the sense little or nothing.) Or he may have been drifting, as so many are in these days, into a general doubt of the Bible, and of all except their own so-called "higher criticism:" If so, we trust that the article on "The Twelve Apostles," may prove helpful. It was intended to meet just such doubts and questionings and has already been blessed to many of the "sheep." Or he may have meant that the translators might at times have used to advantage other words than those they did use. But, whichever was his thought, his expression was unwise; because his meaning was not made clear to you, and led you into doubts and fears and questionings, instead of establishing you in the Faith.

The same would be my construction of the unwise expression you mention relative to DAWN and TOWER. Probably the meaning was that a few typographical errors had come to his attention; or that, if he were to set himself about it, he could clothe the thoughts in other language which he would think preferable. But as for his holding variant views on *any doctrine of importance* taught in the DAWN and TOWER, I think that very improbable; and hence that his wiser way would have been to have ignored motes and trifles unworthy to be mentioned with the blessed truths now shining upon and refreshing us all. (And I may here answer one of your questions by saying that, if I knew of errors in the DAWN, I assuredly would contradict and correct them.)

Besides, let us remember that the colporteurs also are fallible, and often subjects of special temptations, – as are all public representatives of the truth. (Matt. 18:1; Luke 22:24; Num. 16:3-9.) If you engage again as a colporteur, dear Brother, you may have more temptation on this line than thus far, and will be able to sympathize more heartily with others and to help them.

While, as you have possibly noticed, the DAWN gives only so much prominence to the name of the author as seemed necessary, – omitting it entirely from the usual places on the cover and title page – and while we have never offered objections to the many who have quoted at length from our writings without mentioning them (but on the contrary have rejoiced to have the truth proclaimed from any motive – Phil. 1:15-18), yet our observation, covering several years, is that those who love the truth, but are ashamed of the channel through which God sends it, never prosper in it, but finally lose it as well as its spirit. "He that humbleth himself shall be exalted, and he that exalteth himself shall be abased," is God's rule; and God's blessing will come to us along that line or not at all.

Should the temptation ever come to you, to seek to show your wisdom by magnifying a minor difference between yourself and another of the Lord's servants, reject the thought as a temptation from the devil, and do the very reverse; – minimize differences, and endeavor to mind the *same things* and to be of one mind and one spirit with all who love the Lord. – 1 Cor. 1:10.

Let ambition of the flesh die in you, dear Brother, and take instead that "fervency of spirit, serving the Lord," which the Apostle enjoins; – an ambition to be and to do, simply and solely, to please and to serve our great Redeemer, and through him the Father. To do this, "Keep yourself in the love of God," and "let it dwell in you richly and abound."

Your servant in the Lord and his truth,

C. T. RUSSELL.

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