

## KNOWLEDGE AND FAITH REGARDING CHRONOLOGY

ADEAR Brother inquires, Can we feel absolutely sure that the Chronology set forth in the DAWN-STUDIES is correct? – that the harvest began in A.D. 1874 and will end in A.D. 1914 in a world-wide trouble which will overthrow all present institutions and be followed by the reign of righteousness of the King of Glory and his Bride, the Church?

We answer, as we have frequently done before in the DAWNS and TOWERS and orally and by letter, that we have never claimed our calculations to be infallibly correct; we have never claimed that they were *knowledge*, nor based upon indisputable evidence, facts, knowledge; our claim has always been that they are based on *faith*. We have set forth the evidences as plainly as possible and stated the conclusions of faith we draw from them, and have invited others to accept as much or as little of them as their hearts and heads could endorse. Many have examined these evidences and have accepted them; others equally bright do not endorse them. Those who have been able to accept them by faith seem to have received special blessings, not merely along the line of prophetic harmonies, but along all other lines of grace and truth. We have not condemned those who could not see, but have rejoiced with those whose exercise of faith has brought them special blessings – "Blessed are your eyes for they see, and your ears for they hear."\*

Possibly some who have read the DAWNS have presented our conclusions more strongly than we; but if so that is their own responsibility. We have urged and still urge that the dear children of God read studiously what we have presented; – the Scriptures, the applications and interpretations – and then form their own

judgments. We neither urge nor insist upon our views as infallible, nor do we smite or abuse those who disagree; but regard as "Brethren" all sanctified believers in the precious blood. On the contrary, it is those who differ who smite us and speak evil of us, because we do not welcome them as, with hammer and tongs, they seek to remove a mote which they think they see in our eye of understanding. They are our critics who always claim the infallibility. We go humbly onward, following the Apostle's example and words, "We believe and therefore speak"<sup>\*</sup>; – whether others hear or forbear to hear. Is not this in accord with the Spirit of Christ? Is it not in accord with our Lord's instructions also, – "Forbid him not" (Mark 9:39); and again, "What is that to thee? Follow thou me." (John 21:22.) But some of those who come to a trifling point on which they disagree seem to imagine that the entire harvest work must be overthrown or at least stopped until they get their little jot or tittle satisfactorily adjusted. Such evidently make mountains out of mole hills, and forget that, if the present movement among **[R4067 : page 295]** the Lord's people is the harvest work or under the Lord's supervision at all, the Lord is responsible, and not they, and can be trusted to accomplish his own ends in his own best way without the violation of either the letter or spirit of his commands.

Recurring again to the query on Chronology we quote from DAWN-STUDIES, Vol. II., page 38, last paragraph, as follows: –

"In starting with the question, How long is it since man's creation? we should and do feel confident that he who gave the prophecies, and said that in the time of the end they should be understood, has provided in his Word the data necessary to enable us accurately to locate those prophecies. However, any who expect to find these matters so plainly stated as to be convincing to the mere surface reader, or the insincere skeptic, will be disappointed. God's times and seasons are given in such a way as to be convincing only to those who, by acquaintance with God,

are able to recognize his characteristic methods. The evidence is given "that *the man of God* may be thoroughly furnished." (2 Tim. 3:17.) These well know that in all the paths by which the Father leads they must walk by faith and not by sight. To all who are prepared to walk thus, we expect to be able to point out at every step solid statements of God's Word – a sure foundation for reasonable faith."

In the same chapter we proceed to point out that many of the links of chronology in sacred and profane history are "*broken, lapped and tangled so much that we could arrive at no definite conclusion from them*, and should be obliged to conclude, as others have done, that nothing positive could be known on the subject, were it not that the New Testament supplies the deficiency." (Page 49, first paragraph.) Thus we sought to prove that chronology cannot be built on *facts*, but can be received only on faith. But again we urge a fresh reading of Vol. II. entire. If with these suggestions some shall lose their faith in our chronology, others and many more we believe will have their faith in it strengthened greatly.

We remind you again that the weak points of chronology are supplemented by the various prophecies which interlace with it in so remarkable a manner that *faith* in the chronology almost becomes *knowledge* that it is correct. The changing of a single year would throw the beautiful parallels out of accord; because some of the prophecies measure from B.C., some from A.D., and some depend upon both. We believe that God meant those prophecies to be understood "in due time"; we believe that we do understand them now – and they speak to us through this chronology. Do they not thereby seal the chronology? They do to *faith*, but not otherwise. Our Lord declared, "The wise shall understand"; and he told us to "Watch" that we might know; and it is this chronology which *convinces us* (who can and do receive it by faith) that the Parable of the Ten Virgins is now in process

of fulfilment – that its first cry was heard in 1844 and its second cry, "Behold the Bridegroom" – present – was in 1874. It is this chronology and none other which awakened us to trim our lamps, in harmony with the Lord's promise through the Apostle, "Ye brethren are not in darkness, that that day should overtake you as a thief." If our chronology is not reliable we have no idea where we are nor when the morning will come. Bishop Ussher's chronology, as we have pointed out (DAWN II., p. 51) puts the end of six thousand years nearly a century future and would destroy every prophetic application as we have seen and profited by it. And when we say "our" chronology we merely mean the one we use, the Bible chronology, which belongs to all of God's people who approve it. As a matter of fact it was used in practically the form we present it long before our day, just as various prophecies we use were used to a different purpose by Adventists, and just as various doctrines we hold and which seem so new and fresh and different were held in some form long ago: for instance – Election, Free Grace, Restitution, Justification, Sanctification, Glorification, Resurrection.

The work in which the Lord has been pleased to use our humble talents has been less a work of origination than of reconstruction, adjustment, harmonization. God's Word, the great harp from which now comes such wondrous music, was unstrung. One denomination had one string, another denomination had a different one – Election, Free Grace, Baptism, Second Coming of Christ, Time Prophecies, etc. They had twanged away, each on his own string, until all were disgusted at the discord and about ready to quit for relief – as they since have done, practically. Then came the Lord's time for putting the old harp in order again, for the use of his most faithful followers. To whatever extent the great Master has used any of us either in restringing and tuning the harp, or in calling to the attention of his "brethren" the harmony and the beauty of the melodious paeans therefrom in honor of the

Almighty, let us praise him for the great privilege enjoyed, and use it.

The *fact* that we have reached this harmony just at the right time according to our chronology – just at the time promised by our Lord when he declared that, to those who would be ready and open to his knock promptly, he would "come in and sup with them," that he would "gird himself [become their servant] and come forth and serve them" (Luke 12:37) – is an evidence to us that the time features of the prophecies as we understand them are correct. To this great Chief Servant of his Church then we render thanks for the harmonious light of Present Truth – and are we not to consider that the chronology which has had so much to do with this light is also of him?

But let us suppose a case far from our expectations: suppose that A.D. 1915 should pass with the world's affairs all serene and with evidence that the "very elect" had not all been "changed" and without the restoration of natural Israel to favor under the New Covenant. (Rom. 11:12,15.) What then? Would not that prove our chronology wrong? Yes, surely! And [R4067 : page 296] would not that prove a keen disappointment? Indeed it would! It would work irreparable wreck to the Parallel Dispensations and Israel's Double, and to the Jubilee calculations, and to the prophecy of the 2300 days of Daniel, and to the epoch called "Gentile Times," and to the 1260, 1290, and 1335 days, the latter of which marking the beginning of the "harvest" so well fulfilled its prediction, "Oh, the blessedness of him that waiteth and cometh unto the 1335 days!" None of these would be available longer. What a blow that would be! One of the strings of our "harp" would be quite broken!

However, dear friends, our harp would still have all the other strings in tune and that is what no other aggregation of God's people on earth could boast. We could still worship a God so great and grand that none other could compare with him. We should still

see the grandeur of his salvation in Christ Jesus – "a ransom for *all*." We should still see the wonders of "the hidden mystery," our fellowship with our Redeemer in "his [R4068 : page 296] death" and also "in his resurrection" to "glory, honor and immortality" – "the divine nature."

If, therefore, dearly beloved, it should turn out that our chronology is all wrong, we may conclude that with it we have had much advantage every way. If the attainment of our glorious hopes and present joys in the Lord should *cost* us such disappointment as our friends fear, we should rejoice and count it cheap! If the Lord sees it necessary for the arousing of the "Virgins" to permit a false note upon the time bugle, let us take it joyfully as one of the "all things" working together for good to those who love him, – to the called ones according to his purpose. But let us not forget that the parable shows that the *second* awakening of the Virgins was no mistake! The Bridegroom came! The "wise virgins" had the necessary faith to follow; the others, too worldly-wise, lacked the faith and missed the high honors accorded to the Bride class, though privileged later to be her companions at the "marriage supper of the Lamb."

The best medicine, the best antidote for a poisoned faith in Present Truth, is a careful review of the presentations of the DAWN-STUDIES. If that fails we know nothing to recommend. But let us not forget that there were conditions precedent to our admission into this *light*, and that those conditions must be maintained if we would stay in the light. If, therefore, all or any portion of the light becomes darkened, our first query should be, "Am I living up to my covenant conditions – self-denial, self-sacrifice?" If we discover a coolness there we may know that we have found the real secret of our trouble and should at once "take it to the Lord in prayer."

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