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DELIVERANCE FROM THE ADVERSARY

BROTHER C. T. RUSSELL: –

Dear Sir. – Yielding to an impulse I am writing to you, baring the present thoughts and intents of my heart before him who knoweth them all and who – O wondrous grace – careth for me even after all these years that I have been in the hands of the Adversary who beat and pounded and plucked me bare while I cried, Oh, my God, why hast thou forsaken me? I trust you will bear with me while I recall the past and try to explain how I got so far out of harmony with the "Watch Tower Society" and the spirit of the truth. I had been a very close student of scriptures and a "come-outer" since 1875; your chronology in Vol. III., M.D., was just suited to my mind and I began to study the subject closely. I saw a chance to differ from you and sent my findings to a brother in the Truth who rather liked them and encouraged me to study and write some more.

Now this was all lawful, and it helped me much because I had arrived nearly at the same conclusion as you, but the thought that I could successfully cope with [R4447 : page 235] Brother Russell in his findings on chronology had puffed me up considerably, and I felt that I might be able to find other flaws. At this time you called for such as were "in fullest harmony" with M.D. and W.T. teachings, who had some talent in the way of leading meetings, that they might be sent here and there under the name of Pilgrims and representatives of W.T. office at the society's expense. I had not the least talent in that direction, so I could not feel slighted at not being invited.

At this point, and through hints dropped by others, I became fearful that Brother Russell was seeking to draw around us the lines of sectarianism and bind me within a society where "fullest

harmony" with the teachings of M.D. was to be the test of the Lord's approval.

I rebelled against this with what to me seemed righteous indignation, and right here the Adversary got me. I know it was here because I am not ignorant of his method of attack, as you will see further on.

Some unclean demon appealing to me through my righteous hatred of sectism gave me the mental suggestion that Bro. R. was trying to place himself over us, and this demon kept suggesting these words – "I will not have this man reign over me." This was not a passing thought, it was a suggestion applied to my mind over and over again, and while I was not sure of this at that time I am positive now because of my experience with these evil spirits.

I then began to lose interest in the Truth and tried to save myself by writing continuously on subjects differing from Bro. R., while I longed for something to inspire me and take the place of the "Watch Tower" but found nothing.

This was the demon's opportunity, and he began to torment me at my work. If I put something down I could not find it when I wanted it. Everything went wrong; business was a failure, debts piled up, and I was now fighting mad. Let me pass over the rest of this sad experience; it would only give you pain if I should relate it here. I come now to the time I became personally acquainted with four unclean demons. I had heard that they were in darkness as to the Truth, but I found that they knew the Scriptures and Brother Russell better than I. I merely mention here a few things, such as discussing Scripture with them and English translation of Greek words.

The subject turned to the "Seventh Trumpet" and "the strong delusion that should deceive even the very elect if it were

possible." They represented themselves as the angels of the seventh trumpet sent forth with the Truth of God for the Elect and to save them from the strong delusion with which Spiritualists were to deceive the whole world by their wonderful feats.

The intense inquisitiveness in my make-up that made a close student of me had now got me into communication with demons through reading Spiritualistic books and papers, together with that longing desire for the spiritual. Nevertheless I still held on to the Truth and was proof against all these vain sophistries that make for "outer darkness," and I prayed God in desperation to take me out of the depravity into which I had fallen. How I longed to be a Christian and back in the sunshine of God's love once more. I even apologized for God's favor on the ground that he might use me in the other age, exhibiting me as a miracle of his glorious grace for the encouragement of the depraved.

It is now more than a year since I began to find my way back into the favor of God through continuously watching and praying. It has been a wonder to me how God could ever look upon me again with the least desire. The thought seems to answer this, that it was not on my account but on account of the great love wherewith our Heavenly Father loved his only begotten by whom and for whom all things were created. John speaks of those who manifest the Spirit of Christ in love for the brethren that in such God's love is made perfect. He loves them for what they are, and this love seems to be that kind referred to by the Apostle in these words – "Keep yourself in the love of God."

I feel grateful to God for the encouragement he has given me, and his tender care over me has been wonderful. He has led me back over the same lines of Truth and has granted me, seemingly as a tonic, to see new beauties in the Truth I had learned so that they come to me with new relish as when I first received them. Just so you have found new beauty in the Truth

on the Covenants. Without unlearning anything you have added greatly to the Truth as a whole, and I have entered into your joy.

Dear Brother, I wish I could say something as a warning to others, not because you do not see the danger to those who seem to have the contentious spirit, but because I have had such a sad experience. I feel anxious [R4448 : page 235] to put the brethren on the alert that they might judge themselves and weed out any little root of bitterness in their heart so that they may escape the chastening of the Lord.

If those brethren who are just a little fearful for the Lord's work in your hands could only realize how the hosts of darkness are pressing them and watching for an occasion to slip in a mental suggestion; appealing to their honor here, that they might find an entrance there! We read that "the angels of the Lord are encamped around them that fear him to deliver them." May it not be reasonable at least that the Lord has withdrawn his bodyguard at this crucial time that the soldiers of the cross might all the more place their reliance in "the sword of the spirit" and "the shield of faith"?

Realizing that the time is short, there is every reason that we give heed to what we have already learned. The command at San Juan Hill – "Every man watch out for himself," is appropriate at present, and he who insists on his comrade keeping step with him is in greater danger.

You have what is termed a "Vow." I do not know much about it, only I read the one in last "Tower" and will say that it expresses exactly my heart's desire and prayer to God. The paragraph on the opposite sex is very timely in view of the great power which Satan has taken to himself, so that the members of Christ may refrain from every appearance of evil lest the powers of darkness gain an advantage.

Now I want to put myself on record here, and feel that my experience justifies the claim that I know whereof I speak. It is this. The closer one is living to the Lord, the more will he love Brother Russell and the Truth which he stands for, the more love will he have for the brethren, and, as a consequence, the more God will love him.

If this "Vow" be intended to bring the Church of God into closer fellowship with each other, that they be of one mind and one spirit, then the present is the providential moment to use this "Vow" as it is intended. It is well to have the sheep disposition and to flock closely together in time of danger.

I have written this with a full heart and eyes moistened, but not with the hopeless tears of Esau, because the Spirit of the Lord is with me and has caused me to hope when there was no hope, and with God's help I feel encouraged to take up the lines where I let them slip and press forward to the mark of the prize, and where it will be the very law of my nature to walk in the paths of righteousness and peace.

Yours very sincerely,

ALEX. ALLAN.

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DEAR BROTHER ALLAN: –

Your letter made me glad. I rejoice with you that you are recovered from "the snare of the fowler." Surely it is true that "we wrestle not with flesh and blood merely, but with wicked spirits in high positions," possessed of great intelligence and wily. What your letter expresses we have often wished to say to the dear friends, but have hesitated lest, instead of doing them good as we

desire, we might do them harm by giving them even a flimsy excuse for saying that we endeavored to throttle their liberties. Alas! how few realize what a dangerous thing liberty is – how carefully it must be used for our benefit and how easily it might be misused to our eternal danger. Because God created us free agents; because this is part of his likeness; and because, additionally, ambition must be a part of every progressive individual, therefore this free agency and ambition in conjunction bring us all under tests of character. And the greater our abilities, the more our talents and the wider our influence, the stronger the power of ambition may become. Then comes the test. Will this laudable ambition be subject to the Divine will – thoroughly consecrated to do the Lord's will even unto death?

If our devotion to the Lord be absolute, fully in control of our thoughts and words and doings, our liberty and largest ambition will be rightly directed and eventuate in blessings to ourselves and to others. But if the Divine will be not first and absolutely in control of our wills the more ambition and the more liberty we have the greater will be our danger. Where the Lord is not revered, obeyed with all the heart, mind, soul and strength, some one else has an influence in our hearts, husband or wife, parents or children or, more than probably, *self*. We cannot be "overcomers" except as our hearts are absolutely loyal to the Lord, with self-will and every other will subjected to the Divine will. This is the lesson of life to those who would come off conquerors. How we rejoice with you, dear Brother, that, although you were nearly vanquished in this struggle, you have finally, by God's grace, recovered your balance.

It is not to be wondered at that the more prominent brethren have the more severe trials along this line. It must not surprise us if, in this evil day into which we have entered, we should find a considerable number of those possessed of talents or influences stumbling. Of this condition of things the Apostle forewarns us,

saying, Be not many of you teachers, knowing that he who is a teacher will experience the more severe trials. (James 3:1.) The deflection of some recognized as teachers will cause special trials to others not teachers and will prove to what extent they have a personal relationship to the Lord through an individual consecration to him and through his instructions by his Word and the prophecies – in the School of Christ. We fear that too many are in this attitude of leaning on others whose fall might bring them disaster.

It is because we have long recognized this principle that, in all of our writings, we have presented the Lord's message as his message, and not as our own; giving the chapter and verse for every doctrine. If any are leaning on us or on anything but the Lord's Word for guidance, we believe that the fault is not traceable to our teachings. We have striven to bring all the members of the Body into direct personal contact with the Head. While not ignoring the value of books and sermons, we have, nevertheless, urged upon all the necessity of proving, to the extent of their ability, every item of Truth which they receive. Notwithstanding this we fear that many of our dear readers lean upon us and upon others. We fully know that we are in the evil day and that the armor which the Lord provided is to be put on individually by each one of his faithful soldiers of the cross. We will use *our* shield, breastplate, helmet and sword in the defence, as much as possible, of all of the Lord's people; but each must see to it that he puts on this armature for himself. The great King of the Universe has provided it. The great Captain of our salvation, Jesus, has invited us to put it on. We, as a corporal, merely call attention to the Captain's order. Whoever is negligent will surely rue it.

The time for adjusting this armor is very short. The battle is on now. Many are falling at our side. What we do should be done quickly, energetically, systematically, thoroughly. It is important

that we help others to the extent of our ability, but still more important according to the Divine will, that we should take heed to ourselves and make our own calling and election sure. It has been our observation that some who have come into the Truth quite recently are much more clear in it and have the armor better adjusted and are able to use the "sword of the spirit" better, than some who have been in the Truth for five, ten and even twenty years. Indeed some who have been long in the Truth seem less skillful today in the use of the armor than they were years ago.

Why is this? And what is the remedy? The answer is a simple one, manifest to all. Divine providence has furnished to the people of God at this time an outline of the Divine Plan and a detail of Bible doctrines such as God's people have never before had in their possession. Without claiming any inspiration for the "Studies in the Scriptures" we surely may claim a Divine supervision in respect to the *matter* which they contain and the *time* of their presentation. Whoever admits that we are in the Harvest time at all – that we have been in it since 1875 – must acknowledge this also. The Lord promised that at this time he would cause his people to sit down to a bountiful repast of spiritual food and that he would be their servant and bring forth to them "things new and old." (Luke 12:37.) All who recognize these things must recognize these "Studies in the Scriptures" as being identified with the fulfillment of that promise. If they are not, how has the promise been fulfilled? It will not do to say that the "Divine Plan of the Ages" and the general elucidation of Divine Truth through those volumes is merely one man's opinion. That would be giving too much honor to any man. No one who understands these things can possibly believe that any man could fabricate a theory which puts all other theories of this and every other day completely into the shadow, as a tallow dip in comparison to the most wonderful are lights of our day.

Neither is there reason or sense in the attempt of some to claim that these "Scripture Studies" are merely a rehash of what has been believed for centuries. True, they present the doctrines of Election and Free Grace, Baptism, etc., etc., but not as they were nor as they are discordantly believed. These books discuss the Bible's presentations and set them in order as showing their *relationship* to each other, as one harmonious whole as never before presented. They are opposed by those who cannot refute them. We repeat, then, that "Studies in the Scriptures" are either of the Lord's providence or else they are a fraud, and at the same time one of the greatest miracles.

The secret of the clearness and power of some who have come recently into the Truth can be traced to the fact that they have been diligently using these Divinely provided helps for Bible study. On the contrary many of those who today are less clear in the Truth than they were years ago owe their loss of spiritual vigor and clear perception of the Truth to the fact that they have neglected this Divine provision for their needs. They have followed the worldly thought – that, having digested what some other man has thought, believed and taught, they should break fresh ground for themselves, [R4449 : page 236] in hope of bringing forth still brighter jewels from the Divine Word. Some of these diggers have searched long and carefully, but have found nothing, brought forth nothing, that has specially sparkled as a gem of truth before the eyes of the Lord's people. Some of them have sought far and near for other fruits and viands for the table of the Lord's family, but have added little, if anything, to that which the great Provider has set before us of "things new and old." Some of their new dishes, [R4449 : page 237] new viands, set before the Church have proved to be unhealthful, indigestible, visionary, and calculated to give a fever, rather than real spiritual strength. Others failing of their ambitions in these directions have become destructive and have uttered what some of the friends have styled a "Midnight Howl," against the food that the Lord has

prepared, against his service of his people, etc. They cannot approve his management of the Harvest work; and although admitting that the time is short now for a radical change they feel they must take it in hand for him or everything will come to naught. "He that sitteth in the heavens shall laugh: The Lord shall have them in derision." – Psa. 2:4.

All these things are *tests*, dear Brother, and the sooner we realize this fact, the better for us. We have no fear that the great Shepherd now present with his sheep and gathering these who know his voice out of all the various pens of Christendom, will suffer the wolves to stampede his flock, or to devour them. Has he not said, "The Father who gave them me is greater than all and none can pluck them out of my Father's hand"?

The lesson to us all is, "Humble yourselves under the mighty hand of God that he may exalt you in due time." Let us not be heady, high-minded and worldly-wise, but humble, teachable and full of faith in the Divine promises, which are so rapidly fulfilling and culminating.

Very truly your servant in the Lord,

C. T. RUSSELL.

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