

BE YE NOT SIFTED

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We should all come to a real appreciation of each other. You are all so very important to me and very, very important to each other—important especially to the Lord. The Plan which we have is equally important to us. We see it behind us on the wall today; and you know, we are the only group in all the world which has a plan and has an understanding of God's message. The others do not—they would like to know and they gather in ecclesiastical studies round the globe trying to fathom the depths of God's plan. And here we feast sumptuously at the Lord's table! Very shortly it is hoped, with the eye of the world upon them, astronauts will lift their foot off this planet and on to another. The whole world is watching that—yet what is most important in all the world is going on here in this room, not up there around the moon.

We read in Luke 2:10, "And the angel said unto them, Fear not: for, behold, I bring you good tidings of great joy, which shall be to all people." What a marvelous message that was and from an angel of the Lord as well. But what happened? How did they receive that message? They, that to Israel, crucified the Messiah the Lord of glory. And where were the promised good tidings? The destruction of Jerusalem at Titus' hand was far from a great joy to them, of that we can be sure. And why could they not understand while he was with them? Why could they not see? Did they not have a thus saith the Lord from his own lips? Throughout the age, Israel was personally instructed from above and yet even today they are blind in part, though soon they shall see out of obscurity and come to know their Messiah. But not as we have come to know him, having found that better heavenly part which they had lost. Man is like that, he seldom appreciates what he has until it has slipped from his grasp. He is continually reaching for something also and must put aside one to pick up the other. Remember the dog of Aesop's fables who had the large bone? He was so happy until he saw another dog which seemed to him to have a larger bone. So, he opened his mouth to grasp it—but it was only a reflection in a pool. He lost everything instead of gaining what he had hoped he would.

Man has now put forth his hand toward the gleaming alabaster moon, left this earth far behind and even now when he arrives that alabaster will prove to be dirty beach sand according to their own words, on a cold withered sterile orb without life. It is only when they look back that they see a blue and white jewel set against the black velvet of space—earth with its clouds of pure water. A planet alive filled with life and they, you see, have come to appreciate what God has provided a few ordinary men before them. As men who had left it far behind and with the prospect of perhaps never seeing it again. And what of their return? Their course must be absolutely precise! If their attitude at the end is not absolutely precise they will not live! If that attitude is not correct they will be destroyed as they re-enter earth's atmosphere. Our course is much the same. If at the end our

attitude is not precise, we have not the proper attitudes, the proper heart—we too shall be destroyed. For we reach for a higher star and we cannot turn back.

Now this being the case that our attitude is so important why then do we concern ourselves with other things, which sometimes seem not closely related? We might have the finest, clearest mind with understanding and yet die of “heart trouble.” So our attitude is very important and we know we have passed from death unto life, as the Scriptures remind us, because we do love our brethren. That is so very important.

I am sure in the minds of all here if I asked, “Do you love your brother as a brother in Christ,” you would say, “Yes.” But be very careful. What does that love mean and entail? Imagine if you will two brethren, one is struggling to understand a point which he cannot. As the years pass he finally comes to that understanding and with joy and exuberance he comes to his fellow brother and says, “I have finally understood this point.” His brother turns to him and says, “Well, you see brother, I knew that all along but I love you so much I didn’t want to cause any difficulty and so I kept silent.” How would he feel? How would you feel knowing that he loved you so little that he would not help when you needed help? Now I ask you again, do you love your brother as a brother in Christ? Are you proving your love through your actions or is it only words? These are very serious matters of the heart. We might even say, deadly serious.

Do you set an example standing for truth in love and confidence without compromise? Do you vigorously uphold to your brethren every source of wholesome spiritual food thus promoting an enlightened understanding of God’s word and his plan? You see, that would be real love—manifested! It isn’t enough to just say “yes, I love my brother.” You must show it. Are you sure? It is my prayer for you all that this is indeed so.

Some tell their brethren that Bro. Russell was that Wise and Faithful servant of the Lord, then to promote an opposing view, caution us that Bro. Russell was after all not “inspired.” As well we know, for he did not need to be. He was the servant of the Lord’s table and it is he against whom they shall have to complain. We should not complain to the waitress because of the food that comes from the kitchen.

We notice that The Dawn and other of their publications often advertise (in the back of every Dawn in fact) all six volumes of “*Studies in the Scriptures*” as those fundamental “keys to the Bible... the outstanding textbooks on the Bible for our day.” This is what we read there. Some support and promote this while at the same time telling others this key which they themselves have promoted does not quite work, and in fact that some of this meat in due season from the 7th messenger may even be poisonous. The Lord does not tell us “who then in that unwise, unfaithful steward who shall serve us poisoned food out of season.” That is not the way the Scripture reads! It is very important for these brethren and their heart condition, their attitude, that the seriousness of compromising

conscience in any way is perceived. What shall become of our Christian conscience if we persist in promoting what we believe to be error?

Will you continue to believe that the 1,000 year reign of Christ began in 1874 as our previous speaker so eloquently brought to our attention and as the Studies in the Scriptures show the Bible to teach? Some do not and promote that it is still future. And yet, at the same time they add to the confusion by telling others that they support the volumes of Studies In the Scriptures. We must not say one thing and support another. What shall become of our Christian conscience if we persist in promoting what we believe to be error?

If they believe, on the other hand, that the volumes do contain error that will lead us away from the truth then surely their judgment and understanding of the matter would have to be superior to that of the seventh messenger of the Lord. That is a very serious charge and a very serious claim. Nor, let them compromise your brother's confidence in the 7th messenger by suggesting that Bro. Russell taught these views! They will often suggest that the Reprints update the volumes, yet the volume forewords were written in 1916 and as we have already heard from this very platform, do not suggest these new understandings. Further, the very last Reprint article was a reaffirmation of Bro. Russell's confidence in his understanding as presented in volumes two and three of Studies in the Scriptures. We have to keep in mind dear friends that Bro. Russell did not know that there would even be Reprints and, therefore, most certainly would have failed us if he did not bring us up to date through the forewords to the Studies in the Scriptures—as we believe he did. Moreover, would Bro. Russell, the Lord's messenger, have been so dishonest as to believe the chronology wrong or even in doubt and at the same time use his final opportunity in the volume forewords to endorse it? Ponder this carefully! If he thought it was wrong would he have used that last opportunity to endorse it?

Often Bro. Russell is pitted against himself as the “Reprint game” is played. You are all aware by now how this game is played. You search until you find just the right words which seem to support your view and ignore all the others. It is then we discover that the Reprints and volumes are an old fiddle upon which we can play any tune. Doesn't that sound familiar? Isn't that what we have had told to us of the Scriptures themselves? We found the truth of those Scriptures by reconciling all the Scriptures and harmonizing them together before we could come to God's understanding and come to His interpretation of His plan. So it is with any written work of any kind. It must all be harmonized together if we would have the author's understanding and not our own. No one has the right to reject another man's work unless he is certain that he has that man's understanding. Only then is he able to judge it unreasonable and worthy of rejection. These matters are all very serious to us all.

Let us now go into the matter in a little more detail that we might see exactly how serious all this is. For example: **1.** Do you believe that the wages of Sin is death and no more? **2.** That hell is in fact the grave? **3.** That Jesus in dying for Adam died a ransom for all? **4.** That therefore all mankind have the assurance of God's own law of an opportunity for perfect everlasting human perfection on earth? **5.** That since Pentecost, a little flock, by accepting that assurance now through Jesus' merit, ahead of the world, may lay down of their own free will this imputed perfection in sacrifice and if faithful will receive the very nature of God as their reward? Do you believe this? I am sure you all do and because you do you have the truth. But now can you prove it? Can you really prove it?

In witnessing to others I am sure you have discovered it is not as easily done as you might think. You must have a hearing ear before you can really prove what is clear to you. Otherwise they cannot see it nor can they accept it. And, it demonstrates to us that it is very difficult to come to this understanding, and that if it could be so easily proven through the Scriptures themselves, then the Divine Plan would have been understood long, long ago—but it was not. This is a very recent understanding. Where did we get this understanding? Can any of us say that we got it directly from the Bible? I am here to testify to one and all that I already had the Bible and was as sincere as any of us could be in the Methodist church. We had Wednesday night testimony meetings. We had Sunday evening study meetings. We had all that we have who are here today—save two things: we had not the Studies in the Scriptures, and of course we did not have the Truth!

Surely this should tell us something since we are now able to understand the Bible as never before. If we are at all honest in our hearts we must certainly see that this understanding was all received through the Harvest messenger; the truth of the Bible through the Harvest message. How did Bro. Russell prove it to us? Did he do it with a new Bible or a new translation? No, same Bible, same story, same translation as before. What was different then? What was the difference that led to this remarkable understanding? He had a new plan! It was the plan that did it! Prior to that there was no plan. You can talk to the most learned of Bible scholars outside of the truth and they to a man are virtually unable to discern that there even is a plan. They doubt that there is a single unified plan. They feel God is somehow muddling along hoping that somehow it will work out.

Imagine! A Divine Plan of the Ages. That is what got through to us and affected us so. We found that the plan was harmonious, reasonable and a plan that really works, if you can receive it—and not all can. Remember too that while the Pastor did not consider all the Scriptures of the Bible we nevertheless do have a complete plan. It is a complete plan into which all Scriptures can be placed with harmony and understanding because we do have that complete plan. Of this I am sure—there are no Scriptures beyond understanding and which will not fit that plan. If it does not square with the Plan then it is our understanding that it is wrong, or would you like to suggest to us a new plan? This

is why we read on each and every one of the Divine Plan charts Hab. 2:1-3 which I would like to read to you now. Keep in mind the Watch Tower and the watch man. Hab. 2:1-3. "I WILL stand upon my watch, and set me upon the tower, and will watch to see what he will say unto me, and what I shall answer when I am reprov'd. And the LORD answered me, and said, Write the vision, and make it plain upon tables, that he may run that readeth it. For the vision is yet for an appointed time, but at the end it shall speak, and not lie: though it tarry, wait for it; because it will surely come, it will not tarry."

Is that the vision you have been waiting for? Do you have the understanding? Then it has not tarried! It is plain and I think we can see that into this plan we must fit the Scriptures. For it is a Scriptural plan. Thus we do not twist the plan to fit isolated Scriptures but we must reshape our understanding of them to the harmony of the Plan, which was its very purpose in order that it not lie. True Bible study leads to greater Biblical understanding. Now if volume study has provided it for us all, then surely that must be the best way to study the Bible and come to a proper understanding.

The plan, The Divine Plan, is really a time plan by which we may be convinced. I would like to give you an illustration of just how important that can be. A group of people were standing and they saw smoke rise on the horizon. One turned to the other and said "what do you suppose that is?" Well, one guessed perhaps that was a forest fire, another thought perhaps a farmer was burning off the stubble on his field. Another man with absolute conviction said, "No, that is the train!" The others were of course concerned. How could he be so sure with virtually no evidence at all, save the smoke on the horizon. He said, "Because it is 9:55 and it is time for the train." Yes, because he knew the time, with but little evidence he also knew it was the train. This is very important, this is why the Divine Plan of the Ages was provided for us that we too might be sure. There is no other religious group that dares claim prophetic time prophecies. Not one. All non-Christian religions avoid it as the plague and for a very good reason because if true, then surely it must be of God, but if false? Well, that is very serious isn't it? They dare not take the risk and so they make no such claim. And so the Lord tells us, that this is my plan, I will give you the prophecies and the times and you shall see that it is my plan. Test me and see if it is not so!

Are you convinced then by the seventy weeks of Daniel? Did that bring a thrill to your heart when you studied it for the first time? Read again Dan. 9 and study the matter carefully. Time won't permit us to consider it at this time.

What of the Jewish Double? Does that bring a thrill to your heart? Recall the end of the 1845 years. At the Berlin Congress of Nations was marked the beginning of the great re-establishment of Israel as a Nation. Such an obscure beginning! I have mentioned it to many and they ask, how can you possibly claim that this is a fulfillment with such a tiny beginning? Yet today the flag of Zion flies over Jerusalem and no power on earth can

take it down. Can you see in the parallels 1874 and the Lord's return, 1878 and the resurrection of the sleeping saints, 1881 and the parallel of the end of the seventy weeks of favor? 1914 marking the parallel of the destruction of Jerusalem? Are you thrilled by the remarkable achievements of these parallels and the incredible way in which they perfectly fit? And recall the 1260 days of Daniel from 539 A.D. and the setting up of the Papacy to its collapse in 1799? The 1290 days of Daniel 12 also take us from 539 A.D. to 1829 A.D. and the beginning of the Millerite movement. There are the 2300 days to 1846 A.D. and the 7 times the 2520 years of the Gentiles from 606 B.C. to 1914 A.D.

And the Jubilees themselves which through two great prophecies and separate methods indicate the beginning of that great restitution work in 1874. Remember it is a work, a process. Perhaps we should read it quickly. Lev. 25:8-10. Notice the Lord's instruction to them. Vs. 8 "And thou shalt number 7 sabbaths of years unto thee"—now that would be enough from the Lord even if He stopped there, but it was evidently very important for the Scripture continues—"seven times seven years." That is just in case they weren't listening too closely the first time. Then the third time—"and the space of the 7 sabbaths of years shall be unto thee 49 years." Vs. 9, "Then shalt thou cause the trumpet of the jubilee to sound on the tenth day of the seventh month, in the day of atonement shall ye make the trumpet sound throughout all your land." Vs. 10, "And ye shall hallow the 50th year, and proclaim liberty throughout all the land unto all the inhabitants thereof: it shall be a jubilee unto you;" and ye shall *have* returned every man unto his possession, and ye shall *have* returned every man unto his family:—Bro. Hugelman just read that wrong didn't he?!—"it shall be a jubilee unto you; and ye shall return every man unto his possession, and ye shall return every man unto his family." Not returned, not accomplished—but rather a process to take place within it; "and ye shall return every man unto his family."—it makes a difference doesn't it? Lev. 25:12, 13, "For it is the jubilee; it shall be holy unto you: ye shall eat the increase thereof out of the field. In [that is, within] the year of this jubilee ye shall return every man unto his possession."

And so it is taught to us through the harvest message that the date indicated by this, the antitype of this program beginning Oct. of 1874, would mark the beginning of this restoration program which was to be 1,000 years in length. At the completion of this great work, for he must reign until he hath put all enemies under his feet the last enemy to be destroyed shall be death—Adamic death, our Lord and his church shall step aside. The Kingdom shall then be turned over to the Father. The restoration work is complete. You see, it is not a 1,000 year Reign in which we may sit back and enjoy ourselves and relax. It is a 1,000 year work program for the restoration of all mankind. No wonder then that when we came to Dan. 12, we didn't have time to consider it all. Here we have indicated in this one chapter the 1260, the 1290 days, and finally we come to the end of the chapter and we are told blessed is he that waiteth, and cometh to the 1,335 days—the 1335 days which ended in 1874 as we all know. Now I think it is very interesting that we should often say this is a proof of the Lord's presence and of his return in 1874. But it is

only because of Acts 3:19 and the jubilee program which tells us first that we should expect restitution. The times of restitution are to begin at that time, and therefore implies that the heavens would no longer retain our Lord. For you will notice Dan 12:12 only indicates that there is a blessing and not what that blessing is to be! We may not pick it out of the air of ourselves. Little wonder then that the brethren of Bro. Russell's day were so thrilled with these Scriptures. If these things convince you then you are convinced of God, for through faith these things are seen. They cannot be of man. Acts 3:19-21 was therefore a keynote Scripture, a key through the jubilee. Restitution began, therefore, our Lord could no longer be retained. And what of the times of refreshing to those brethren who were asked to repent—the Jewish brethren of the Apostles' day? Shall we now doubt Ezekiel 37 and the dry bones assembled since 1948 in our time? We have witnessed the restoration of a dead nation, but we know there is yet more to come; even a personal restitution in this time period as Bro. Morehouse brought to our attention. This great 1,000 year work has begun, first the church, then the nations, then the people. Each phase in its own order. The key to this understanding is the harmony of every feature of the great system of truth and not one thing taken separately. Some have suggested that these marvelous time marks are somehow not correct and that Bro. Russell's own confidence in them was shaken and Reprint 5367 is quoted as proof:

“A dear 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 Dawn and Towers and orally and by letter, that we have never claimed our calculations to be infallibly correct; ...

“If our chronology is not reliable we have no idea where we are nor when the morning will come... 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 would not that prove a keen disappointment? Indeed it would! ... What a blow that would be! One of the strings of our 'harp' would be quite broken! ...

“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.”

That doesn't sound as though Bro. Russell was very convinced does it? Looks very black for us, as though perhaps he was a little concerned himself. Now we could go to other Reprints which would seem to contradict this and indicate that he had confidence. But we shall not play that game; rather, we shall reread this same Reprint article, but now we are going to read it all.

“We answer, as we have frequently done before in the Dawn 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 evidences, facts, knowledge, ...”

You see if it were so, all would see the Divine Plan:—“our claim has always been that they are based on faith.” Isn't that interesting? Sometimes we think that the chronology in itself requires no faith, but this is not what we are told here.

“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.’”

Remember—this is the very same article!

“Recurring again to the query on Chronology we quote from DAWN-STUDIES, Vol. II, page 38 last par., 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 stop solid statements of God's Word—a sure foundation for reasonable 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...”

That doesn't sound very uncertain does it?

“... 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.”

If you can see it—can you see it?

“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 fulfillment—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 6,000 years nearly a century future and would destroy every prophetic application as we have seen and profited by it.”

Bro. Russell's statement was not a statement about his own chronology. “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.”

The emphasis is upon you!

“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 seen so new and fresh and different were held in

some form long ago: for instance—election free grace, restitution, justification, sanctification, glorification, resurrection.

“The fact that we have reached this harmony just at the right times 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 should ‘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.”

Do you see? Already there was evidence that the chronology was 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: ... And would not that prove a keen disappointment? Indeed it would! It would work irreparable wreck to the parallel dispensations and Israel’s double.”

Which we of today have seen fulfilled before our eyes.

“... 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!’”

Thus we see that we must accept the whole package or not at all. It will not stand if the foundation is pulled out:—“None of these would be available longer.” Bro. Russell did not say “some” but “none.” “None of these would be available longer, What a blow that would be!”

“But let us not forget that the parable shown 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.’”

Remember dear brethren this is in this same article that is supposed to be so damaging to Bro. Russell’s confidence in the chronology.

“The best medicine, the best antidote, for a poisoned faith in present truth...”—That is rather strong isn’t it!—“is a careful review of the DAWN-STUDIES.” (The 6 volumes of Studies in the Scriptures were at the time of this article titled 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.’”

Now what do you suppose Bro. Russell thought when he read those headlines in that international peace year 1914? WAR IN EUROPE!! Do you suppose Bro. Russell viewed this as a failure of the chronology? Or do you suppose the first World War in human history was recognized as the stamp of approval from the Lord? This Reprint article closes with these words which we shall now sing in the closing hymn—#171

“Mine eyes can see the glory of the presence of the Lord;
He is trampling out the winepress where his grapes of wrath are stored;
I see the flaming tempest of his swift descending sword:
Our King is marching on.

The seventh trump is sounding, and our King knows no defeat.
He will sift out the hearts of men before his judgment seat.
O! be swift, my soul, to welcome him, be jubilant my feet;
Our King in marching on.”