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September 25, 1972

An open letter to:

Dawn Bible Students Association,
Trustees and Dawn Membership.

Greetings in the name of our Lord, Christ Jesus!

The weight of this letter and my personal responsibility to the Lord as stated in Ezekiel 33:6 has been heavy upon my heart for more than a year. It is my love for you, my brethren, that directs this letter. Please so consider it.

The Trustees' Meeting Minutes of November 14, 1953, report my acceptance to membership in the Dawn Bible Students Association. This membership has continued to this date, Recommendation for my membership at that time was made by Brother Christian W. Zahnow, a faithful defender of the faith until his course was run. At the time of my appointment Brothers King Barret, Ludlow Loomis, Eugene Burns, Arthur Cook, and Kenneth Rawson were accepted to Dawn membership. Since that date each of these brethren, and many more, by voice, letter, or detailed testimony have found it necessary to withdraw from an organization that no longer can bear the confidence of brethren who place the standard of Present Truth above membership in an organization. I, too, must declare my withdrawal from the Dawn Bible Students Association in a manner agreeable to my conscience before the Lord.

On November 13, 1953, a letter was written to me above the signature of Brother Woodworth inviting me to enter the pilgrim service. The last paragraph of the letter read, "Let us pray that the dear Lord may continue to richly bless his people as together they endeavor to hold up the banner of truth and serve one another." I accepted this offer upon that condition. For several years I spent my vacations in serving the brethren and "upholding the banner of truth." You ask, what truth? The truth that was common among all of us at that time and as was and is found in the full text of the writings of the Seventh Messenger, Pastor Russell. This was the message of truth found in the pages of the Dawn and supporting booklets.

On October 13, 1953, a previous letter was written to me above the same signature which I still appreciate and is perhaps one of the reasons, by the Lord's grace, I may take my position today. The second paragraph of this letter I quote, as follows:

"Knowing your carefulness with respect to the truth I am enclosing a brief outline of our doctrinal position with respect to those whom we sponsor in the ministry. In considering our invitation I know you want to be assured of this."

Over the past 19 years my study has permitted the verification of all aspects of the Harvest Truth and a most satisfying appreciation of the more than 10,000 pages of writings of the Pastor. The evidence of that 1953 period will support that this was also the declared joy of the Dawn brethren.

The doctrinal qualifications for speakers by the Dawn at that time in the next to last paragraph read as follows:

“We believe that the present may best be described as a transition period, during which Satan’s evil world is being destroyed and the final preparatory work on earth for the new kingdom is being accomplished, and that it is now our privilege and responsibility to proclaim the truth as widely and effectively as possible in order that the last members of the body of Christ may be reached, and that a witness be given to mankind in general.”

Dawn literature of that date confirmed that the work of this “transition period” was being accomplished by our returned Lord as King and with him his faithful saints. Too, from the doctrinal qualifications, Satan’s world or house had been entered into in order to effect the work of destruction. I still can abide by this doctrinal qualification and other 1953 views. But I fail to find my name or the names of others who are holding to the 1953 views on the Dawn pilgrim list today. What are you thinking, brethren, as you read this bit of history?

The second paragraph of the doctrinal qualifications for speakers I quote as follows:

“Doctrinally, we adhere to the fundamental truths of The Divine Plan of The Ages as delineated by Brother Russell, and abundantly substantiated by the inspired Word of God, including the ‘harvest message’ and the second presence of Christ.”

How well chosen were the words in the above, “...we adhere to the fundamental truths of The Divine Plan of The Ages as delineated by Brother Russell...” The word delineate means to represent accurately, or to convey clearly through the medium of words. This surely suits God’s description of the Seventh Messenger as “the Man clothed in linen with an inkhorn by his side,” The question of what we call “fundamental truths,” we have learned, has changed greatly from 20 years ago. The following portion from a discourse given at Bowling Green General Convention in 1950, will fully substantiate my statement. The quotation is from Bible Student News, published by the Dawn on page 24. The subject, “Fellowship and Eldership.” We believe the lesson was in agreement with the views of that day for Dawn pilgrims. It is a well prepared lesson and I am today in full agreement with its importance. The question as to your position, brethren, must rest with you, I quote:

“Some have attempted to justify a so-called ‘liberal’ attitude toward essential knowledge of eldership by using Brother Russell’s writings. They claim that his V.D.M. Questions did not include questions regarding the Lord’s presence or the covenants. Hence they conclude that Brother Russell did not consider these doctrines essential for eldership.

“Before we could so conclude, however, they would need to analyze questions 20 and 21 of this series. In essence they ask, ‘Have you read thoroughly the six volumes of ‘Scripture Studies,’ and have you derived much enlightenment and benefit therefrom?’ Imagine his reaction to an answer something like this: ‘I’ve read them, but there is much in them with which I’m not in harmony. I can accept Volume I, but there is much in Volumes II, III, and IV which I consider to be error. ‘Tabernacle Shadows,’ in my opinion, is also error.’ Surely one who gave such an answer would not then have been considered qualified as a teacher!”

Beloved brethren, as you follow with me in this letter, I am not endeavoring to shame anyone or point fingers, but I am striving to cause you to think and to retrace some steps if need be. I ask each of you, do you use this yardstick for eldership today? Tape recordings and the printed pages from the past can produce a heart searching test. Your spiritual life and my life are on trial. Loyalty to God and His Word must rise above any earthly tie—whether human or organization.

In the pages of the past we have all appreciated the zealous valor of Brother Martin Luther who braved the deathly persecuting power of the Roman Catholic Church to nail his historically famous thesis on the door of the church he once supported. Undoubtedly, Luther was directed by the Lord, as a goodly portion of his presentation had scriptural foundation. Surely, we would suppose that all thinking members of the church who read his thesis would have rallied to support Luther. But did they? We know the history. Very few! Luther was excommunicated from the very church he was once dedicated to serve. The apathy and complacency of brethren today upon the question of error or truth makes us all realize we need not live in the year 1513, to have a test of loyalty by God. Many more able brethren before me have written a similar letter and have addressed it much like this one and without a noticeable ripple among those who would read its contents.

About 1922, my father was appointed by Rutherford to serve as Bible House Representative on the West Coast. This assignment became a seven day job of 16 hours each day. This work brought him in close contact with headquarters. Some who read this letter may recall that period. Changes in practice and doctrine began to slowly enter the Watch Tower. The volumes of the Pastor were finding space on the back shelf as the books of the Society took their place. The doctrine of Justification as taught by the Pastor was first attacked; then the time of the antitypical Jubilee was changed; Israel's place as a blessing nation was changed; the time of the Kingdom was changed, etc., etc. In 1926, my father was brought before the class on a church trial on the charge that he had declared that we are beginning to follow the Judge and not the Lord, and the truth we once knew was being changed. Needless to say, he was excommunicated from the class. What effect did his trial have upon the local brethren? Very little.

To check the path we have trodden since 1950, concerning doctrinal changes, let us look at the facts. They will prove only one of two conditions: 1) We were at one time wrong on many fundamental doctrines and now we have the proper light or 2) we were in times past fully correct and have been during the 40 years of the ministry of Brother Russell and for some 25 years of the period of the Dawn, but now we are again seriously in error. You will agree we have no other choice than to accept one or the other of the above. Since we cannot charge our loving God or His returned Son of providing improper "meat in due season" to the household of faith we must accept the fact that purity of doctrine came with our Lord's return. You will recall it was God who caused the prophet, Ezekiel, to write concerning "the Man clothed in linen" these words of approbation, "I have done as thou hast commanded me!"

In the 1946, edition of the booklet, "When Pastor Russell Died," we find a 12 page chapter entitled, "Meat in Due Season." The chapter traces the manner in which Present Truth came to us. This chapter, for very obvious reasons, is now deleted from current editions. On page 56, of this booklet we read as follows:

"Yes, God had again spoken through His Son; and the true significance of all His past messages, beginning in the Garden of Eden when he said that the seed of the woman would bruise the serpent's head, on down to those thrilling last chapters of Revelation, now, in the light of this glorious vision, became apparent. And verily it was meat in 'due' season. Peter had said concerning Christ, 'Whom the heaven must receive until the times of restitution of all things'; and how perfectly appropriate that the first work of the returned Lord should be to reveal the purpose of his coming in order that a world-wide proclamation could be made concerning it.

"The fact that actual restoration to life has not yet begun is no valid objection to the truth concerning our Lord's second presence. Peter's words, 'until the times

of restitution of all things' do not imply that the very moment of our Lord's return would be marked by a resurrection of all the dead. Jesus came the first time to die for the world, but he was actually here for more than thirty years before he was crucified. His second coming is to establish his kingdom and restore the redeemed world to life, but that work will not be fully accomplished until the end of the millennial age.

“Israel's year of jubilee was a picture of the era of kingdom blessings. The early days of that year did not see the Israelites restored to their lost possessions, but were signaled merely by the blowing of the jubilee trumpets. God's great works are always introduced by the giving of information concerning them, and the giving of this information is considered by him as a part of the work, and is accomplished within the time, not before the time, set apart therefor. While no one has as yet been restored to human perfection, the great increase of knowledge along all lines has gradually awakened the people of the world to the fact they are being denied their rights, and has caused them to long for, yea, to clamor for, the universal blessings of earth which they now recognize to be their inalienable rights. This state of affairs naturally has produced much of the confusion of thought of these days and is resulting in the overthrow of the systems of selfishness which stand in the way of the kingdom of Christ. Yes, the old building is now in the process of demolition, preparatory to the erection of the new building by Christ and his church. This is a necessary part of the work of the new Day.”

My, what a refreshing manner to describe the work of our day. But, brethren, what are the teachings of the Dawn today? — surely not this.

In the same booklet, we read the purpose of the name “Dawn” as attached to the organization. We read, “It was called **The Dawn** in keeping with the original **Millennial Dawn** literature, and because of a deep conviction that we are living in the dawn of the Millennium.” Page 28.

Every issue of The Dawn should be a sharp reminder that we are in the dawn of the Millennium or the name of the magazine should be changed. In keeping with the dimming light perhaps it should be called “The Evening.”

In the February 1950, Dawn on page 30, we find a brief Reprint quotation which undoubtedly was given as a word of warning to brethren at that time. It is headed, “True Light,” and we quote:

“True light is in harmony with all previous light, or truth. We should scrutinize closely everything presented as light which shines only as it is able to extinguish previous light. Remember, too, that now (‘the evil day’) is not so much a time of attack and advance, as of watching and withstanding the attacks of error. ‘Take unto you the whole armor that you may be able to withstand in the evil day.’”

This is still the operation of true light brethren, and I plead with you that you give the Pastor's logic much thought.

Undoubtedly, the November 1952, Dawn article, “This Transition Period” has caused much concern to all thinking brethren. With this positive and clear presentation of all aspects of Harvest Truth which represented the early and later thoughts of the Pastor in clear readable words how can any member of the Dawn say with heart honesty, “I believe today as I have

always believed.” If so, there must have been several brethren out of harmony with the Dawn’s presentations in 1952.

The article in the above mentioned Dawn is long and only a few lines will be quoted:

“The first work of the kingdom is the destruction of the present world. This work is now in progress! ‘All his saints’ are honored with the privilege of participating in this, some on the other side of the veil and glorified with Christ, and the others, in that the Lord has put his words upon their lips, to proclaim the ‘day of vengeance.’

“The scriptures emphasize that the entire work of the kingdom is accomplished within a thousand-year period of time, and that all the saints reign with Christ during this thousand years. If we view the matter from God’s standpoint, recognizing that the announcing of the kingdom is considered by Him a very vital part of kingdom work, we will have no difficulty in understanding how the entire church does share with Jesus in the work of the thousand years.

“Undoubtedly the mediatorial work of the kingdom is near, although we should not be surprised that already nearly eighty years of the Millennium has been utilized in the preparation and destruction of the various elements of ‘this world’.”

With the issue of the March 1953, Dawn [page 5], a verification that we are living in the time of the antitypical Jubilee was again expressed in these words:

“This ‘trump of God’ was symbolized in the Old Testament by Israelis jubilee trumpet, which at that time announced the incoming year for Israel when debts were to be cancelled, slaves set free, and when those disinherited were to have their homes restored to them. This was designed by God to foreshadow the restoration of the entire human race to its lost inheritance of life and to freedom from sin and death.”

Then in June 1954, a beautiful article on the subject, “When The Morning Appareth” rang with full clarity of truth. I am thankful to our loving Father that I and many others can still sing the beauty of the truth set forth therein. Here are just a few quotes:

“We know that we are receiving a kingdom which cannot be shaken, because we know that God is in the ‘midst of her,’ and that ‘she shall not be moved.’ (Psa. 46:5) The reason the ‘her’ class is not moved—not shaken in faith, not separated from the love of God, not removed from a favorable standing before Him—is because ‘God shall help her, when the morning appeareth.’”

“All who become part of the ‘her’ class must of necessity have profound respect for and confidence in the prophecies of God’s Word, and believe their testimony. Those who can now reach but the one conclusion, which is that the ‘morning appeareth,’ that the new day has dawned. True it is only by the ‘sure word of prophecy’ that they recognize the appearance of the morning, because in its early hours this ‘day of the Lord’ is ‘a day of darkness and of gloominess, a day of clouds and of thick darkness as the morning spread upon the mountains.’—Joel 2:1, 2”

“But by the light of the sure ‘word of prophecy’ we are able to see through the

darkness and discern that the ‘morning appeareth,’ that we have reached the time in the outworking of the divine plan when, although the ‘morning’ has come, a short dark night has also come down upon a distressed world...”

“He has helped us at this time when the morning appeareth—helped us by giving us a knowledge of his divine plan.”

“The morning referred to is the beginning of the Millennial Day. Actually this day dawned more than half a century ago. No doubt we saw this clearly once. Is the Day star still shining brightly in our hearts?”

“Are we still waiting patiently for this early phase of the morning to be over, or have we concluded that possibly the morning has not come at all, that we are not in the early hours of the Millennial day?”

It is evident the writer of this 1954 article above quoted was saddened to see some brethren growing weary in waiting for brighter evidences of the New Day and concluding that the Lord and his day had not come. Now, brethren, ponder the following with heart consideration: Today many fellow brethren sharing the Dawn’s present views are denying we are in the new day and are teaching the Millennial age is still future. Is this not a step toward darkness? The Day star cannot shine in a heart that has not welcomed the dawn of the New Day. This is the testimony of scripture not my opinion.

Let us go back to the 1947 Dawn [August, Vol. 16, No. 8], “The Table of The Lord” article:

“Satan is too clever to suggest openly to the Lord’s people that false doctrines are better for them than truth. His method is to raise doubts in their minds concerning the truth. He appeals to their pride, telling them that they should allow those who don’t believe the truth to air their unbelief among them. They are told that they should be ‘broad-minded,’ and be willing to give others ‘the benefit of the doubt.’

“Those who have been genuinely feasting at the table which the returned Lord prepared for them do not have doubts, and while they regret that some who seemingly rejoiced in the bounties of this rich spread of truth are now doubting various doctrines, Christian love does not demand that the doubters should be given the privilege of promulgating their unbelief among the sheep.”

Then came 1969. The Lord of the Harvest permitted a most divisive booklet to come among the brethren with the Dawn printing of “Oh, The Blessedness.” The Apostle Paul clarified that which is divisive with these words, “Now I entreat you, brethren, to watch those who are making factions and laying snares, contrary to the teachings which you have learned, and turn away from them.” Romans 16:17. Paul acknowledged that before one can be tested for his faith he must be brought to a proper understanding and then the test may follow. If we consider the harmony of the previous quotations and their agreement with the full context of the Pastor’s writings we must conclude that the Lord first provided his table and then tested our loyalty to remain seated at his table.

In the March 1969, Trustees’ Meeting report was the authorization to prepare “an article in which some of Brother Russell’s latest thoughts on the thousand year reign of Christ and the Church, restitution, and the establishment of the kingdom would be included.”

My question is, what, in the years of previous study of these brethren, have they been reading?

Every above quoted article is fully supported by Brother Russell's 'latest thoughts'. Brother Russell's latest thoughts also happened to be his earliest thoughts. Let us take a look. None of us can go further back in the writings of the Pastor than page 3, 1879, which was the very first paragraph of the Watch Tower. It reads:

“This is the first number of the first volume of ‘Zion’s Watch Tower,’ and it may not be amiss to state the object of its publication.

“That we are living ‘in the last days’—‘the day of the Lord’—‘the end’ of the Gospel Age, and consequently, in the dawn of the ‘new’ age, are facts not only discernible by the close student of the Word, led by the spirit, but the *outward signs* recognizable by the *world* bear the same testimony, and we are desirous that the ‘household of faith’ be fully awake to the fact.”

If the brethren preparing the mentioned booklet were actually endeavoring to present Brother Russell's latest thoughts and not their own they would merely have had to turn to the very last sermon Brother Russell had prepared but had never given by his own lips; it was read at the time of his funeral service. It is found in Reprint 6013, “The Morning Cometh and a Night Also.” The article is long so I will only quote what is necessary to the point:

“Let us not stop now to discuss the darkness of the night and its weeping. Let us awake and take note of the fact that the dawning of the new age is already here. For the past forty-two years we have been in it and enjoying many of its blessings. But those blessings come so stealthily—‘like a thief in the night’—that few recognize their import. Some few have been calling attention to the fact we have been in the Millennial Dawn since 1874.”

Really, brethren, should not this quotation have found its way into the booklet if you were actually trying to find Brother Russell's latest thoughts? Where were the 1916 forewords in the booklet? These should have settled Brother Russell's thoughts on all subject matter in the six volumes. What was wrong with references from the 1917 edition of the printing of the six volumes? They were on the press with Brother Russell's last word corrections at the time of his death.

What The Dawn may have thought to be a support for the “new views” in publishing the booklet, “Oh, The Blessedness!” has been the reverse by the wisdom of the Lord. He has directed many brethren to return to the “old paths”—the full beauty of the Harvest Truth. Thus, many new classes have of necessity been formed to again enjoy the truth as provided by the Lord of the Harvest. New activities by ecclesias are beginning to move. “Truth crushed to earth will rise again.” The text of Jeremiah 6:16, seems to have importance in our day as it did in the early 30's. “Thus saith the Lord, Stand ye in the ways, and see, and ask for the old paths, where is the good way, and walk therein, and ye shall find rest for your souls.”

I was grieved with a statement found in the Trustees' Meeting report of August 1969. We read, “A discussion was held on the matter of listing local class appointments in The Dawn. It was brought out that more classes desire this service and it is difficult to accommodate them due to space limitations.” Brethren, was this truly the reason? Lack of space? It does not seem to be as the very first issue of The Dawn after the previous announcement that this service was regrettably to cease was filled with a two-third page ad for the children's book. Check for yourself, page 63, November, 1969. The speakers' appointment page, the announcement of which was a special blessing to isolated brethren who would be benefitted by the pilgrim visits in nearby areas, must give way to fill the needs of small children. These things should not be. It would have been

better to have informed the brethren that only the names of those sharing the “new views” of The Dawn will be listed.

Another sorrow I found in The Dawn came to me in June, 1971. This article prompted my present course of action, and others in silence have taken a similar position. In the article, “Portrait of a King,” we read: “The Kings have had their day, it is said, but there is a King whose day is shortly to begin. As his ‘day’ draws near the whole world is in a sorry state of affairs.” And the article concludes, “The brightness of the hope that radiates from this promise is in the fact that the day in which Jesus is to be King is very near. The last hours of this night of sin are dark and stormy, but the light of his presence and power of his kingdom will soon be manifest...”

Many brethren consider the denial of our Lord’s return as a King is in essence a denial of his presence. The only office to which our Lord was anointed at Jordan was either Priest, Prophet, or King since these were the only offices of Israel where God required anointing. Our Lord did not lose his anointing at Calvary, but verified his right to it. He was raised from the tomb by the power of God to fulfil his anointing. The time came when, “having obtained a Kingdom,” he began the exercise of his Kingly power. Surely if the Lord is not now King there cannot be a resurrection of the sleeping saints. You ask why. Because the overcomers are promised to “sit in his throne,” which throne he declared was ready when he stood at the door and knocked.

But now let us see from earlier writings when our Lord became King. The quoted Dawn article of June 1971, was supposedly a rerun of the first chapter in “Behold Your King” booklet. The 1952 edition begins:

“The kings have had their day, it is said, but there is a King whose day is just beginning. As his ‘day’ dawns the whole world is in a sorry state of affairs...”

The chapter closes in the original text with these words:

“The brightness of the hope that radiates from this promise is in the fact that the day in which Jesus is to be King is already dawning. It is a dark and stormy dawn, but the light of his presence and the power of his kingdom will soon become manifest, and the darkness of the early morning hours will give way to the brightness of a new day of peace and joy and life for all mankind.”

Now, brethren, what do you think? A complete turn about in doctrine! Every nominal church in the land would agree with the June 1971, presentation that when our Lord returns he will be a King. With this issue of The Dawn I cancelled my subscription. I do not count this error as a small matter. It touches the very heart of the Harvest Message and Truth. And, like the 1513 experience of Luther, I do not expect many to be affected by the clearly stated facts in this letter. But for the few it may assist, we give thanks to the Lord.

As stated earlier in this letter, I do not judge any of my brethren. The facts must bear their own testimony.

But a lasting thought to the Trustees in particular. Turn to the inside of the last cover of any recent Dawn. We read concerning the fine announcement of the Studies in The Scriptures, “The first of these ‘Keys’ to the Bible was written more than seventy-five years ago, the last in 1904. They continue to be the outstanding text books on the Bible for our day.”

To this I fully agree—but do you? Search your own conscience. Do you recommend and use

them in your private and class study, including all the contents of these outstanding text books? Do you agree with the full contents of Volumes II, III, and IV? Will you sit down and take Volume I and explain the Divine Plan Chart just as it is written? Do you agree with the time features; time of the Jubilee; Israel's position as a blessing nation; the harmony of the chapter, "Thy God Reigneth"? What about the portion of the Pyramid? If not, why recommend them for others if they no longer contain the doctrines you teach and believe?

It is with a pure motive, before the Lord, that this letter is written. If I were not deeply concerned about my eternal spiritual welfare and that of yours, I would not write this letter. Truth is the most valuable possession we share, since it alone with our faith sanctifies us as eligible for the Kingdom. When our Lord declared before Pilate, "Everyone that is of the truth heareth my voice," we must recognize we cannot parley with error and hope to be found fully faithful. Doctrinal carelessness and compromise might be permitted for the great company for a while, but not with the Lord's elect.

Lovingly, in Christ,

Bro. Edward G. Lorenz