

QUESTIONS AND RESPONSES

On February 15, 2013, we received the following comment:

“Dear Brothers in Christ: I have been a Witness for over 60 years. Like all Witnesses I was taught that my future, if faithful, would be everlasting life on paradise Earth. However, that hope has never entirely satisfied me. I found it too materialistic. We are taught that material things do not bring happiness, yet the New World, as portrayed by the Witnesses, is seen in entirely materialistic terms. Little is said about spiritual values. This year's calendar is an excellent example. On the other hand, I have never received the witness of the Spirit as taught by the Witnesses. I have several friends who are of the anointed, and I talk to them frequently about this subject. It seems that the idea that a person has to receive some kind of supernatural calling is relatively recent. Russell didn't teach it, nor did Rutherford in his early years. Clearly the Bible's hope, especially in the so-called New Testament, is heavenly life. I must admit I am entirely confused. This week's WT study asked the question, "What do you desire for the future?" I wrote in the margin: "To be in God's presence, wherever that may be." I know that you have already written about the "witness of the spirit," but it isn't easy to break with something you have been taught for so many years, and that I myself have taught and preached to others. As I said I am torn between two conflicting visions of eternal life. If you can help me I would be eternally grateful. Yours in Christ Jesus.”

To the author, thank you for your email. It warms our hearts! In our opinion, you are not at all torn. Your handwritten comment in the margin aptly expresses the witness of your spirit, namely, to be in the presence of God. And that, of course, is in the heavens. Though living 60 years, your handwritten comment exposes your childlike nature in just wanting to be with your Abba, your Father. Rejoice in that! We are profoundly moved at your sincere heart's desire. Welcome to the family, brother!

We wholeheartedly agree with you that the earthly hope is a materialistic hope. Really, brother, if the ‘sacred secret’ is not heavenly, what is the secret? Why is it so sacred? Man long aspired to live on earth. That is not new. And it takes no spiritual values to be a good and obedient human. We need only look around us at self-professed atheists and agnostics who are good to their families, their neighbors, even their associates, but have no love for God or his ways. Remember Jesus’ comments in this regard:

“For if you love those loving you, what reward do you have? Are not also the tax collectors doing the same thing? And if you greet your brothers only, what extraordinary thing are you doing? Are not also the people of the nations doing the same thing?” –
Matthew 5:46-47

We believe you are also correct that the idea that the heavenly hope is a supernatural calling is a relatively recent teaching. We see nothing in Russell’s writings to indicate as much. Perhaps that is why many who awaken to their true hope turn to the early writings of Russell to help them realize their hope.

To us, you do not seem confused at all. Rather than being confused, you are awakening to spirit realities. It is no accident that you reached out to us instead of becoming disgruntled and ‘beating your brothers.’ You are being led by spirit. You are a son! If you have not yet done so, you might want to read **Who Are Led By Spirit?**

Also, do not think that because you have some doubts, you are not a son of God. Doubt alone can never prevent the realization of your hope. Honest doubt and sincere questioning is not sin. At worst, they only delay your journey, but they do not end it. Jesus loves the honest doubter as evidenced by his love and acceptance of the apostle Thomas who carried the nickname “Doubting Thomas.”

But you do appear to be grieving. You spent so many years in a false hope and you are having to adjust to the reality that you were not taught the truth about the good news. We went through the same grieving process. We consider ourselves fairly intelligent, but still we could not see what was plainly stated in the Christian scriptures. How we allowed our eyes to be blinded for so long has confounded us. But it has not defeated us. As long as there is breath in our bodies, there is the opportunity to turn toward the true hope. That is one reason why we started this website – to open the eyes of our brothers. In spite of the fact that the Governing Body continues to teach this error, we have not given up the hope that they, and our local brothers and sisters, are simply misled and will turn to the true hope when they can get past their own shock and grief.

So our suggestion to you, brother, is to sure up your faith! You know the true hope. Accept the plain and open teachings of Jesus and walk in them. You might find some encouragement in the articles “**Am I a Son?**” – ***Conquering Doubt***, and **Comfort for Those Spiritually Grieving**. Also take a look at the **Questions and Responses** under the topic ‘Anointed.’

Finally, we intend to write an article soon about our status as ‘faith-sons’ and what that means. Please stay tuned.

“Elaia Luchnia”
