AN OPEN LETTER ON

BIBLE CHRONOLOGY

In which is examined the charge that Brother Russell misled his brethren when he proclaimed that our Lord Jesus Christ has been present since the year 1874 A.D.; and the claim that the true date for the second advent of Christ is 1954 A.D.

By

Morton Edgar

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"The Great Pyramid and the Bible" "Faith's Foundations"
"Prayer and the Bible" "The Restoration of Israel" etc.

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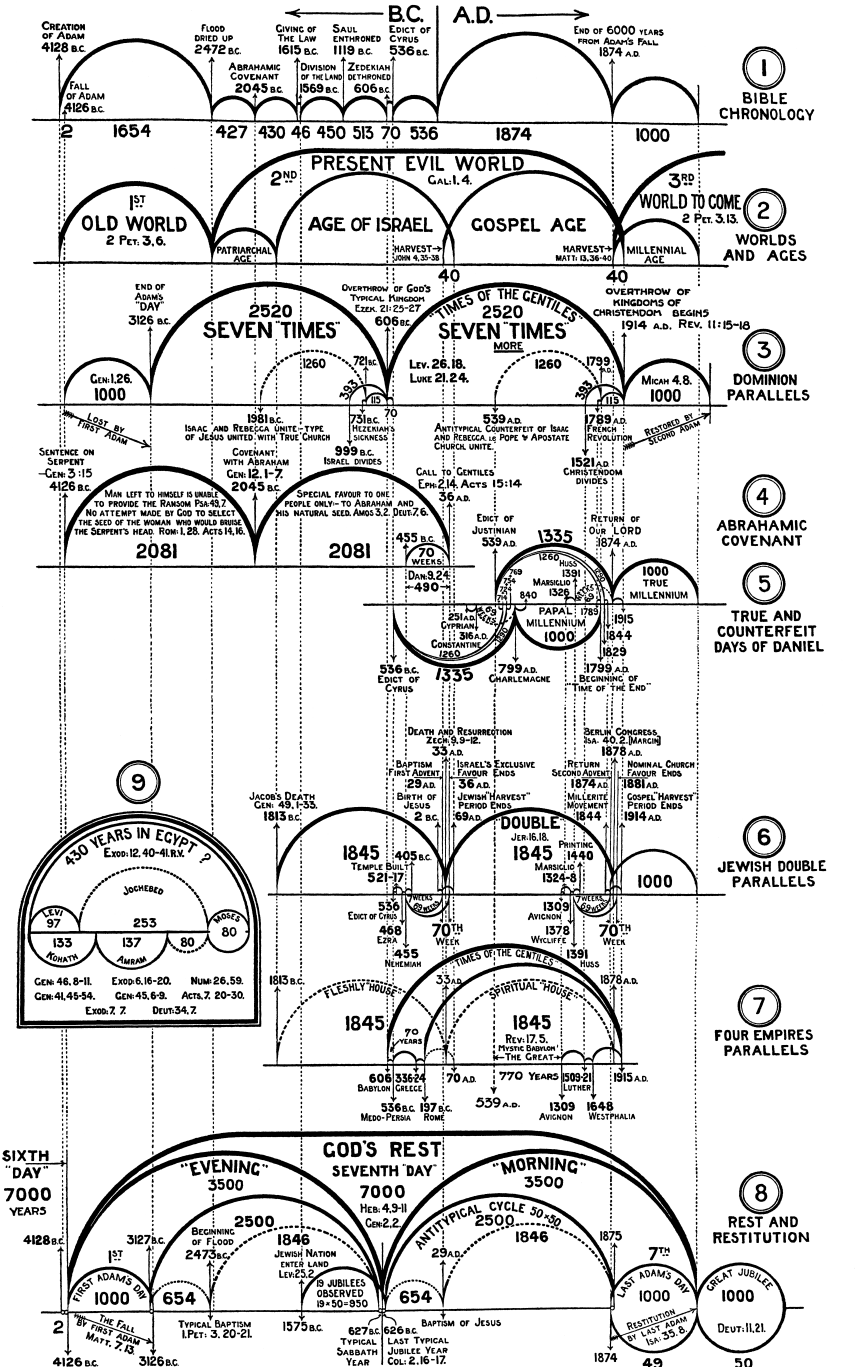

THE DIVINE PLAN OF THE AGES

This Chart is fully explained in "GREAT PYRAMID PASSAGES," Vol. II, which may be procured from:
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AN OPEN LETTER ON

BIBLE CHRONOLOGY

By Morton Edgar

Dear Brethren in the Lord,

My opinion is often asked concerning a "new" Bible Chronology now being advocated by some of the brethren, namely, that one which claims that the full 6000 years from Adam's creation will end in 1954 A.D. Our Lord is due to come again at that date, we are assured, and all things related to the evil reign of Satan will be concluded by the termination of this 6000-year period.

These 1954-date brethren acknowledge that they gained their understanding of God's wonderful Plan of the Ages from the writings of Brother Russell; but they now insist that Brother Russell was entirely in error when he taught that the 6000-year period from Adam's creation ended in 1872 A.D.; that our Lord is now Present, His Second Advent dating from 1874 A.D.; and that all evil will not be put under Christ's feet, 'till His thousand years' reign has accomplished its work, when He shall have delivered up the Kingdom to God the Father, 7000 years after the fall of Adam (1 Cor. 15:24-26). The Primary cause of Brother Russell's error, they affirm, was in his placing too much reliance upon the historical dates of an "Astrologer," namely, Ptolemy, and in neglecting the inspired utterances of the Prophet Daniel. On the contrary these brethren, now that their eyes of understanding are open, utterly reject Ptolemy and his "Canon" or Chronological List of Kings, while, unlike Brother Russell, they whole-heartedly adhere to every word of Daniel.

Can it be that Brother Russell, whom one of these brethren recognises to have been "a devoted man of God"; and of whom another writes: "I, with so many, would testify of my deep respect to that dear servant of God. Of all men I feel that he is fully justified in that honoured title of 'Brother in Christ',"—can it be that he has misled us? "We must give due credit to this great Bible scholar," this 1954-date brother again remarks in referring to brother Russell, but nevertheless feels he must charge him with "leaving us unsettled with regard to future reckonings" when he died on Oct. 31st 1916.

Is it true that Brother Russell has left us unsettled with regard to future reckonings? Did he mislead us by his interpretation of the Bible Chronology and the times and seasons? Let me here say that any brother and sister, children of our heavenly Father, who will obey the injunction of the inspired Apostle to "prove all things," will be able to satisfy themselves that Brother Russell did not mislead us,—that these 1954-date brethren are entirely mistaken. The Apostle admonishes us to "hold fast that which is good"; and Brother Russell's interpretation is good, because Scriptural—1 Thess. 5:21.

During the past thirty or more years there have been a number of distinct attacks against the chronological interpretation of Brother Russell; but while quietly retaining his own faith in his chronology, being persuaded that the Lord Himself was the Author of it, Brother Russell never insisted that his brethren accept it unless they could prove for themselves its truth. Writing in this connection on one occasion Brother Russell said: "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,' whether others hear or forbear to hear. Is not this in accord with the Spirit of Christ?"—Reprints of the *Watch Tower*, page 5367.

I believe I am right in saying that it was in the early part of 1931 when the claim was first published amongst the brethren, to the effect that 6000 years from the creation of Adam will not end till 1954 A.D. In a pamphlet issued in that year it is asserted that Brother Russell was wrong in accepting Ptolemy's date 536 B.C. for the first year of Cyrus king of Persia. The true date, they say, 454 B.C., or no less than 82 years later.

Cyrus, you will recall, was the Persian king who issued a "Proclamation" permitting the captive Israelites in Babylon to return to Judea, and rebuild the Temple in Jerusalem—2 Chron. 36:20-23. The House of God had been destroyed 70 years before by the Babylonian king Nebuchadnezzar, and Jerusalem and the land of Promise had lain desolate without an inhabitant all these years, until the 1st year of the reign of Cyrus—2 Chron. 36:11-21. As this 70-year period is the last definite link in the chronological chain of the Old Testament times we can see the importance of ascertaining the exact date when king Cyrus began his reign.

But the Bible does not furnish a clue as to when Cyrus began his reign, except that it was at the close of the 70 years of desolation. Although the names of Gentile kings are frequently mentioned, the Word of God does not present a list of their reigns, as it does in the case of the kings of Judea. We must therefore rely upon the records of secular history for the beginning of the reign of king Cyrus of Persia.

But it is on this point that the 1954-date brethren disagree,—they say that, as children of God we should hold ourselves aloof from the records of secular history. They claim that the Word of God is all-sufficient in this matter of Chronology, and that secular history has not part to play in our search for truth. But when we examine the arguments of these brethren in support of their claim, we find that they are inconsistent, that they do, after all, accept secular records in certain important periods of Scriptural history (as indeed they must, for there is no other way).

The beginning and end of the 6000-year period.

As the arguments contained in the writings of these 1954-date brethren all centre around the question of the 6000-year period, as to its beginning and end, let us begin with this feature:

According to Brother Russell's interpretation of the Bible Chronology, 6000 years, when reckoned from the creation of Adam, ended in 1872 A.D. But as he always insisted that the six great "Days" of a 1000 years each ended in 1874 A.D., that is two years after 1872, the first of these 1000-year Days must have begun two years after Adam's creation. He had definite reason for this method of reckoning, as we shall see.

The brethren of the "new" chronology, however, reckon their 6000-year period directly from Adam's creation, two years earlier than Brother Russell's calculation; and they end it in 1954 A.D., which is 80 years later than the date given by Brother Russell (1954 – 1874 = 80). These brethren therefore differ from Brother Russell to the extent of 82 years.

Why did Brother Russell reckon the 6000-year period from two years after Adam's creation? He was led to this opinion from an appreciation of the fact that, there must have been an interval after the creation of Adam before sin entered into the world, a period of innocence during which man had communion with his Maker before disobedience brought upon him the death sentence, the wages of sin. And that this period was two years is clearly demonstrated by Brother Russell in his writings. He shows how all the harmonious interlocking of the numerous time-features of the Word of God require a two-year period between Adam's creation and his fall into sin,—See the Chronological Chart on page 146.*

* This two-year period is clearly demonstrated in my Chronological Chart, presented in my 2nd volume of Great Pyramid Passages, which volume Brother Russell recommended to the brethren in his journal, *The Watch Tower* of 15th October 1913. You may recall, also, that this Chart was inserted by Brother Russell in his special *Berean* edition of the Bible, circulated all over the world. It was in 1906, however, when I first published this Chronological Chart, entitled: *The Divine Plan of the Ages.*

But the 1954-date brethren require these two years to fill out their 6000-year period, and therefore they ignore that interval of innocence before the entry of sin into the world. As we have seen, they change the date of the 1st year of king Cyrus from 536 B.C. to 454 B.C., thus dropping out 82 years from the chronological chain of the Bible (536–454 = 82). But the interval between the dates 1874 and 1954 A.D. is 80 years, two years short of the dropped-out period; and thus if they still desire to retain their date 1954 A.D. as the termination of the full 6000 years, they must borrow the extra two years at the commencement of the 6000 years. That is why they date their 6000-year period from the creation, instead of from the fall, of Adam.

This is where these 1954-date brethren make their first mistake, for it is manifestly unscriptural to commence the reign of sin and death from the very creation of Adam. God did not create man in sin, but in His own image—Gen. 1:27. And sin did not enter until after the appearing of Eve; and Eve did not come into being until God had taught Adam his need of a "help meet for him"—Gen. 2:18-23. Then came the temptation by the serpent, and Adam's wilful disobedience in eating the forbidden fruit (for it is written that Adam was not deceived, though Eve was—1 Tim. 2:13, 14). It is in the 3rd chapter of Genesis that we read of the temptation and disobedience of Adam, and of the death-sentence, and the curse upon the earth for man's sake. It is thus clear from the Scriptures that there must have been an interval between Adam's creation and his fall through disobedience; and as we have said this interval is shown to have been two years, because of the harmony of all the time-features of the Bible.

Another mistake into which these 1954-date brethren are led is revealed by their claim that (to quote one of them): "all things relating to this evil reign will be concluded in 6000 years." But Bible students are aware that the Word of God nowhere indicates that the reign of sin and death, and all evil brought into the world through the disobedience of Adam, will cease at the conclusion of 6000 years. On the contrary the Scriptures declare that Christ, our returned Lord, "must reign, till he hath put all enemies under his feet. The last enemy that shall be destroyed is death"—1 Cor. 15:25, 26. And we read that this "day of judgment and perdition of ungodly men," this "Day" which God has appointed, in which he will judge the world in righteousness by that man whom he has ordained, His dear Son Jesus Christ, is to be a 1000-year Day,—the 7th Millennium—2 Pet. 3:7, 8; Acts 17:31.

Brother Russell's attitude toward Ptolemy's Canon.

But let us continue our examination of the arguments of the 1954-date brethren: It is essential to the acceptance of their new chronology, to clear away the testimony of the "Canon" of Ptolemy. At least so these brethren imagine, for they blame it all on Ptolemy that we accept the date 536 B.C., instead of 454 B.C., for the first year of king Cyrus of Persia. They therefore seek to discredit this famous Canon or Chronological List of Kings, by saying that Ptolemy was a mere "Astrologer," discounting the fact that he was an Astronomer of ability, a Mathematician, Geographer, and Historian.

To the same end, also, they enlist Brother Russell on their side (in spite of their rejection of his chronology), by quoting some of his observations concerning Ptolemy; and because of these observations they claim that Brother Russell revealed a certain timidity about accepting the dates of Ptolemy,—although he did accept them nevertheless. One of them writes: "Brother Russell's timidity of the astronomer Ptolemy is revealed elsewhere in his writings: 'Astronomy was one of the early sciences, but in early times it was so mixed with vague imaginations and astrology as to be of little value. Ptolemy, who was an historian as well as an astronomer, found in those superstitious records of the world, connections between history and astronomical data' (W. T. Rep. 1975). And yet our dear Brother Russell allowed this very medium to supply an all-important missing link of chronology. How much better it is to go direct to the fountain source of Divine wisdom and instruction! Then and then only shall we find ourselves on sure ground."

When we read the above quotation from Brother Russell's writings, and the comment thereon, do we not gather the impression that, not only did Brother Russell recognise Ptolemy as a mere Astrologer, but that in spite of this he allowed himself to be guided by this Astrologer in a most important part of the Bible Chronology, turning his back, as it were, upon the Divine Guidance of the Word of Truth? This certainly seems to be the impression that the brother desires to convey to his readers. But he is not being fair to Brother Russell, because we find that he omits important sentences and words in his quotation, without indicating in the customary way that there are omissions.

What Brother Russell wrote is this: "Astronomy was one of the early 'sciences'; but in early times it was so mixed with vague imaginations and astrology as to be of little value, and astronomers (rather astrologers) then not only claimed to foretell something respecting the future state of the weather, but after the style of the modern 'fortune-teller' pretended to predict future events;—teaching that there was some connection, or relation, between eclipses and transits of heavenly bodies and the events of earth,—such as births, battles, deaths, revolutions, plagues, etc;—and they frequently made note of eclipses in connection with their record of events which they supposed answered as fulfilment of these superstitious notions, just as superstitious people now often connect things together in their imaginations which have not the remotest philosophical relationship—as, for instance, the breaking of a looking glass to be a sign of a death, etc., etc. Thus it happened that Ptolemy, who was a historian as well as an astronomer, found in those superstitious records of the world *connections* between history and astronomic data which he was able to use; and his knowledge of astronomy and of dates and times when eclipses had occurred ***helped*** him in bringing order and harmony out of the histories of the four principal heathen nations of his day—Assyria, Persia, Greece and Rome." (See 15th May 1896 *Watch Tower* and note the important parts omitted by the 1954-date brother in his quotation).

We note, therefore, that Brother Russell gives due credit to Ptolemy's knowledge of astronomy, and of his ability in being able to make use of the ancient records of astrologers in the compilation of his "Canon" or List of Kings and their reigns,—Babylonian, Persian, Grecian, and Roman,—without, however, permitting the vague imaginings and superstitions of these astrologers to obscure his judgment.

Brother Russell's article in the 15th May 1896, *Watch Tower*, entitled: "Erroneous Chronology and False Conclusions," from which the above quotation is taken, is not directed against Ptolemy, whose dates, he says, were "generally quite accurate." The article is directed against those who, like Mr. Dimbleby and Mr. Totten, claim to be able to "fix" dates in the Bible astronomically, but who nevertheless violate the Bible records of chronology.

Continuing, Brother Russell writes: "Two dates are fixed [in Ptolemy's Canon] with considerable certainty,—the beginning of Nabonassar's reign on Feb. 26 of 747 B.C. and the beginning of the reign of Cyrus in 536 B.C. The former date is valueless to us in the study of Bible chronology; because Nabonassar is not mentioned in the Scriptures. The latter, however, is a very important aid; for the Bible chronology ends with the '70 years desolation of the land,' and it tells us that God stirred up the heart of Cyrus to restore Israel from captivity at the close of that period, and that this was in the first year of Cyrus;—hence 536 B.C."

But while Brother Russell saw reason to accept as accurate most of Ptolemy's dates, there are two which he did not accept, namely, the date for the beginning of the reign of Nebuchadnezzar, 604 B.C., and that for the beginning of the reign of Artaxerxes king of Persia, 464 B.C. In these instances he followed the Bible indications, that is, 625 B.C. for Nebuchadnezzar, and 474 B.C. for Artaxerxes. For the Scriptures declare that it was in the 19th year of Nebuchadnezzar that this king destroyed Jerusalem and the temple, and laid the land waste without an inhabitant for 70 years—See 2 Chron. 36:11-23; 2 Kings 25:8-12, 25, 26. And as the 70 years' desolation ended in Cyrus' 1st year, 536 B.C., it began in 606 B.C. 606 B.C. must therefore have been the 19th year of the Babylonian king, Nebuchadnezzar, and hence 625 B.C. his 1st year.

As for the reign of Artaxerxes,—it was in the 20th year of this king that God's servant, Nehemiah, received his authorisation, or commandment, to restore and build Jerusalem (as recorded in the Book of Nehemiah); and the prophetic time-features of the Bible require that this 20th year was 454 B.C. Hence the 1st year of Artaxerxes must have been 474 B.C. (There is not need for me to enter into the details which prove that Brother Russell judged correctly as to the date of Artaxerxes' 1st year, 474 B.C., for I present these fully in Section LIX of my Vol. II *Great Pyramid Passages*).

It is interesting to notice that Ptolemy gives the date 625 B.C. for the beginning of the reign of the Babylonian king Nabopolassar, who is said to be the father of Nabokolassar. But modern historians translate both of these names "Nebuchadnezzar," as can be seen in the Babylonian section of the British Museum. If Nabopolassar is the Nebuchadnezzar of the Bible, his 19th year would have been 606 B.C., which is agreeable with Bible Chronology. We should not overlook the possibility that ancient historians, of the days before Ptolemy, may have mixed up the identities of those two Babylonian kings, Nabopolassar and Nabokolassar, whose names are so much alike; just as we know that they mixed up the identities of the two Persian kings, Xerxes and Artaxerxes.

Naturally the 1954-date brethren seek to make capital of the fact that Brother Russell did not accept all the dates of Ptolemy, but those only that are agreeable with Bible Chronology. He rejected the Canon's dates for Nebuchadnezzar and Artaxerxes, as we have said, but accepted the 536 B.C. date for Cyrus. But these brethren think that, to be consistent, he should have rejected all the dates of Ptolemy, saying, in the words of one of them: "If Ptolemy cannot be relied upon all the way, how can we feel quite positive that his findings are correct some of the way?" Which of course has the appearance of logic!

But we remember that other brethren before them, who had also accused Brother Russell with making mistakes in his interpretation of the Bible Chronology, argued after the same manner, but from the contrary viewpoint,—their contention being that if we accept Ptolemy's date for the 1st year of Cyrus, 536 B.C., it is both unreasonable and inconsistent for us to reject any of his dates.

Brother Russell adopted the sensible attitude toward the Canon of Ptolemy. He did not exalt this astronomer and historian to the status of the inspired writers of the Word of God, and contend that we must accept all his dates if we accept some of them. Nor did he follow the other extreme view now adopted by these 1954-date brethren,—that if we reject some of Ptolemy's dates we should reject them all. Each of these attitudes is an exaggeration; and the children of God are not so helpless that they must needs be tied down to either.

We agree with Brother Russell that Ptolemy was "generally quite accurate"; and it is not so improbable that these two wrong dates, for the reigns of Nebuchadnezzar and Artaxerxes, which we find in our copies of the "Canon," are not due to Ptolemy himself but to some copyists who made slips when copying from the original or near original, now lost.

Errors of copyists occur even in the Bible, in spite of all the great care exercised by the Lord's people to preserve the pure text. For instance there is a copyist's error in 1 Kings 6:1, where the period of 480 years should be 580, as is proved by reference to the other Scriptures which cover that interval. Another instance of the error of a copyist: Compare 2 Kings 24:8 where it says that "Jehoiachin was eighteen years old when he began to reign," with 2 Chron. 36:9 which reads: "Jehoiachin was eight years old when he began to reign,"—a difference of ten years. Then the question arises: If the Bible references to the time-periods cannot be relied upon all the way, how can we feel positive that its time-periods are correct some of the way? This is the kind of doubting question directed against us by the worldly-wise. But it does not trouble us, for the Lord's children have ways of searching out the truth unknown to the world—Luke 10:21.

As for brother Russell's supposed "timidity" about accepting the dates of Ptolemy,—we can set our minds at rest. For his last writings prove his unwavering faith in the Bible Chronology as used by him in his *Studies in the Scriptures*. His new *Forewords* in his 2nd and 3rd volumes, written just a month before he passed away, reveal his continued faith in that chronology,—which means continued confidence in Ptolemy's 536 B.C. date for Cyrus (which these 1954-date brethren now want to shift 82 years forward to 454 B.C., thus doing violence to all history, both Sacred and Secular).

Brother Russell disclaimed authorship of the Bible Chronology he adopted.

One other point in connection with the Bible Chronology which Brother Russell adopted: One of these 1954-date brethren writes: "No doubt it will surprise many to know that the *Watch Tower* chronology and reckoning is in the main of Millerite origin, see *Watch Tower* Reprints 3822." When we turn to page 3822 of the Reprints of the *Watch Tower*, we find an article entitled: "Harvest Gatherings and Siftings," dated 15th July 1906. But Brother Russell did not write this article in the year 1906, but twelve years previously, in April of 1894, or over 42 years ago (it was issued in a special copy of the *Watch Tower*, of 25th April 1894). The brethren, then, should not express surprise that the chronology used by Brother Russell was not his own, for he did not seek to hide this fact.

But note one important statement made by Brother Russell in this article, written in the year 1894. He says: "we felt greatly grieved at the error of the Second Adventists [Millerites], who expected Christ in the flesh, and teaching that the world and all in it except Second Adventists would be burned up in 1873 or 1874, whose time-settings and disappointments and crude ideas generally as to the object and manner of his coming brought more or less reproach upon us and upon all who longed for and proclaimed his coming kingdom." It appears therefore that though the Millerites made use of the same chronology that Brother Russell adopted, they through misunderstanding of the Scriptures misapplied it.

The chronological table, used by Brother Russell in his 2nd volume of *Studies* appears in Elliott's *Horae Apocalypticae, a Commentary on the Apocalypse*, which was published in 1846. Grattan Guinness also presents this table in his well-known work *The Approaching End of the Age*, published in 1878. Brother Russell *accepted* it, being convinced that this chronology is based upon the Word of God, whereas neither Elliott nor Grattan Guinness would adopt it, even though they publish it in their works. Brother Russell had faith in it, the others had not.

Referring to this chronology in the 1st October 1907 *Watch Tower* Brother Russell says: "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." "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 "70 weeks" of Daniel and their commencement.

The prophetic period of "70 weeks" recorded in Daniel 9:24-27 is one of the most important, for it points directly to the date of the Messiah's appearing. As explained by commentators these are "weeks" of years,—70 weeks = 490 years. The Messiah was to come at the end of 69 of these weeks, that is, 483 years from an outstanding event, which marked their commencement.

But let us read the prophecy: "Seventy weeks are determined [cut off, or set apart] upon thy people and upon thy holy city, to [1] finish the transgression, and to [2] make an end of sin, and to [3] make reconciliation for iniquity, and to [4] bring in everlasting righteousness, and to [5] seal up the vision [the vision of the "2300 days," of which the 70 weeks formed the first part—Dan. 8:13-17] and [6] prophecy [of the 70 weeks], and to [7] anoint the most Holy [anoint the Messiah with the Holy Spirit]. Know therefore and understand, that from the going forth of the commandment to restore and to build Jerusalem unto the Messiah the Prince shall be seven weeks, and threescore and two weeks [69 weeks]: the street shall be built again, and the wall, even in troublous times. And after [the] threescore and two weeks shall Messiah be cut off [in sacrifice], but not for himself [but on behalf of the world]…and he shall confirm the covenant with many for one week [the 70th week, or during the seven years from His baptism]: and in the midst of the week [70th, or 3½ years after His baptism] he shall cause [by His antitypical sacrifice in death] the sacrifice and oblation [according to the Law of Moses] to cease…"

The principal points to note in connection with our study is that the angel Gabriel, when communicating this prophecy to Daniel, intimated that the period of "seven weeks, and threescore and two weeks," or 69 weeks (483 years), would reach to the coming of Messiah the Prince; and that this period of weeks would commence from a definite event, namely, the "going forth of the commandment to restore and to build Jerusalem."

Without going into details in this place, we remind you that Brother Russell shows how this prophetic period of "weeks" terminated in Autumn of the year 36 A.D. There it was that exclusive favour to the people of Israel ended; for during that last, or 70th, week the Messiah had confirmed the Covenant of God with many of the people of Israel, to as many as received Him and believed on His Name—John 1:11-13. Thereafter the Gentiles (Cornelius being the first—see the 10th chapter of Acts) began to be called in by the Gospel message, that they might be fellow-citizens with the saints, God having now, through the blood of His dear Son, broken down the "middle wall of partition" which had hitherto separated the Gentiles from the Covenants of promise, the *exclusive* privilege of Israel up till that time—See the 2nd chapter of Ephesians.

As the full 70 weeks ended in Autumn of 36 A.D., the 69 weeks ended in Autumn of 29 A.D., at which date our Lord was baptised with the Holy Spirit at Jordan and thus became the Messiah,—the Anointed, or Christ—John 1:29-41. In the midst of the 70th week (of years), that is in Spring of the year 33 A.D., 3½ years after His anointing, Jesus Christ was "cut off" in sacrifice, laying down His life on behalf of the condemned world. All this has been explained by Brother Russell, and has been studied and accepted by all the brethren who have understood.

Remembering that the date 36 A.D. is the end of the 70 weeks period, the 1954-date brethren proceed from this point with their argument. One of them writes: "Bible Students are generally agreed on the significance of the seventy weeks (or sevens) that it represents a period of 490 years terminating 3½ years after the death of Christ with the introduction of Cornelius, the first Gentile convert into the Church, i.e., A.D. 36, and therefore finding its beginning B.C. 454. Therefore, the going forth of the commandment to restore and build Jerusalem was in B.C. 454."

Another of these 1954-date brethren says: "Our Lord was born approximately 36 years* before the conclusion of Israel's time-limit. Thus, by the simple process of subtraction (490 - 36), we obtain 454 B.C., which synchronises with the first year of Cyrus. This Ptolemy makes out to be 536 B.C., a difference of 82 years, which adjustment will be found necessary in our reckoning."

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* Just one point of correction here—Our Lord was not born *approximately 36 years* before the termination of Israel's exclusive time-period of 70 weeks, or 490 years. He was born exactly 37 years before; for He was 30 years of age at His baptism (Luke 3:21-23), which was at the beginning of the 70th or last week, hence 30 + 7 = 37 years, to the end of the 70 weeks.

Thus you see how these brethren arrive at the date 454 B.C., which they (erroneously) say was the date of the first year of king Cyrus. We do not, of course, dispute that 454 B.C. was the beginning of the period of 70 weeks, but on the contrary have for a number of years been careful to draw attention to this fact, showing that Ussher's date, 445 B.C. given in the margin of reference Bibles, must be wrong.

We shall all agree that it is certainly simple enough to subtract 36 A.D. from 490 years, the 70 weeks, and thus arrive at the date 454 B.C. But where did these 1954-date brethren get the date 36 A.D.? Or, rather, where did Brother Russell get this date 36 A.D., which these brethren accept without question?

They are anxious for us to reject all the dates of Ptolemy, claiming that as students of the Word of God we have no need of the records of Secular writers. But are they not aware that when they accept, without question, the 36 A.D. date, they are following the Canon of Ptolemy?

We cannot, of course, find the date 36 A.D. in the Bible, apart from the chronological records of Secular History. On the contrary the Bible refers us directly to Secular History for this, and the other dates, connected with the first advent of Jesus Christ; and had it not been for these references we could not know just when Jesus Christ came into the world.

We must not permit ourselves to be misled by these brethren; for it is our heavenly Father Himself who, through His Holy Word, refers us to the records of Secular History for all of these dates that lead us to the time of His Son's first advent, His birth, baptism and crucifixion, and the end of the 70 weeks. When God is our guide we feel safe, for we know that he will have seen to it that history is reliable in those periods to which His Word directs.

The value of Secular history, Scripturally indicated.

Briefly, the 36 A.D. date is determined by reference to the reign of the Roman emperor Tiberius Caesar. In Luke (3:1-3, 21-23; 4:1) we are told that John the Baptist began his preaching in the 15th year of Tiberius Caesar; and that Jesus Christ, when he was anointed with the Holy Spirit at Jordan at 30 years of age, also began his ministry. That is the Bible reference, and we now require to turn to the records of Secular History to find in what year Tiberius Caesar began his reign, for then we shall know when John the Baptist began his preaching, and when Jesus Christ began his ministry.

It is from Ptolemy's Canon that we find that Tiberius Caesar began to reign in 14 A.D., on 19th August when Augustus Caesar died. The 15th year of Tiberius Caesar was therefore 29 A.D. (or more particularly his 15th year was from 19th August 28 A.D., to 19th August 29 A.D.). In that year, the Word of God informs us, John the Baptist began to preach; and Jesus Christ, who was about six months younger than John (Luke 1:13, 23-36), began his ministry about six months later, when he was 30.

As our Lord Jesus Christ died on the cross as the great Passover Lamb (as we read: "Christ our passover is sacrificed for us"—1 Cor. 5:7), He died in the Spring, in the first month of the Jewish year, thus fulfilling the type of the passover—Exod. 12:1-11. Our Lord was "cut off" in sacrifice in the "midst of the week," the 70th week, that is, 3½ years after His anointing as the Messiah. Reckoning from Spring, 3½ years back leads to Autumn; and it must have been Autumn of the year 29 A.D. when the 70th week began (John the Baptist began to preach in Spring of 29 A.D., about six months before our Lord's 30th year).*

We see therefore that although the Scriptures supply all the details necessary to ascertain the intervals of time between the birth of our Lord, and His baptism, and crucifixion, and the end of the 70 weeks of Daniel (points of time all closely connected), the one leading date required is supplied by the records of Secular

* For the details connected with the dates of our Lord's first advent, I refer you to Section X of my Vol. II *Great Pyramid Passages*.

History,—the 15th year of a Roman emperor, Tiberius Ceasar. It is thus very misleading for anyone to claim that we can do without the records of Secular History when interpreting the Bible Chronology. Our heavenly Father would not refer us to the pages of Secular History if we could do without it, as is clear to every child of God.

As another illustration of how misleading such a claim can be, I desire to draw your attention to one statement made by one of these 1954-date brethren: When the people of Israel returned from Babylon under the Proclamation of Cyrus, we read that they laid the foundation of the House of God, the Temple, in the 2nd year—Ezra 3:8-11. Then enemies stopped the work, and it was not resumed until the 2nd year of Darius king of Persia—Ezra 4:24. The Scriptures also tell us that work on the Temple was finished in the 6th year of Darius—Ezra 6:15. So far our information is supplied by the Word of God.

But one of these 1954-date brethren in his publication cites further information, not supplied in the Bible: He tells us that an interval of 15 years elapsed between the time when work on the Temple was stopped, and when this work was resumed. To quote: "The books of Ezra and Nehemiah follow on with a detailed account of how the work proceeded [that is, work on the Temple,—the book of Nehemiah, however, does not speak of the work on the Temple, but is wholly taken up with the work of restoring and building Jerusalem and its wall]. This reveals incredible difficulties in the task. For instance, fifteen years went by, at which time the work was stopped, and still the temple was not completed. Meanwhile, the chief actors whom God had used, Cyrus and Daniel [except that God did not use Daniel in this connection], were now sleeping in the dust. Then the prophets Haggai and Zechariah arose, and caused Darius, a new king, to search the records. The decree of Cyrus was found, and the work of the temple was recontinued and finished about twenty-one years after the original proclamation"—of Cyrus.

How does this brother know that the interval during which work on the temple was stopped was 15 years? Who told him? How does he know that the temple was finished 21 years after the Proclamation of Cyrus? He never got that information from the Bible, for we shall search in vain for a Scriptural statement as to how long after Cyrus this king Darius began his reign. The brother has forgotten, apparently, that it is from secular history, from Ptolemy's Canon, that students gather these facts.

It is from Ptolemy's Canon that we find that Cyrus' first year was 536 B.C.; and it is also from Ptolemy's Canon that we find that Darius king of Persia began his reign in 521 B.C. Hence Ptolemy informs us that the 6th year of Darius, when the Temple was finished, was in 515 B.C., or about 21 years after Cyrus began to reign.*

The "Proclamation" of Cyrus, and the "Commandment" spoken of by Gabriel.

But above all we should examine the claim made by these brethren that, the "Proclamation" of Cyrus was that "Commandment" spoken of by Gabriel to Daniel —Dan. 9:25.

Did the Proclamation of Cyrus fulfil the Commandment? Let us read what Gabriel said: "Know therefore and understand, that from the going forth of the commandment to restore and to build Jerusalem unto Messiah the Prince shall be seven weeks, and threescore and two weeks: the street shall be built again, and the wall, even in troublous times"—See the whole declaration of Gabriel in Daniel 9:24-27.

Read now the Proclamation of Cyrus: "Now in the first year of Cyrus king of Persia, that the word of the Lord by the mouth of Jeremiah might be fulfilled, the Lord stirred up the spirit of Cyrus king of Persia, that he made a proclamation

* For further details of the work on the Temple, which was a reformation work in Israel, see the footnote on page 106 of my 2nd volume of *Great Pyramid Passages*. In Section XX in that volume I show how the temple-work in the days of these Persian kings prefigured a similar reformation work, in the spiritual sense, in the Gospel Age, in which the dates correspond in accordance with the Parallel Dispensations.

throughout all his kingdom, and put it also in writing, saying….The Lord God of heaven…hath charged me to build him an house at Jerusalem, which is in Judah. Who is there among you of all his people? his God be with him, and let him go up to Jerusalem, which is in Judah, and build the house of the Lord God of Israel, (he is the God), which is in Jerusalem"—See the full Proclamation in Ezra.

When we compare this Proclamation of Cyrus with the words of Gabriel, we see that there is no connection. Gabriel declared that a Commandment would go forth to restore and build Jerusalem, saying that the street and the wall would be built in troublous times. Cyrus' Proclamation refers to the building of the House of God, the Temple.

The fact that Gabriel said to Daniel: "from the going forth of the commandment to restore and to build Jerusalem," proves that God had arranged in His Plan of the Ages that such a Commandment would go forth, at a definite time. Does the Word of God tell us when this Commandment did go forth? Yes; in the 2nd chapter of the Book of Nehemiah we read how Artaxerxes, another king of Persia, sent forth this Commandment in his 20th year, granting the commission to build Jerusalem to God's faithful servant Nehemiah. And reliable history (not Ptolemy's Canon alone) shows that the 20th year of Artaxerxes was in 455-454 B.C. Are we sure that this Commandment went forth from Artaxerxes in his 20th year? Yes, we need not doubt it,—we only require to read the Book of Nehemiah to convince ourselves.

The 1954-date brethren, in order to uphold their chronology, not only shift the 1st year of Cyrus from 536 B.C. to 454 B.C. (thus dropping out 82 years from the history of the world), but they seek to make it appear that the Proclamation of Cyrus was that "Commandment" spoken of by Gabriel. They recognise there is a difficulty in identifying the Proclamation with the Commandment, and several ways are suggested to overcome it.

Cyrus' Proclamation contains no word about restoring and building Jerusalem, but is concerned with the building of the House of God about which Gabriel said nothing. Nevertheless, says one of these brethren in his publication, the Proclamation of Cyrus was the foretold Commandment. Why, then, the exclusive mention of building the Temple in the Proclamation, and no word about building Jerusalem? "The reason is obvious," writes this brother, "Ezra was a priest of the Aaronic Order (Ezra vii, 1/5) and as such would be particularly concerned with the temple aspect, to which he accordingly gives prominence. On the other hand, Daniel, who was not a priest, but a statesman, took a national view, and his prayer and Gabriel's answer to it were occupied with the question of the restoration of Jerusalem, as the centre of national life." (The brother then goes on to quote Josephus, the Jewish Historian, to prove that his view of this matter is the correct one,—he has confidence in the Historian Josephus, but professes to have no faith in the Historian Ptolemy).

But you will agree that this reasoning is not acceptable to the child of God who seeks to be guided by the Word of Truth. It implies that the angel Gabriel, the messenger of God to Daniel, spoke about building the temple as well as restoring Jerusalem, and that Daniel in recording the message deliberately suppressed all mention of building the temple. It also implies that Cyrus in his Proclamation gave commandment about restoring and building Jerusalem, as well as about building the House of God, and that Ezra the scribe deliberately omitted that part connected with building Jerusalem. In other words it implies that neither Daniel or Ezra were faithful recorders, but each gave a garbled account of what they had heard; and with this, of course, we cannot agree.

Another of these 1954-date brethren explains the difficulty of identifying the Proclamation of Cyrus with the Commandment spoken of by Gabriel, by suggesting that king Cyrus was "guided" by Daniel on how to frame his Proclamation. According to this suggestion, Daniel was the real author of the Proclamation, Cyrus being merely an instrument in the hands of the Prophet. But the explanation given by this brother makes Daniel, the "greatly beloved" of the Lord, appear to be a dissembler; although the brother says that Daniel's "wisdom" was here evidenced.

But let me quote: "Cyrus, guided by Daniel, issued his decree." "The question now comes, why did Cyrus, guided by God's servant, mention so particularly the temple, rather than the City? Daniel's wisdom is here evidenced! He knew that if Israel went up with the temple in view that it would attract the right class of individual. As a people they had been punished with seventy years' captivity while the land lay desolate. Let them now return to restore the true worship, and all should be well! Daniel well knew that the city itself would arise simultaneously. Indeed, this would be the natural outcome. There were no less than 43,000 souls who went out of Babylon, all-sufficient to re-populate any then known city. The first consideration on arriving was dwelling-places, and it was not until the second year that the foundations of the temple were laid."

Comment on the above seems hardly to be necessary, the statements are so self-contradictory. The Scriptures plainly declare that it was God who "stirred up the spirit" of Cyrus, that he made his Proclamation and put it in writing; and there is no intimation that Daniel had anything to do with this. This brother asks us to believe that, although Gabriel's message to Daniel foretold that a Commandment would go forth to restore and build Jerusalem, nevertheless Daniel took it upon himself to alter that message,—advising Cyrus to ignore the words of Gabriel and speak about the rebuilding of the temple. But, we might object, why should Daniel want to change the message of God, which Gabriel had brought to him? Because, we are told, the contemplation of rebuilding the House of God would attract the "right class of individual" back to their land; whereas, apparently, if Cyrus' Proclamation had been in line with the message of Gabriel, saying nothing about the House but about the restoration of the city, the wrong class would have been attracted.

And yet, the brother tells us, Daniel "well knew that the city itself would rise simultaneously." This would be "the natural outcome,"—"the first consideration on arriving was dwelling-places," says this brother,—not that the first consideration was the building of the House of God!

This brother also imagines that the entire 43,000 people who left Babylon took up their abode in Jerusalem. The Scriptures, however, show that the returned people lived in the other cities throughout Judea, and comparatively few in Jerusalem; as we read, they "came again unto Jerusalem and Judah, every one unto his [own] city"—See Ezra 2:1, 70. In that year of their arrival, in the 7th month, when the Lord's altar was built, the people offered burnt offerings, and they also kept the feast of tabernacles in Jerusalem;—and for this service, we read, the people gathered themselves from their cities—Ezra 3:1-6. This was the first great gathering at Jerusalem since the captivity; and at the feast of tabernacles the people lived in booths, not in houses—Lev. 23:39-44.*

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* Still another of these 1954-date brethren seeks, in his publication, to identify the Proclamation of Cyrus with the Commandment to build Jerusalem. The method used by this brother is to omit all, except a small part, of the message of Gabriel when quoting Daniel 9:25. The small part which he quotes and comments upon is sufficient for his purpose: "'know ye therefore and understand from the going forth of the commandment…' (Dan. 9:25…'the word,' Roth.)"

He then hurries on to add his comment, without completing the quotation of Gabriel's message: "This was put in writing by Cyrus and issued throughout all his empire that all Jews might know and return to Jerusalem, 'then rose up the heads and leaders of the people.' 2 Chron. 36:22, 23. Ezra 1:1-5."

It is clear that the brother does not want us to linger over this 25th verse of the 9th chapter of Daniel, for then we would see that the "Commandment" spoken of by Gabriel was *not* put in writing by Cyrus.

This brother has also something to say regarding the calculation of the Sabbath and Jubilee system of Israel,—he objects to Brother Russell's interpretation of that time-regulation of the nation of Israel. For Brother Russell shows how, by this type of the Law, the very date of our Lord's Second Advent is pointed forward to, 1874 A.D., and how the Jubilee year typifies the great 1000-year period of the Times of Restitution.

The brother says: "The fiftieth year of jubilee is but the first year of another seven years' run…" This was Grattan Guinness' idea, each cycle of 7 x 7 sabbaths following on continuously, 49 + 49 + 49, etc., thus leaving out the most important year of all, the 50th, called by God a Holy and a Hallowed year—Lev. 25:8-13. The brother overlooks the fact that the jubilee year was itself a rest to the land (Lev. 25:11); pre-eminently a "sabbath" year, the culmination of the whole series of sabbaths. The first year of "another seven years' run" was, of course, a "working" year, and by no means a year of rest to the land—Lev. 25:3.

The building of the House of God, and the building of Jerusalem.

When the people of Israel were permitted to return from Babylon to their own land, the principal object of their return was to build the Lord's House, the Temple. They had to have places to dwell in, but there had been no commandment to restore and to build Jerusalem and to set up its walls. It was to be from the "going forth" of that Commandment that the 69 "weeks" spoken of by Gabriel were to count, pointing forward to the coming of the Messiah. The Temple foundation was laid in the 2nd year, and then the people weakly allowed their enemies to stop the work—Ezra 3:8, 10; 4:1-5, 24.

But the Lord was not pleased when His people stopped work on the Temple,—it evidenced lack of faith. They should have trusted the Lord to enable them to overcome their enemies, and should have gone on with the work and completed it. The Lord therefore taught them not to leave His House unfinished, by causing their harvests and the labour of their hands to fail. He Himself explains: "Is it time for you, O ye, to dwell in your ceiled houses, and this house [the Temple] to lie waste? Now therefore thus saith the Lord of hosts; Consider your ways. Ye have sown much, and bring in little….Go up to the mountain, and bring wood, and build the house; and I will take pleasure in it, and I will be glorified, saith the Lord. Ye looked for much [harvest], and lo it came in little; and when ye brought it home, I did blow upon it. Why? saith the Lord of hosts. Because of mine house that is waste, and ye run every man into his own house"—Haggai 1:4-9.

When the people at last realised why their harvest and labour of their hands had not been blessed, they set to with a will, and completed the House of God. The House was finished, we read, in the 6th year of Darius king of Persia—Ezra 6:15. While the Word of God does not say when this king began his reign, we know from Ptolemy's Canon that his 6th year was about 21 years after the 1st year of Cyrus. We are therefore indebted for much to this Astronomer, Mathematician, Geographer, and Historian, for our correct understanding of Bible Chronology. We have little doubt that the Lord Himself so overruled matters that important dates, necessary for His people to know but not directly furnished in His Word, would be recorded in reliable history. This is the view that Brother Russell held, and I agree with him, as you do also.

The passage in Haggai which we have just read (1:4-9) shows that the people had houses to dwell in. Does this not imply that, after all, the city of Jerusalem had been built? No; for the Scriptures declare that, right up to the days of Artaxerxes king of Persia, the city had not been built. We read that in the days of Artaxerxes, many years after Cyrus, the houses in Jerusalem were not yet built: "Now the city was large and great: but the people were few therein, and the houses were not builded"—Nehemiah 7:1-4.

The walls of the city had only then been completed, as the result of the Commandment of king Artaxerxes given to Nehemiah, but within these walls the city was "broad in spaces"—great open spaces—and the houses had not yet been built—See marginal reading of Neh. 7:4.

What, then, about the houses into which the people entered in the days when the House of the Lord lay waste? Because of the Scripture we have just read (Neh. 7:4), we must conclude that these houses were in the other cities of Judea, and in the open country-side which the people cultivated. It was agreed later, after the wall of Jerusalem had been built by Nehemiah and his helpers, that the people should give tithes of the ground,—fruit of all manner of trees, of wine and of oil, unto the priests and Levites—"that the same Levites might have the tithes in all the cities of our tillage"—Neh. 10:32-39. Also, although the wall of the city was now built, and the gates set up, only a proportion of the people dwelt therein, as we read: "the rulers of the people dwelt at Jerusalem: the rest of the people also cast lots, to bring one of ten to dwell in Jerusalem the holy city, and nine parts to dwell in other cities. And the people blessed all the men that willingly offered themselves to dwell at Jerusalem"—Neh. 11:1, 2. It was evidently regarded as somewhat of a sacrifice to take up permanent residence in Jerusalem in these days.

That Jerusalem was not built in the time of Cyrus, nor until the time of Artaxerxes 82 years later, is again proved by the Scriptures. We read in the Book of Nehemiah how king Artaxerxes, noting that Nehemiah was sad, asked: "Why is thy countenance sad, seeing thou art not sick?" And Nehemiah replied: "Why should not my countenance be sad, when the city, the place of my fathers' sepulchers, lieth desolate, and the gates thereof are consumed with fire? Then the king said to me, For what dost thou make request? So I prayed to the God of heaven. And I said unto the king, If it please the king, and if thy servant have found favour in thy sight, that thou wouldest send me to Judah, unto the city of my fathers' sepulchers, that I may build it"—Neh. 2:1-5.

Here, then, was the great opportunity for which this faithful servant of the Lord had earnestly prayed. He had set his heart upon restoring the city of his fathers, which he had learnt had not yet been built although his people had been many years in the land. He was well aware that his people were now subject to Gentile kings (See Neh. 9:36, 37), that they were servants in the land and could not do anything of importance without permission from these rulers. He had therefore prayed to God, confessing his sins and the sins of his people; and throwing himself upon the mercy of the Lord, besought that he might find favour in the sight of the king, Artaxerxes, whom he served as cupbearer,—as we read: "O Lord, I beseech thee, let now thine ear be attentive to the prayer of thy servant, and to the prayer of thy servants, who desire to fear thy name: and prosper I pray thee, thy servant this day, and grant him mercy in the sight of this man. For I was the king's cupbearer"—Neh. 1:11.

That is why when the king had said: "For what dost thou make request?," Nehemiah realised that his prayer was being answered; and he lifted up his heart to God in heaven, in thanksgiving, and for strength and wisdom to answer the king aright—"So I prayed to the God of heaven." Then he asked that he might be sent to Judah that he might build Jerusalem.

And we read how Artaxerxes granted Nehemiah's request, giving him letters authorizing him to proceed with the work of building the city and its wall and gates—"So it pleased the king to send me." "Moreover I said unto the king, If it please the king, let letters be given me to the governors beyond the river, that they may convey me over till I come into Judah; and a letter unto Asaph the keeper of the king's forest, that he may give me timber to make beams for the gates of the palace which appertaineth to the house [the Temple], and for the wall of the city, and for the house that I shall enter into. And the king granted me, according to the good hand of my God upon me"—Neh. 2:7, 8.

In order to enforce the mission of Nehemiah, and to give to it all the power of a Commandment from the king, Artaxerxes sent captains of the army and horsemen with Nehemiah—Neh. 2:9. Several years previously king Artaxerxes had declared that: "this city be not builded, until commandment shall be given from me"—See Ezra 4:21. He had now given that Commandment, and the city could now be built. This was the "Commandment" spoken of by Gabriel to Daniel, from which the 69 weeks, of years, were to date, to the coming of the Messiah—Dan. 9:25.

The wall of Jerusalem built in troublous times.

When Nehemiah arrived at Jerusalem, he carefully inspected the broken down walls and gates, to see what work required to be done. But he had not at the first taken anyone into his confidence, and made his examination in the night-time, saying: "neither told I any man what my God had put it in my heart to do at Jerusalem"—Neh. 2:12-16. But when he had satisfied himself as to what must be done, he spoke to the people: "Then said I unto them, Ye see the distress that we are in, how Jerusalem lieth waste, and the gates thereof are burned with fire: come and let us build up the wall of Jerusalem, that we be no more a reproach. Then I told them of the hand of my God which was good upon me; as also the King's words that he had spoken unto me. And they said, Let us rise up and build. So they strengthened their hands for the good work"—Neh. 2:17, 18.

But the work of restoring Jerusalem was not to be accomplished without the bitter opposition of enemies,—the Lord had said through Gabriel that the street and wall would be "built again in troublous times." Nehemiah tells us that his enemies "laughed us to scorn, and despised us, and said, What is this thing that ye do? will ye rebel against the king?" But he answered them with spirit: "Then answered I them, and said unto them, The God of heaven, he will prosper us; therefore we his servants will arise and build: but ye have no portion, nor right, nor memorial, in Jerusalem"—Neh. 2:19, 20.

The work was portioned out, and progressed in spite of these enemies, who "mocked the Jews" and said: "What do these feeble Jews? will they fortify themselves? will they sacrifice? will they make an end in a day? will they revive the stones out of the heaps of the rubbish which are burned?"—Neh. 4:1, 2.

But Nehemiah says: "So built we the wall; and all the wall was joined together unto the half thereof: for the people had a mind to work." And when their enemies saw this "they were very wroth, and conspired all of them together to come and to fight against Jerusalem, and to hinder it." But Nehemiah says: "Nevertheless we made our prayer unto our God, and set a watch against them day and night"—Neh. 4:6-9.

The labour was hard, and at one time one of the workers said: "The strength of the bearers of burden is decayed, and there is much rubbish; so that we are not able to build the wall"—Neh. 4:10. Also their adversaries threatened to slay them, and cause the work to cease. Nehemiah, however, did not let these discouragements deter him from his great task; and he said to the nobles and rulers and to the rest of the people: "Be not afraid of them: remember the Lord, which is great and terrible, and fight for your brethren, your sons, and your daughters, your wives, and your houses….And it came to pass from that time forth, that the half of my servants wrought in the work, and the other half of them held both the spears, the shields, and the bows, and the habergeons;…they that bear burdens, with those that laded, every one with one of his hands wrought in the work, and with the other held a weapon"—Neh. 4:11-17.

In addition to all this opposition, and the great labour entailed to meet it, the enemies tried other methods to stop the work of rebuilding Jerusalem. They proposed that Nehemiah come out and meet them to discuss the matter; but Nehemiah perceived that they intended to do him mischief, and answered: "I am doing a great work, so that I cannot come down: why should the work cease, whilst I leave it, and come down to you?" They invited Nehemiah four times to come down and meet them, and he would not. A fifth time they sent, and this time the messenger had a letter in his hand; "Wherein was written, It is reported among the heathen, and Gashmu saith it, that thou and the Jews think to rebel: for which cause thou buildest the wall, that thou mayest be their king, according to these words. And thou hast also appointed prophets to preach of thee at Jerusalem, saying, There is a king in Judah: and now shall it be reported to the king [Artaxerxes] according to these words. Come now therefore, and let us take counsel together." They were very anxious to get Nehemiah outside Jerusalem; but Nehemiah saw through their scheme, and replied: "There are no such things done as thou sayest, but thou feignest them out of thine own heart"—Neh. 6:1-8.

But all these efforts of their enemies cause Nehemiah and his coworkers much trouble; and Nehemiah said: "For they all made us afraid, saying, Their hands shall be weakened from the work, that it be not done. Now therefore, O God, strengthen my hands"—Neh. 6:9.

There was yet one more effort of the enemies to cause Nehemiah to stop his work of restoring Jerusalem and its wall, and this a very subtle one. Nehemiah was urged to enter the House of God, to shut himself within the Temple behind closed doors, "for," he was told, "they will come to slay thee; yea, in the night they will come to slay thee." He was being tempted to flee into the House of God, a place he had no right to enter, that he might save himself. But Nehemiah perceived that the warning just given him was not of God, but came from his enemies, and he replied: "Should such a man as I flee? and who is there, that, being as I am, would go into

the temple to save his life: I will not go in." He recognised that for him to go into the temple would be sin; also he said: "that they might have matter for an evil report, that they might reproach me"—Neh. 6:10-13.

All attempts, both within and without, having failed to stop the work, Nehemiah reports: "So the wall was finished in the twenty and fifth day of the month Elul, in fifty and two days. And it came to pass, that when all our enemies heard thereof, and all the heathen that were about us saw these things, they were much cast down in their own eyes: for they perceived that this work was wrought of our God"—Neh. 6:15, 16. All the gates, twelve in number, were set up in the wall; and from that time they were watched constantly, and closed at night.

Then came the "dedication of the wall of Jerusalem" (12th chapter of Nehemiah); and we read: "that day they offered great sacrifices, and rejoiced: for God had made them rejoice with great joy: the wives also and the children rejoiced: so that the joy of Jerusalem was heard even afar off"—Neh. 12:43.

The date of the beginning of the "70 weeks."

Thus we see how the Scriptures record how the Commandment went forth to restore and build Jerusalem, and how the wall was built in troublous times as prophesied. And we see how this Commandment came from Artaxerxes king of Persia in his 20th year, in answer to the earnest prayer of faithful Nehemiah to his God. Not at the instigation of Daniel to Cyrus, but at the earnest request of this other devout servant of the God of Israel, Nehemiah, this foretold Commandment to restore and to build Jerusalem with its wall and gates was sent forth, in God's due time.

Jerusalem was now a City in the true sense, with protecting wall, and gates continually guarded—Neh. 7:1-3. From this time forward the nation of Israel could hold up its head, as all enemies well knew. From this time also there was a steady looking for the coming of the long-expected Messiah; and while we read that when He did in due time come to His own, His own received Him not, yet: "to as many as received him, to them gave he power to become the sons of God, even to them that believed on his name: which were born [begotten], not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God"—John 1:11-13. These are they with whom the Messiah was to "confirm the covenant" during that "one week," in the "midst" of which He was cut off in sacrificial death, thus causing the typical "sacrifice and oblation to cease." And by His death on the cross He "made an end of sins," finished the transgression and made reconciliation for iniquity, having brought in everlasting righteousness. The fulfilment of the prophetic 70 weeks "sealed" the vision of the "2300 days," for both of these periods dated from the same event, i.e., the going forth" of the Commandment to restore and build Jerusalem, the 70 weeks being "determined" or cut off from the longer period of 2300 days.

As the 1954-date brethren reject this Scriptural indication of the time when the Commandment went forth to restore and to build Jerusalem, we can only wonder for what purpose they think the Book of Nehemiah was included in the Word of God. It is so clear that this Book was written under Divine direction, that the child of God might know of a certainty when that foretold Commandment went forth; and that thus he might realise how the Messiah came at the due time forearranged by God. And it is wonderful how reliable history, not altogether depending upon the historian Ptolemy, fixes the date for the 20th year of Artaxerxes at 455-454 B.C.

Ezra goes to the Temple; and Artaxerxes stops an unauthorised attempt to build Jerusalem.

The Scriptures are clear that there was no Commandment to restore and build Jerusalem during all the 82 years between the time of Cyrus, and the 20th year of Artaxerxes when, at last, the foretold Commandment did go forth. As if to emphasise this Commandment of Artaxerxes in his 20th year he, in his 7th year, had issued a commandment to stop some work on the wall which he had not authorised—Ezra 4:21. We read that Artaxerxes permitted Ezra to go to the Temple in Jerusalem, with

the vessels, in the 7th year of the king: "This Ezra went up from Babylon; and he was a ready scribe in the law of Moses, which the Lord God of Israel had given: and the king granted him all his request, according to the hand of the Lord his God upon him.

"And there went up some of the children of Israel, and of the priests, and the Levites, and the singers, and the porters, and the Nethinims, unto Jerusalem, in the seventh year of Artaxerxes the king.…Now this is the copy of the letter that the king Artaxerxes gave unto Ezra the priest....Artaxerxes, king of kings, unto Ezra the priest, a scribe of the law of the God of heaven, perfect peace, and at such a time. I make a decree, that all they of the people of Israel, and of his priests and Levites, in my realm, which are minded of their own freewill to go up to Jerusalem, go with thee.…The vessels also that are given thee for the service of the house of thy God, those deliver thou before the God of Jerusalem.…Blessed be the Lord God of our fathers, which hath put such a thing as this in the king's heart, to beautify the house of the Lord which is in Jerusalem"—See the whole 7th chapter of Ezra.

King Artaxerxes therefore had dealt very generously with Ezra in regard to the beautifying of the Temple, the building of which had been completed in the 6th year of Darius, about 48 years previously. The king had also allowed Ezra to restore the worship and the Law of God in fuller measure. But it appears that some of the Jews who had returned from Babylon with Ezra had exceeded the authority of the king, and had taken it upon themselves to attempt to rebuild the wall of Jerusalem. Naturally the enemies of the Jews were quick to let Artaxerxes know about this.

They wrote a letter to the king, saying: "the Jews which came up from thee [with Ezra] to us are come unto Jerusalem, building the rebellious and the bad city, and have set up the walls thereof, and joined the foundations. Be it known unto the king, that if this city be builded, and the walls set up again, then will they not pay toll, tribute, and custom, and so shalt thou endamage the revenues of the kings…we certify the king that if this city be builded again, and the walls thereof set up, by this means thou shalt have no portion on this side the river"—Jordan.

They also requested that the king should search "in the book of the records of thy fathers," and there the king would see for himself that "this city is a rebellious city, and hurtful unto kings and provinces, and that they have moved sedition within the same of old time: for which cause was this city destroyed"—Ezra 4:11-16.

It was in the days of Nebuchadnezzar, king of Babylon, that Zedekiah had rebelled in Jerusalem, and in consequence the armies of Babylon destroyed the city and broken down the wall; and it had remained waste ever since, no attempt at restoration having been permitted by the kings who now had the rule over Israel. And this attempt at restoration, in the 7th year of Artaxerxes, was also stopped; for we read that when Artaxerxes received the letter of complaint, he made search among the records as requested, and found that it was true that "rebellion and sedition have been made therein"—"of old time"—Ezra 4:18, 19.

Artaxerxes therefore sent word to these enemies of the Jews, saying: "Give ye now commandment to cause these men to cease, and that this city be not builded, until commandment shall be given from me. Take heed now that ye fail not to do this: why should damage grow to the hurt of the kings?" Then we read: "Now when the copy of king Artaxerxes' letter was read…they went up in haste to Jerusalem unto the Jews, and made them to cease by force and power"—Ezra 4:17-23.

The division of the 4th chapter of Ezra.

Thus we see how an unauthorised attempt to rebuild Jerusalem and its wall was stopped by direct command, and by force. The full account is presented in the 4th chapter of Ezra, from verses 6 to 23 inclusive. Note particularly that the first five verses of this 4th chapter, and also verse 24, all relate to the building of the Temple and not to the city, whereas verses 6 to 23 inclusive relate to the attempted rebuilding of the city, and not to the Temple. Failure to recognise this division of this 4th chapter of Ezra has led some to draw false conclusions. The Book of Ezra is taken up with the restoration of the House of God, the Temple, and the worship of God therein; but for some reason the account of this unauthorised attempt to

rebuild Jerusalem, and how it was stopped by command of Artaxerxes, probably in his 7th year, was inserted in the 4th chapter, right in the midst of the narrative of the rebuilding of the Temple. Verses 6 to 23 of Ezra 4th chapter is a parenthesis, therefore, and should be carefully separated from what goes before and comes after,—otherwise we shall be confused in our study.

The king named Ahasuerus, in the 6th verse of Ezra 4, and who reigned before Artaxerxes, is believed by commentators to have been Xerxes, father of Artaxerxes. Monumental inscriptions found in excavations in the East, within comparatively recent years, identify Xerxes with Ahasuerus. The Scriptures do not say what accusation against the Jews was made at that time, but it is possible it was in reference to some attempt to rebuild Jerusalem, as in the days of Artaxerxes. But, as we see, none of these attempts had the Lord's blessing, nor, indeed, His approval, until the time of Nehemiah, whose efforts were blessed and crowned with full accomplishment. And we can see why the Lord had not furthered the cause of the Jews in any earlier attempt to rebuild Jerusalem, until the 20th year of Artaxerxes,—He had predetermined the exact time when the foretold "Commandment" to this effect would go forth, that this Commandment might form the starting-point of the time-prophecy which particularly marked the date for the appearing of the Messiah, that is, the 70 weeks—Dan. 9:24-27.

Nothing could be plainer than this, nor more satisfactory; and none of the Lord's people will have any difficulty in recognizing that the "Commandment to restore and to build Jerusalem" went forth in the 20th year of Artaxerxes, and not before.

What a wonderful thing it is that reliable history proves that the date of the 20th year of Artaxerxes was 455-454 B.C. (See Section LIX in my Vol. II *Great Pyramid Passages* for the proofs). The 69 "weeks," or 483 years from that date end, therefore, in 29 A.D., when the Messiah came and was anointed with the Holy Spirit at Jordan, about six months after John the Baptist began to preach in the 15th year of Tiberius Ceasar—Luke 3:1-3, 21-23; 4:1. Thus the beginning and end of the 69 prophetic "weeks" are both referred to in the Word of truth, with direct reference to the records of Secular history. The Lord Himself is the Author of this arrangement.

Cyrus, and the prophecy of Isaiah.

The contemplation of all these Scriptures to which attention has been called, must make it plain to the scripturally-minded that Cyrus, the king of Persia, could not have given forth that "Commandment" spoken of by Gabriel in his message to Daniel. But, it may be asked, What about that reference to Cyrus by name in the prophecy of Isaiah?—See Isa. 44:28; 45:1-13. Did not this king of Persia fulfil this prophecy?

Notice that the Scriptures do not say that king Cyrus of Persia issued his Proclamation to fulfil the words of Isaiah, as claimed by the 1954-date brethren. What the Bible does say is: "that the word of the Lord spoken by the mouth of Jeremiah might be accomplished"—2 Chron 36:22.

Except in a figurative way this heathen king of Persia could not fulfil Isaiah's prophecy as God intended. For when Isaiah declares that Cyrus is the "Shepherd" and "Anointed" of the Lord God of Israel, it is evident that he is not referring to any heathen king. In Isa. 44:28 the word translated "Shepherd" is the same as in Psa. 23:1—"The Lord is my Shepherd"; and in Isa. 45:1 the word translated "Anointed" is the same as in Psa. 2:2—"…the rulers take counsel together, against the Lord, and against his anointed."

One of these 1954-date brethren writes in his publication that: "The Scriptures declare that Cyrus was ordained before his birth expressly to issue this all-important decree." And to prove this he quotes Isaiah 44th chapter, from verse 24 onward. Verse 24 reads: "Thus saith the Lord, thy redeemer, and he that formed thee from the womb, I am the Lord that maketh all things;…" The Lord is not here referring to Cyrus, however, but to Jacob, or Israel,—for the reference should read from verse 21 and not from verse 24; and if you will look this up you will see that this is so. See also verses 1 and 2 of this 44th chapter of Isaiah, which speaks of the same things: "Yet now hear, O Jacob my servant; and Israel whom I have chosen: thus saith the

Lord that made thee, and formed thee from the womb, which will help thee; Fear not, O Jacob, my servant; and thou, Jesurun, whom I have chosen."

A "Tablet" recently discovered in the East, sets forth the policy of Cyrus which he extended to the Jews, in permitting them to return to their land, and to restore the worship of their God. It is known as "The Annalistic Tablet," on which is a cuneiform inscription written by the king himself, or which he caused to be written at his dictation. The inscription shows that this policy of Cyrus, in setting at liberty those captives that former rulers, like Nebuchadnezzar, had carried away from their homelands, was extended to other nationalities, and not to the Jews alone.

Professor Sayce describes this Tablet in his work *Records of the Past*, and reproduces an extract from it. We gather that, in the opinion of Cyrus, the reason why former rulers had failed in their conquests was because they had removed the "gods" (idols) from their sanctuaries, or temples, and had taken them to Babylon—See 2 Chron. 36:18. Cyrus therefore reversed this policy, and restored these "gods," as well as the captives to their own habitations.

The words of Cyrus in this connection, as translated from the Tablet, are: "…all the peoples I collected and restored to their habitations…and the gods…I settled in peace in their [former] sanctuaries, in seats according to their hearts. May all the gods whom I have brought into their own cities intercede daily before Bel and Nebo that my days may be long…I have settled [the people] of all countries in a place of rest."

This enlightened policy of Cyrus, king of Persia, to accord freedom to the captive of former conquerors when he came into rulership as the first king of the second Universal Empire, and to restore their "gods" to their former sanctuaries (in the case of Israel he restored their vessels to the Temple), probably resulted from the fact that it was the Lord God of Israel who had "stirred up" his spirit.

This king of Persia, Cyrus, was therefore by the Lord's overruling a wonderful picture of our Lord Jesus Christ, the true Cyrus, the great "Sun of Righteousness" who shall arise with healing in his wings. And all the things spoken of by Isaiah, while having a partial fulfilment in this king of Persia, have their true and everlasting fulfilment in our Lord Jesus Christ. Cyrus, king of Persia, did not give the Commandment to restore and build Jerusalem (had he done so it would have been recorded by the inspired writer, Ezra; in which case the "70 weeks" would have commenced in the year 536 B.C., and the first advent of our Lord would have taken place 82 years earlier than it did),—he confined his Proclamation to the building of the House of God, the Temple. But the great Cyrus, the real Cyrus of the prophecy, will build both Temple and City in His day of blessing—See Zechariah 6:12, 13; and John 2:19-22.

Just as in the typical Age of Israel, when the captives were freed from Babylon they built the Temple, and afterward the City, so in the Antitypical Age the captives of sin and death, all of whom Christ has bought with a price, when freed from "Babylon the Great" (known to the Lord's people as the "masterpiece" of Satan who has the "power of death") by the Great Cyrus, the Shepherd and Anointed of God, will build the spiritual Temple first, and then the City, representing in this picture the earthly government of which the "Ancient Worthies" will be the Princes—Psa. 45:16.

Let me repeat once more: All the historical records that have been preserved through the ages, and all the monuments and tablets discovered during the past generation or more which have direct bearing upon that history, agree with the "Canon" of Ptolemy that Cyrus king of Persia began his reign in Persia in the year 537-536 B.C. And as this date is indicated by the Lord in His Word of Truth, the 1st year of Cyrus marked the end of the last "link" of the chronological chain as supplied in the Bible. This last link is the period of the 70 years' of desolation of the land of Israel.

Thus from the time of Adam the Bible supplies link after link in the chronological chain right up to the first year of Cyrus, from which time the records of Secular history begin to be reliable. And as the Lord Himself refers us to these records just at the time when the chronological chain would otherwise be broken, we may be sure that He arranged that they would be reliable,—for He is the God not

only of Israel, but of all the earth,—the Lord of hosts is His Name. He has thus given His people of the Gospel Age (to whom it concerns most) an unbroken chronological history of the world till our day, a pre-eminently "Biblical" Chronology, founded upon the infallible Word.

The cry: "Behold the Bridegroom" dates from 1874 A.D.

We know, therefore, that from the creation of Adam 6000 years ended in the year 1872 A.D.; and from the harmonious interlacing of the Scriptural time-prophecies and times and seasons in general, we know that there were two years in the garden of Eden before Adam disobeyed God and sin and death entered into the world. Therefore from the fall of Adam 6000 years ended in the year 1874 A.D.

In the year 1874 A.D. our Lord came again as the "Bridegroom" to receive His Bride, the waiting Church of the firstborn whose names are written in heaven. The members of the Church, the Lord's "Body," who were asleep in death were awakened in the First Resurrection in 1878 A.D., 3½ years after the return of their Lord and Master,—the parallel date to our Lord's own resurrection in 33 A.D. Since then all who "die in the Lord" are changed in a moment to their heavenly condition, to meet the Lord "in the air" and join their fellow-members who are already with their Lord—1 Cor. 15:51, 52; 1 Thess. 4:15-17; Rev. 14:13. Soon, now, the few remaining members will pass beyond the veil, and the full membership in the Bride class, the Body of Christ, will be complete in glory.

All this we know by faith, which is supported by knowledge of the Word of God. As Brother Russell shows, when it was realised that our Lord was Present since 1874 A.D., the cry went forth: "Behold, the Bridegroom! Go ye out to meet him"—Matt. 25:6. Those who had the necessary faith believed, and entered into the joy of their belief and its realities—See John 1:29, 40, 41. As for those who had no faith, God is not dealing with them yet,—their opportunity for blessing will come later.

Brother Russell always treated this "cry"—"Behold, the Bridegroom, Go ye out to meet him," as a real, historical fact, just as the cry of John the Baptist, "Behold the Lamb of God, which taketh away the sin of the world" was a fact—John 1:29.

Speaking about this Brother Russell wrote: "Let us not forget that the parable [of the wise and foolish virgins—Matt. 25:1-13] 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 first "awakening" of the virgin class was in 1844 A.D., the culmination of the "Millerite movement," the date which corresponds in the Parallel Dispensations to the birth of our Lord in Bethlehem in Autumn of 2 B.C., 30 years before He came as the Messiah.

Think again over these words—"The second awakening of the virgins was no mistake." Our Lord came as the Bridegroom in 1874 A.D., and He made His Presence known to the faithful few who, obedient to His warning, were watching for His coming. They did not know beforehand when He would come, as the Lord had said, but they watched, and when He "arrived" they knew it, and immediately declared forth the glad news, that their fellow-members in the faith might know it also.

Knowledge and faith regarding Bible Chronology.

Hear again what Brother Russell, that faithful and wise servant of the Lord, says about our Bible Chronology, and the realization of our Lord's Presence: "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—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 though the Apostle, 'Ye brethren are not in darkness, that that day should overtake you as a thief'"—See Brother Russell's article on "Knowledge and Faith regarding Chronology" in the Watch Tower for 1st October 1907, reproduced in the issue of 15th December 1913.

Speaking about the wonderful harmony of all the time-features of the Bible, Brother Russell goes on to say: "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 the chronology, which has had to do with this light, is also of him?"

One of the 1954-date brethren in his publication against Brother Russell's interpretation of the Bible Chronology, writes: "Before proceeding with our findings, here is a statement from the pen of Brother Russell, which tells how much depended upon his conclusions. It was published in December, 1913 (W. T. Rep. 5368)." He then quotes this "statement" from Brother Russell's pen; but he does not quote the full statement,—he omits some very important parts, without any indication whatever that these parts are left out. His readers, therefore, if they do not happen to have the *Watch Tower*, or if they rely too much upon this brother, will not be able to check up on his quotation to see whether or not he is presenting Brother Russell's words and thought correctly. I shall therefore quote Brother Russell's "statement," and then point out where this 1954-date brother makes a significant omission:

The article from which the quotation is made is that one from which I have already quoted, namely, "Knowledge and Faith regarding Chronology," which Brother Russell wrote in the *Watch Tower* for 1st October, 1907, and which he reproduced without alteration or comment six years later, in the 15th December 1913 issue. The particular part under discussion runs as follows:

"But let us suppose a case far from our expectation: 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 favour 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! 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 death' and also 'in his resurrection' to 'glory, honor and immortality'—'the divine nature.'"

You will see from the words of Brother Russell that, although he was willing to agree that if none of the things expected, according to our chronology, came to pass, this would prove that our chronology was wrong, which would be a keen disappointment,—yet he still clung to the fact that the "days" of Daniel, especially the 1335 days, had *not* passed away without fulfilment. This is the important part in Brother Russell's "statement" which the 1954-date brother omits in his quotation.

According to Brother Russell's interpretation of the "days" of Daniel, the period of the 1335 days points directly to the date 1874 A.D., the end of the 6000 years from the fall of Adam, and hence the beginning of the 1000-year "Day" during which our Lord Jesus Christ is Present, executing judgments amongst the nations, and bringing restitution blessings to the world of mankind. The realisation that our Lord came again in 1874 A.D. was indeed a blessed experience to all who understood and receive this knowledge by faith. That is why Brother Russell, when speaking in this article about the 2300, 1260, 1290 and 1335 days, adds: "the latter of which, marking the beginning of the harvest [1874], so well fulfilled its prediction, 'Oh, the blessedness of him that waiteth and cometh unto the 1335 days!'"

No expressions of doubt by others could induce Brother Russell to give up that which he had proved is true. The foretold "blessedness" came to all the watchers at the end of the 1335 prophetic days, 1874 A.D.; and even since that date the blessedness comes to all who learn how this prophecy was fulfilled, and who have faith and understanding. As we read in the Book of Daniel: "the wise shall understand." The cry "Behold! The Bridegroom, go ye out to meet him," which began almost immediately after 1874 as Brother Russell declares (See his 3rd Volume of *Studies in the Scriptures*, pages 190-191), has continued to go forth, and will do so till all of the Virgin class have heard and have gone in. Then the door will be shut and no more can enter.

The Lord cannot "come" *again*,—He has been here since 1874 A.D. The resurrection of the sleeping saints in the "first resurrection" cannot *begin* at some future date,—it has already begun, since 1878 A.D., and will continue till all of the remaining members of Christ's Body, who are "alive and remain," are changed in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, to their spirit condition — 1 Cor. 15:50-52; 1 Thess. 4:15-18.

Brother Russell's unwavering faith in the time-prophecies.

I have quoted Brother Russell at some length, because he was the one who, as the Lord's faithful and wise servant, drew our attention to these things, for which we greatly thank him. I have also quoted specially from that article in the 1913 issue of the *Watch Tower* (first published in 1907, be it noted), because these 1954-date brethren quote from it,—but with a different motive from mine. I quote from this article to prove that Brother Russell, while willing to admit that others could differ from his conclusions if they thought they should, had himself continued confidence and faith in the Bible Chronology as presented by him in his works. He could find no flaw in this chronology, but nevertheless pointed out that acceptance was a matter of faith. But the 1954-date brethren quote from this article, as others did before them (whose interpretation of the chronology, differing from that of Brother Russell, is now seen by them to be wrong,—as we all along knew, telling them so), to "prove" that Brother Russell was all ready to renounce his faith in the times and seasons. He did not of course show any signs of renouncing his faith, but continued to hold to his faith as his writings after 1914 prove. But it looks very much as if these 1954-date brethren do, as witness what they say in this connection: "Brother Russell lived just long enough to see his predictions unfulfilled. He passed away on Oct. 31st 1916, leaving us unsettled with regard to future reckonings."

Well, these brethren speak for themselves. They do not speak for us, who have faith; and the Lord is still here guiding His people, and none are unsettled in their

faith who have the spirit of understanding. Brother Russell firmly believed up to the time of his passing away that: The Lord has been Present since 1874 A.D.; He has been doing Kingdom work, which will continue throughout the thousand years of Restitution, until He hands over the Kingdom to God the Father. Brother Russell continued to believe that the "First Resurrection," in which all the saints who overcome take part, began in 1878 A.D., and will continue until all that remain are "caught up together with them in the clouds, to meet the Lord in the air." And he believed from the beginning of his ministry that the epoch called the "Times of the Gentiles" would end in 1914 A.D.; and from Autumn of that year till his death he clearly declared that these "Times" had indeed been ended at the foretold date, 1914.

Just a month before he passed away Brother Russell wrote, in reference to the closing of the Gentile Times in 1914,—"We are not able to see behind the veil; we are not able to know the things progressing under the direction of our glorious Lord and the members of His Church already glorified. Our thought is that somehow the Lord is taking a hand in the affairs of the world now as He did not do in times past"—See the new *Foreword* to Vol. II of *Studies* dated 1st Oct. 1916. He died on 31st Oct. 1916. You will see, therefore, that Brother Russell did not think that all his "predictions" were unfulfilled, and neither do we.

The foretold "Times of Restitution" began in 1874 A.D.

The last article written by Brother Russell on the subject of the Bible Chronology appears in the *Watch Tower* for 1st December 1916, one month after his death. He had intended to deliver the subject-matter of this article in a sermon to the brethren in Brooklyn; and it was read out to them as he had written it. In this, his last article, he shows that his faith in the times and seasons, as interpreted by him in his 2nd and 3rd volumes of *Studies in the Scriptures*, was as strong as ever. The article appears in the *Watch Tower* Reprints, pages 6013, 6014.

Under the sub-heading of "The dawn begun in A.D. 1874," Brother Russell wrote: "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 [1916-1874 = 42] we have been in it and enjoying many of its blessings. But these blessings came so stealthily—'like a thief in the night'—that few recognise their import. Some few have been calling attention to the fact that we have been in the Millennial dawn since 1874.

"Bible chronology quite clearly teaches that the six thousand years since Adam's creation have ended—six great days of a thousand years each, mentioned by St. Peter—'a day with the Lord is as a thousand years,' (2 Peter 3:8) Now the great seventh day, also a thousand years long, has commenced. We have been enjoying its dawning. It is to be a grand day! What wonder if the dawning be remarkable!

"It may surprise some to be told that the past forty-two years mean more to the world in increase of education, increase of wealth, increase of all manner of labour-saving inventions and conveniences, increase of safeguards and protections for human life, than did all the six thousand years which preceded them—many times over. The world has probably created a thousand times as much wealth during these forty-two years as during the entire six thousand years preceding. Yet these changes have come so gradually that few have noticed them."

These words were written by Brother Russell in 1916, 42 years after the date when our Lord began His second advent, as King over all the earth. And now we are in the year 1936,—and during these past 20 years very many great blessings to mankind have come into common use, things that Brother Russell had never seen, or of which he saw the mere beginnings. All these are part of the "restitution of all things" due to take place in this grand Millennial Age the dawning of which was in 1874 A.D. As Brother Russell said, these wonderful things which our returned Lord is bestowing upon mankind have come so gradually, and in such a seemingly "natural" way, that only the few who are "awake" realise that they are definite evidence of the New Age.

Dominion over the earth is being restored to mankind.

We are to remember that Jesus Christ was to be sent by His heavenly Father at the "times of restitution of all things, which God hath spoken by the mouth of all his holy prophets since the world began." Till then He was to be "retained" in heaven—Acts 3:19-21. All things, including life, were lost by Adam through his disobedience, and all things will be restored by Christ in the times of restitution; and one of the things to be restored is dominion over the earth—Gen. 1:26. We read that Christ, who is the image of the invisible God, the firstborn of every creature, is the creator of all things: "For by him were all things created, that are in heaven, and that are in earth, visible and invisible"—"All things were made by him; and without him was not anything made that was made"; and our Lord after His resurrection from the dead said: "All power is given unto me in heaven and in earth"—Col. 1:15-17; John 1:3; Matt. 28:18. Therefore we can see that the wonderful inventions of the past 60 years are the result of "discoveries" which our present Lord permitted because it is the due time for these things to be known. They are all part of the preparation for receiving the great multitudes which are about to be raised from the dead; for, as our Lord Himself declared, "the hour is coming, in the which all that are in the graves shall hear his voice, and shall come forth…"–John 5:28, 29.

Had Adam not sinned and been condemned to death, he and the human family could have retained dominion over all the earth; and the wonders of science and inventions could have been theirs. Restitution does not necessarily mean that mankind had knowledge of these things, and used them, but that the right to this dominion was theirs had Adam obeyed his Creator. Because Jesus Christ has now come again, to bring blessing upon the human race, He permits men to find out many of the secrets of nature, all of which are in His control,—dominion is gradually being restored, and, later, life will be restored and all that this implies.

Distress upon the nations also due to our Lord's Presence.

After recounting some of the blessings now enjoyed, as parts of the lost dominion restored to mankind, Brother Russell goes on to show another side of the dawning of Restitution Times, also foretold in God's Word of Truth. Under the sub-heading of "Increase of world-wide discontent" he wrote: "We are in the morning of our text [Isa. 21:11, 12—"The morning cometh, and also the night"]. Ah, what a glorious morning! How changed are the human conditions from those of our grandfathers! How thankful the whole world should be! Paeans of praise should be rising from all the people of the favoured lands of civilization; and helping hands should be outstretched to carry the same blessings to heathen lands. But is it so? Are the people happy and rejoicing? Are they appreciative of the new day?—of the gifts of divine Providence?

"No! In proportion as the blessings of God have come, the discontent of humanity has increased; and unbelief, not only in respect to the Bible as the divine revelation, but in many instances in respect to the very existence of an intelligent Creator. Notwithstanding the great increase in the world's wealth, and the fact that there are some noble souls who are using their share of the wealth in a praiseworthy manner, nevertheless the general operation of the law of selfishness prevails; and all the legislation which has been enacted, or can be enacted, fails to hinder them from exploiting the masses in the interests of the comparatively few.

"Did God know all these things? What will he do about them? Will he bring in the Millennial blessings, and risk that men shall take for granted that they have won the secrets of nature by their own wisdom and perseverance, and forget God entirely? Will they become more discontented? Would a Millennium of discontent be advantageous? What will God do about it?

"According to the Bible, God foreknew the conditions of our day as we are now reviewing them; and in our text he gives a key to the situation—elsewhere in the Scriptures made very plain. Through the Prophet, God tells of a dark night coming —after the morning dawn has been well ushered in—a dark storm-cloud just at

sunrise. This dark hour is described in the prophecy of Daniel, and also in that of our Lord Jesus, to be a 'time of trouble, such as never was since there was a nation.'" See Dan. 12:1-4; Matt. 24:21; 26:64.

We who have studied and understood the Lord's Plan of the Ages have always known that the Lord's reign of righteousness would be ushered in in the midst of great trouble and distress. All who have learned Present Truth have at one time agreed that troublous times were bound to come when our returned Lord began to overthrow the evil systems which have bound humanity in error for so long. Yet some are now beginning to doubt if our Lord is indeed Present, even though formerly they did have faith in His Presence. Some are now inclined to hold up belief in His Presence to ridicule, saying, in the words of one of them: "according to the former reckoning [in which he formerly professed belief], we are already 62 years in the seventh millennium! Think of it, only 38 years [still to go] and one-tenth of the millennium has gone!"

Does not this brother remember what the inspired Apostle Peter declares: "there shall come in the last days scoffers, walking after their own desires, and saying, Where is the promise of his presence?…"—2 Pet. 3:3, 4. Does not Peter go on to declare that the "day of the Lord," the 1000-year "Day" of judgment during all of which our Lord is to be Present, will "arrive as a thief in the night," stealthily, unknown to the world and recognised by those only who are awake and watching? For, says the Apostle Paul, "yourselves know perfectly that the day of the Lord so cometh as a thief in the night.…But ye, brethren, are not in darkness, that that day should overtake you as a thief.…"—1 Thess 5:2, 4.

Yes, the great Day of Christ was to arrive "as a thief," and the Lord's people have been aware that we are in that Day of 1000 years, the seventh millennium, for, now, 62 years. They have thought of it continuously, and rejoice in the knowledge; and if during these 62 years mankind has been blessed so greatly with the wondrous gifts that come down from the Father of lights, what further blessings may we not expect during the remaining 938 years! The Lord's people, who are still awake and watching, are not unmindful that, although the blessings of the dominion being restored to mankind are now enjoyed, trouble must go on increasing until all evil systems are swept away, that the blessings of Christ's reign may be enjoyed without fear and in thankfulness, with praises to God for His wonderful works to the children of men.

The return of Israel to their land foreknown, and being fulfilled.

The fact that the Jews, Israel, are now getting a hold on their ancient land of Promise, especially since the end of the "Gentile Times" in 1914, is in line with our expectations. But as all the Scriptures must be fulfilled, so we know that the present trouble being experienced by the Jews must develop and become so bad, that they will cry out to the Lord in their trouble; and He shall deliver them out of their distresses, and in such a way that they will recognise that their God is, as of old, helping His covenanted people once more.

They have yet to be brought to realise that Jesus Christ, whom they rejected in the days of old, is their Saviour and King; and they will surely recognise this in His own due time. The way is even now opening.

The people of Israel return to their land in unbelief at first, according to the Scriptures; but afterwards the Lord will cleanse them with the water of truth, and give them a new heart and new spirit, and they will then know the Lord, and He will call them his people. This is revealed in the 36th chapter of Ezekiel.

Shall we now, with all the indications we see around us, declare that our Lord is not present? that He will not be Present for many years yet? Those of us who have been watching, and who have faith, are not in doubt,—we know and are persuaded that our Lord is even now taking to Himself His great power to reign over mankind. The Lord be praised!

Your loving brother in His Name,

MORTON EDGAR.

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BY
JOHN EDGAR
M.A., B.Sc., M.B., C.M., F.R.F.P.S.G.
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SUPPLEMENTAL ANALOGY to TRUE BIBLE CHRONOLOGY CONFIRMED

THE 450-YEAR PERIOD OF THE JUDGES

A study By Brother Morton Edgar
27 Aytoun Road, S.1.
Glasgow, Scotland
3 Dec 1948

Here is a problem in Bible chronology which, in some measure, should exercise the minds of all students. The Apostle Paul declares that God gave judges to Israel:

> "…He gave unto them judges about (during) the space of four hundred and fifty years, until Samuel the prophet … and afterward they desired a king: and God gave them Saul…forty years" (Acts 13:20,21).

Did the Apostle speak solely by inspiration when he gave us this important chronological information? Or could he also have been guided by the records of the Old Testament? In other words, is it possible to find in the ancient Hebrew Scriptures the chronological records which prove that judges ruled Israel during 450 years?

It is possible. And this fact shows that the inspired Apostle Paul spoke according to the Scriptures in this matter of the period of the judges, and of the reign of Saul, as he did in his preaching the doctrine of Christ (1 Cor. 15:1-4). But we shall not find in the Old Testament, a statement such as that of the Apostle, that the judges ruled during 450 years. Close study is necessary, also attention to the original Hebrew text in some important passages.

We have been much helped in this study by our dear Brother in the Lord, Hugo Karlén, whom we mention in our booklet, "The Great Pyramid, Its Scientific Features,"–page 37, second paragraph. What follows is largely the result of his investigations, made some years ago.

In connection with this period of the judges, Brother Russell wrote in Volume II, page 49, "The records given in the books of Judges and 1 Samuel mention 19 periods, approximating a total of 450." He adds, however, "that they are disconnected, 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…" (Acts 13:19-2l).

Brother Russell did not attempt to define the 19 periods to which he calls attention. But other students of the Word have made the attempt. We recently presented a list of 19 periods, with scriptural texts for reference which add up to 450 years. This list appeared to be conclusive, but we invited examination and comments. Most of those who received the list expressed themselves as satisfied. But a few were critical and pointed out certain scriptural statements which seemed to be irreconcilable with the list, even though the nineteen periods summed up to the desired 450 years.

Let us repeat the list as given, and then we can consider the irreconcilable Scriptures referred to:

Period	Years	Period Identity	Scripture Reference
1	8	Servitude to Mesopotamia	Judges 3:8
2	40	Judgeship of Othniel	" 3:9-11
3	18	Servitude to Moab	" 3:14
4	80	Rest under Ehud	" 3:15-30
5	20	Servitude to Jabin	" 4:1-3
6	40	Rest under Deborah	" 5:31
7	7	Bondage under Midian	" 6:1
8	40	Rest under Gideon	" 8:28
9	3	Reign of Abimelech	" 9:1-22
10	23	Judgeship of Tola	" 10:1,2
11	22	Judgeship of Jair	" 10:3
	301	(sub-total) Judges 11:26	
12	18	Oppression of Ammon	" 10:8
13	6	Judgeship of Jephthah	" 12:7
14	7	Judgeship of Ibzan	" 12:8,9
15	10	Judgeship of Elon	" 12:10,11
16	8	Judgeship of Abdon	" 12:12-15
17*	40	Oppression of Philistines	" 13:1
18	40	Judgeship of Eli	1Sam. 4:12-18
19**	20	Judgeship of Samuel	" 8:5
	450	**TOTAL**	Acts 13:20,21

NOTES:

* During the last 20 of this 40 years Samson judges Israel ... Judges 15:20; 16:30-31.

** Until Israel asked for a king. It was during Samuel's judgeship that the ark remained in Kirjath-jearim...1 Sam 7:2

The above nineteen periods appear to be the identical list which Brother Russell had in mind when he wrote page 49 of his 2nd volume of "Studies in the Scriptures." Nevertheless, we can quote Scriptures which prove that the list cannot be accepted as it stands.

For instance the 8 years of servitude to Mesopotamia is the first period of the list. But a punishment of servitude could not follow immediately after the end of the wilderness journey when Joshua led the people into the land of promise. For the Scripture declares:

> "And the people served the LORD (not the king of Mesopotamia) all the days of Joshua, and all the days of the elders that outlived Joshua, who had seen all the great works of the LORD, that he did for Israel" (Judges 2:7).

Before the punishment of servitude because of unfaithfulness could be due, that faithful generation which served the Lord under the elders that outlived Joshua must have died out, and an unbelieving generation have taken its place. On this evil generation would come the punishment of servitude. This is what we read:

> "And Joshua the son of Nun, the servant of the LORD, died, being an hundred and ten years old… and also all that (faithful) generation were gathered unto their fathers: And there arose another generation after them, which knew not the LORD, nor yet the works which he had done for Israel" (Judges 2:8-10).

To allow for the passing away of a generation which served the Lord, and the rising of another, evil generation which merited the punishment of servitude to the king of Mesopotamia, an interval of many years was required. (We shall speak of this interval presently).

Jephthah, a prominent judge in Israel, speaks of a period of 300 years (see Judges 11:26). The Scriptures show that this period of 300 years began to count from the end of the wilderness journey, and terminated when Jephthah began his judgeship. Jephthah was that judge who vowed a vow unto the Lord and said:

> "If thou shalt without fail deliver the children of Ammon into mine hands, then it shall be, that whatsoever cometh forth of the doors of my house to meet me, when I return in peace from the children of Ammon, shall surely be the LORD'S, and I will offer it up for a burnt offering" (Judges 11:30-40)

And it was his only daughter who came out to meet him. Note: It is pointed out in the Emphatic Diaglott that the Authorized Version gives a faulty translation of the original Hebrew – see the Alphabetical Appendix under the heading of Jephthah, page 22 [1864 edition], for the correct understanding of the text.

It was during his contention with the king of the children of Ammon, that Jephthah made mention of the period 300 years. When Judge Jair died and Jephthah took over the judgeship of Israel, the Ammonites determined to "crush" into complete subjection the children of Israel. (See marginal reading of Judges 10:8).

Jephthah tried to reason with the Ammonite king, and asked him why he fought against Israel. The king replied:

> "Because Israel took away my land, when they came up out of Egypt" (Judges 11:12-13).

Jephthah then reminded the king that for 300 years the children of Ammon had made no attempt to regain their lost land, saying:

> "While Israel dwelt in Heshbon and her towns and in Aeoer, and her towns, and in all the cities that be along the coasts of Arnon, three hundred years? Why therefore did ye not recover them within that time?" (Judges 11:26)

The terminal of the 300 years spoken of by Jephthah, which coincides with the death of Judge Jair and the beginning of the judgeship of Jephthah, is a definite "time point" in the history of Israel. From this time point, we can then reckon backward to the days of Joshua, and forward to the time when Samuel the prophet anointed Saul as king over Israel.

First, let us reckon backward: From the list on page 2, we note that Jair judged Israel for 22 years, and Tola before him for 23 years. Abimelech had a brief reign of 3 years, after Israel had enjoyed a rest of 40 years under Gideon. Before Gideon's deliverance, Israel had suffered bondage to Midian for a period of 7 years. These five periods total 95 years, and all are easily to be followed in the scriptural record.

But the preceding times of Deborah, Jabin, and Ehud call for careful consideration. For it was a mistake to assume that 80 years referred to in Judges 3:30 were entirely under the deliverer Ehud. Ehud delivered Israel after their 18 years servitude to Moab (Judges 3:14-29). But the Scriptures neither say nor imply that the 80 years rest which the land then enjoyed were all under the deliverer Ehud. The judgeship of Shamgar who followed on the death of Ehud, and of Deborah the prophetess who judged after Shamgar, are included in this 80 year period. Also, the oppressor Jabin, with his captain Sisera, were conquered within this time period.

The Philistines tried to break the rest which Ehud had won for the land, but they were immediately overthrown by Shamgar (Judges 3:31).

The "20 years" spoken of in Judges 4:3 can also be read "twentieth" year, according to the Hebrew original, for there are no ordinals in the Hebrew above 10, and the context and the sense of the passage must determine which is correct in any particular text. (Ordinals are: first, second, third, etc. Cardinals are: one, two, three).

After the death of Ehud, during the time of Shamgar, the children of Israel again did evil in the Lord's sight (Judges 4:1), and in punishment "the LORD sold them into the hand of Jabin, king of Canaan, that reigned in Hazor. The captain of his host was Sisera, which dwelt in Harosheth of the Gentiles. And the children of Israel cried unto the LORD for he had nine hundred chariots of iron, and twenty years he mightily oppressed the children of Israel" (Judges 4:1-3).

But as we pointed out, we can read: "and in the twentieth year he (Jabin) mightily oppressed the children of Israel." (Judges 4:1-3).

It was in the twentieth, and the last, year of Shamgar that Jabin oppressed Israel. The Hebrew of the word translated "oppressed" in this text does not necessarily imply that Jabin subjected Israel, but rather, that he troubled them, and this in the northern part of the country only. (See marginal note of Judges 4:2).

Shamgar, as a judge, appeared not to have exercised complete control of the land, and thus we read: "In the days of Shamgar the son of Anath, in the days of Jael, the highways were unoccupied, and the travellers walked through byways (or 'crooked ways')" (Judges 5:6, marginal reading). Although the land had rest during this time (no active wars), yet, owing to the weakness of Judge Shamgar, there was a feeling of insecurity – the people were afraid to walk openly along the highways.

In the last (the twentieth year) of Shamgar, Jabin determined to subject Israel wholly to his yoke, and his oppression was at that time so great, that the children of Israel cried unto the Lord, with the result that Deborah, with Barak, put an end to Jabin and Sisera. (See Song of Deborah and Barak, Judges chapter 5).

From the Hebrew text it is clear that the times of Ehud, Shamgar (Jabin) and Deborah are included in the 80 years spoken of in Judges 3:30.

Immediately preceding the eighty years, Israel had been in servitude to Moab for 18 years (Judges 3:14). Previous to this 18 years, Othniel had judged Israel for 40 years (Judges 3:9-11). Othniel had delivered Israel from their 8 years of servitude to Cushan-rishathaim, king of Mesopotamia (Judges 3:8-10).

This trouble of servitude had come upon the erring children of Israel when all that faithful generation which served the Lord during the days of Joshua, and of the elders that had outlived him, had died out. How many years in the interval between the end of the wilderness journey and the beginning of the 8 years of servitude to Mesopotamia? We can ascertain this by first summing up the periods backward from the death of Jair, and then deducting this total from the overall period of 300 years spoken of by Jephthah (Judges 11:26):

Jair	22 years
Tola	23 years
Abimelech	3 years
Gideon	40 years
Midian (Judges 6:1)	7 years
Ehud, Shamgar (Jabin) and Deborah (Judges 3:30)	80 years
Moab	18 years
Othniel	40 years
Mesopotamia	8 years
Total	**241** years

This total of 241 deducted from the 300 equals 59 years. The Lord had caused Israel to wander for 40 years in the wilderness, until all men from 20 years old and upward, who had come out of Egypt, had been consumed in the wilderness. (Numbers 32:11-13).

Therefore, the oldest of the "elders that outlived Joshua" would be 60 when he entered Canaan; and even if he had lived to the extreme age of Joshua, 110 years, his death would still be 9 years short of the beginning of the Mesopotamian servitude.

Turning again to the list of 19 periods referred to by Brother Russell [see page 2 of these notes], we find that the twelfth period, the oppression of Ammon, requires our attention. Let us read Judges 10:8 which speaks of this oppression from the text of the Authorized Version.

> "The anger of the LORD was hot against Israel, and he sold them into the hands of the Philistines, and into the hands of the children of Ammon. And that year they vexed and oppressed the children of Israel: eighteen years, all the children of Israel that were on the other side Jordan in the land of the Amorites, which is in Gilead. Moreover the children of Ammon passed over Jordan to fight also against Judah, and against Benjamin, and against the house of Ephraim; so that Israel was sore distressed." (Judges 10:7-9)

It is pointed out that the above English translation does not convey the meaning of the Hebrew original. One can see that, as it stands, the English text requires some explanation: "that year … eighteen years…". The word "eighteen" should properly be rendered "eighteenth," to get the true sense of the passage. This is determined by the context. The correct translation is:

> "And that year they (the Ammonites) vexed and crushed the children of Israel in this, the 18th year."

Note also that the word "oppressed" is, in the marginal reading, "crushed," which is a truer translation of the Hebrew word, and suggests a different thought.

The Ammonites did not succeed in dominating Israel as a whole. They troubled and vexed part of Israel for 17 years, during the time of Jair's judgeship. But that year, when Jair died, which was the eighteenth year of their hostility to Israel, they thought now that Judge Jair was removed in death, they would easily have success in dominating the whole of Israel. And accordingly they attacked Israel dreadfully, crushingly. But they were stopped and defeated by Jephthah, "a mighty man of valour" (Judges 11:1).

And in the 11th chapter of Judges we read how Jephthah was made the leader of Israel, and how the Lord delivered the children of Ammon into his hands:

> "He smote them from Aroer,… with a very great slaughter. Thus the children of Ammon were subdued before the children of Israel." (Judges 11:32-33).

Therefore we are not to reckon on a period of 18 years oppression from the time of Jair's death. The Ammonites did not crush Israel for 18 years, but rather it was in the 18th year of their trouble-making that they crushed Israel, thus calling forth that special effort of Israel under Jephthah which defeated and subdued them.

The 6 years of Jephthah's judgeship began at the death of Jair, the end of the 300 years spoken of by Jephthah (Judges 11:26). From this time point we now count forward in Israel's history to the time of Samuel's judgeship, and his anointing of Saul as king.

Ibzan followed Jephthah and judged Israel 7 years. Then Elon judged for 10 years, and Abdon for 8. The 40 years oppression of the Philistines followed on the last 20 of which Samson judged Israel (Judges 13:1; 15:20; 16:30-31). Eli followed with a judgeship of 40 years (1 Samuel 4:12-18). Finally, the prophet Samuel acted as judge until the people asked for a king, and God gave them Saul.

In the list of 19 periods (see page 2), Samuel is entered as having judged Israel for 20 years, on the assumption that the 20 years spoken of in 1 Samuel 7:2 had reference to the duration of Samuel's judgeship. But 1 Samuel 7:2 does not state that Samuel judged Israel for 20 years. The Scriptures show that up to the time when Saul was anointed to be king of Israel, Samuel must have acted as judge much longer than 20 years.

Ferrar Fenton says 45 years, while other chronologers, reckon Samuel's judgeship to have been between 40 and 50 years. The Scriptures show that Samuel was a child at the time when Eli's eyes began to wax dim for age (1 Samuel 3:1-2). But Samuel is said to be old and gray headed when he anointed Saul as king (1 Samuel 12:1-2). This implies a considerable number of years between the death of Eli when Samuel replaced him as judge and his anointing of Saul (see also 1 Samuel 8:1-5; 12:2).

When we take the literal translation of the Hebrew of 1 Samuel 7:2, we read:

> "And it came to pass from the time the ark remained in Kirjath-jearim, that the days were multiplied, and it was the 20th year and all the house of Israel lamented after the LORD," or "assembled before the LORD."

In the Latin Vulgate [the] translation reads: "…it was now the 20th year."

Most translators and commentators consider that the Philistines, after the death of Eli, continued to have a certain power over Israel during 20 years. In the meantime, however, Samuel was judge in Israel.

But in the 20 years from the arrival of the ark in Kirjath-jearim, Israel had enough of the Philistines oppressive power and had turned to the Lord for help. We read that Samuel prayed to the Lord on behalf of the children of Israel in their distress, after admonishing them to

> "…put away the strange gods and Ashtaroth from among you, and prepare your hearts unto the LORD, and serve him only: and he will deliver you out of the hand of the Philistines." (1 Samuel 7:3).

When the Philistines sought to do battle against the now repentant children of Israel, the Lord "…thundered with a great thunder on that day upon the Philistines, and discomfited them; and they were smitten before Israel… So the Philistines were subdued, and they came no more unto the coast of Israel…" (1 Samuel 7:4-15).

After these 20 years, in the last of which the Philistines were finally subdued, Samuel judged Israel for 25 years until he anointed Saul to be king, making, therefore 45 years in all for the judgeship of Samuel. The number of years for Samuel as judge…is in agreement with the Scriptures.

Commencing with the end of the wilderness journey, our amended list now reads:

Judgeship of Joshua and the elders that outlived him, etc	59 years
Mesopotamian servitude	8 years
Othniel	40 years
Moab	18 years
Ehud, Shamgar (Jabin in 20th year) & Deborah with Barak	80 years
Midian	7 years
Gideon	40 years
Abimelech	3 years
Tola	23 years
Jair	22 years
Total (Judges 11:26)	**300** years

Jephthah	6 years
Ibzan	7 years
Elon	10 years
Abdon	8 years
Philistines (last 20 Samson)	40 years
Eli	40 years
Samuel	45 years
Total from end of wilderness journey.	**456** years

As the final total of 456 years dates from the end of the wilderness journey, whereas the Apostle dates his 450 years from the division of the land among the tribes of Israel, we require to deduct 6 years from the 456 year total. The remainder of 450 years being that period spoken of by the Apostle in Acts 13:20.

That it took 6 years to divide the land is pointed out, and fully discussed by Brother Russell in the Second Volume of Studies in the Scriptures, pages 47-48.

Although the above amended list appears to be comprised of 17 periods, it must be remembered that the 80 years is the sum of three periods, namely: 20 years for Ehud, 20 for Shamgar, and 40 for Deborah. Thus we still have 19 periods in all for the time the judges ruled in Israel— 456 years from the end of the wilderness journey and 450 years from the dividing of the land.