

CHARLES T. RUSSELL RESPONDS TO CLAIM THAT THE TIMES OF GENTILES SHOULD BEGIN COUNTING FROM 587 B.C. RATHER THAN 606 B.C. [R3436 : page 296]

THE TIME OF HARVEST.

AUTHOR of MILLENNIAL DAWN and Editor of ZION'S WATCH TOWER:—

Dear Sir,—Since you have changed your views respecting Gentile Times let me suggest the possibility of still another error. You count the seventy years Babylonian captivity of the Jews as beginning with the overthrow of Zedekiah, Judah's last king, but I notice that "Bishop Usher's Chronology," given in the margins of our Common Version Bibles and based on "Ptolemy's Canon," begins that seventy-year period nineteen years earlier—namely, in the first year of Nebuchadnezzar, when he took captive Daniel and other prominent Jews and laid the Jews' country under tribute. Now if this, the common reckoning, be correct, it would make the Times of the Gentiles to begin nineteen years later than you estimate, namely, in B.C. 587, instead of B.C. 606;—and this in turn would make those times end nineteen years later than you have reckoned,—in October, A.D. 1933, instead of October, 1914. What do you say to this? Are you humble enough to acknowledge that I have struck some new light, and that you and all DAWN readers have been "all wrong," walking in darkness?

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[R3437 : page 296]

We reply that there are too many *ifs* in the proposition, and that they are all abundantly contradicted by facts and Scripture, and are therefore not worthy the slightest consideration.

(1) The brother errs in supposing that we have changed our view of "Gentile Times." Those "times" or years are 2520, with a definite beginning in B.C. 606, and a definite ending, A.D. 1914. We know of no reason for changing a figure: to do so would spoil the harmonies and parallels so conspicuous between the Jewish and Gospel ages. The only "*change*" in view is that the anarchy to follow the ending of those "times" will not shorten them; and that the forty years "harvest" of the Church will be complete and not be interfered with by the world-wide anarchy to follow it. This, as we have shown, makes the parallel with the Jewish age still more accurate; for the Jewish harvest of forty years ended in A.D. 69—prior to the complete anarchy amongst the Jews which came the year following.

The brother seems to further misunderstand us to teach that no great trouble will come before October, 1914 A.D. This is incorrect: we expect the great trouble of [Rev. 13:15-17](#) before that date; but it will not be the world's trouble, the anarchy which will cause the "earth," society, to melt with fervent heat. It will be a trouble peculiar to the Lord's consecrated ones. In the past these two distinctly separate troubles were less clearly discerned than now. And this is just what we should expect—that the light shining more and more unto the perfect day would not be *contradictory*, but establish and clarify the truths already shown us, including the times and seasons.—[Dan. 12:4,10](#); [1 Thes. 5:1-4](#).

THE ERROR LONG SINCE EXPOSED.

(2) In MILLENNIAL DAWN, Vol. II., pp. 36,37, we were careful to note the unreliability of all ancient histories, and, after quoting various authorities conceding this, we added, last paragraph:—

"The Bible, our God-provided history of the first three thousand years, is the only work in the [R3437 : page 297] world which—beginning with Adam, the first man mentioned in history, monument or inscription, whose name, the time of whose creation and death, are recorded, and from whom his descendants can be traced by name and age in successive links for nearly four thousand years—furnishes us a clear and connected history down to a period where secular history is well authenticated. As we shall see, the Bible record extends to the first year of Cyrus, B.C. 536, a well-established and generally accepted date. There the thread of Bible chronology is dropped—at a point where secular history is reliable. God has thus provided for his children a clear and connected record down to the present time....The Bible, therefore, is the chart of all history. Without it, as has been truly said, history would be like rivers flowing from unknown sources to unknown seas."

On page 52 of the same volume we said: "Usher dates the seventy years' desolation eighteen years earlier than is shown above—that is, before the dethronement of Zedekiah, Judah's last king—because the king of Babylon took many of the people captive at that time. ([2 Chron. 36:9,10,21](#); [2 Kings 24:8-16](#).) He evidently makes the not uncommon mistake of regarding those seventy years as the period of *captivity*, whereas the Lord expressly declares them to be seventy years of *desolation* of the land, that the land should lie 'desolate, without an inhabitant.' ([Dan. 9:2](#); [Jer. 26:9](#).) Such was not the case prior to Zedekiah's dethronement. ([2 Kings 24:14](#).) But the desolation which followed Zedekiah's overthrow was complete; for, though some of the poor of the land were left to be vine dressers and husbandmen ([2 Kings 25:12](#)), shortly even these—'all people, both small and great'—fled to Egypt for fear of the Chaldees. (*Verse 26*.) There can be no doubt here; and therefore in reckoning the time to the desolation of the land, all periods up to the close of Zedekiah's reign should be counted in, as we have done."

From the foregoing it is evident that at the time of writing DAWN II. we were fully aware that "Ptolemy's Canon" and "Usher's Chronology" cut short the "seventy years" "desolation of the land," and counted them as but *fifty-one* years, Usher endeavoring to make the Bible account agree with "Ptolemy's Canon." We, however, have followed the Bible record exactly and persistently, and took secular history only where Bible history ended. We cannot make seventy years' *desolation of the land* into fifty-one years' desolation for the sake of harmony with Ptolemy. ([Dan. 9:2](#); [2 Chron. 36:21](#).) Indeed we reject all of Ptolemy's Canon back of the first year of Cyrus, 536 B.C.—the farther back it goes, the greater its errors.

"WHERE IS THE PROMISE OF HIS PRESENCE?"
([2 PETER 3:4](#).)

(3) Note the confusion that would result all along the line from the one change above suggested. It would extend the Jubilee antitype nineteen years, making the Lord's *presence* and "times of restitution" not due in any sense until A.D. 1874 *plus* 19—1893 A.D. On the contrary, it would shorten the Jewish age nineteen years, and thus, according to the parallels (MILLENNIAL DAWN, Vol. II., Chap. vii.), would shorten the Gospel age also, and show the harvest as due (19 plus 19) 38 years before October, 1874,—that is to say, it would involve the idea of the Gospel "harvest" beginning 1836 A.D. and ending 40 years later, in 1876 A.D. And this would involve the thought of the Lord's *presence* in A.D. 1836, instead of 1874, the gathering of the sleeping saints in 1840, instead of 1878, and the end of the harvesting of the "wheat" in 1876, instead of 1914 A.D., as the time when the burning of the "tares" in the world's "time of trouble" would have been due.

All this confusion would result from an abandonment of the Bible narrative in favor of Ptolemy's Canon. Let those who want the darkness take it. Let those of us who have had our eyes of understanding opened rejoice in the true light more and more. As we have already seen, the "harvest" is a time for winnowing the "wheat"—a sifting, a separating time, and it is for each of us to prove our characters: "Having done all, stand!"

The tests of this "harvest" must be like those of the Jewish or typical "harvest". One of them is *the cross*, another is *the presence* of Christ, another is *humility*, another is *love*. The Jews were reprov'd because they "knew not *the time* of their *visitation*." ([Luke 19:44](#).) The matter is doubly distressing for those who have once seen the light of present Truth, and afterward go into the "outer darkness" of the world. It implies unfaithfulness. "If the light that is in thee be(come) darkness, how *great* is that darkness."—[Matt. 6:23](#).

Remember, dear brother, our Lord's words in the context: "If thine eye be evil, thy whole body shall be full of darkness." An "evil eye" represents a mind perverted by anger, malice, hatred, envy, strife, ambition, etc. Such a mind's eye is sure to mislead the judgment which seeks to be guided by it. Those who have such an "eye" never would be drawn to the Truth. But some drawn to the Truth with a true eye—a true, honest, guileless heart—may become perverted through the cultivation of a wrong spirit, through selfishness, ambition or what not, and lose the true eye and soon lose the beautiful vision which enchanted them previously. The Lord explains the philosophy of the thing in the words, "Light was sown for the righteous, Truth for the upright in heart."

HOW TO TEST THESE THINGS.

First of all, go to the Lord in prayer, desirous of [R3437 : page 298] knowing the Truth. Ask for the pure heart, for humility, for the wisdom which cometh from above, which is first pure, then peaceable, easy to be entreated, full of mercy and good fruits, without partiality and without hypocrisy. ([Jas. 3:17.](#)) Next take up your DAWNS—the medium through which God has already blessed your study of his Word—with the Scriptures, and afresh prove all its teachings. In such an attitude of study we feel sure that you will be more firmly convinced than ever that the Lord's providence has specially guided in the preparation of those books for the present time—for the Israelites indeed, in whom is no guile.

Coming to Chapter vii. of Vol.II., on the "*The Parallel Dispensations*," you will find it one of the most convincing proofs of the whole presentation. This is one of the tenfold cords of evidence which your suggested change, or any change whatever, would render useless, nonsensical.

Turn to page 232 of DAWN II. There you will see the reckoning showing the period of Israel's history from the death of Jacob to the death of Christ to be 1845 years. You will perceive that the seventy years' *desolation* are counted in the calculation. But if we were to accept "your theory," or rather the common theory built upon Ptolemy's and Usher's chronology, it would reduce this 19 years, and instead of 70 make it 51 years' desolation. This would reduce the result so that the entire length of Israel's history, being 1845 years, would be 19 years less, namely, 1826 years from Jacob's death to Christ's death in A.D. 32, where their "house" was left desolate, and forty days later at Pentecost, when the "house of sons" was instituted.

Now, then, notice that if the Jewish age was a type or pattern of the Gospel age the latter would be 1826 years long (1845 less 19) to the point corresponding to Christ's death, the point where Israel's "*Mishneh*" began to count, as pointed out by the Prophet, "Even today do I declare I will render double unto thee"—that "day" being clearly marked by the prophecy of the riding on the ass and the "shout." Now count 1826 years since A.D. 32 to find the Gospel age parallel. It would be 1858 A.D. What occurred then to correspond to the rejection of nominal Israel? Nothing!

Three and a half years prior (1854) would in this calculation correspond to or be the parallel to the beginning of our Lord's ministry, and should here represent the Lord's *presence* and the *harvesting* time for [R3438 : page 298] gathering the elect "wheat" into the "barn." What occurred in 1854 to meet these requirements of the parallels? Nothing!

Forty years from the beginning of our Lord's ministry saw the full end of the Jewish harvest in A.D. 69—followed by anarchy and destruction in A.D. 70. So the parallels demand that forty years from the beginning of the harvest and *parousia* here, the Gospel age should be fulfilled and the "wrath" be poured upon the nations. This would in this argument be 40 years from 1854, namely in 1894 A.D. What occurred at or before or since that date that would parallel the awful calamities that befel natural Israel, and what evidence is there that "the harvest is past, the summer ended and we are not saved?" None whatever!

On the contrary, how grandly all the prophetic periods agree with these parallels, and how irresistible is their "voice" to those who have "ears to hear." Frequent restudies of these testimonies of the Lord's Word will be profitable to us all; and none is grander, more faith-inspiring, more convincing than this Chapter vii. of Vol. II. on Parallel Dispensations. At best, as the Scriptures declare, we are leaky vessels, and the multitudes of cares of this life tend to crowd out the "Wonderful Words of Life" to such an extent that many on re-reading declare that they received as great, if not greater blessing than the first time. The DAWNS are merely the Scriptures in rearrangement, with connecting comments; and hence it is no wonder that some write to us that they have read them as much as a dozen times and appreciated their lessons more each time. God's Word is new every morning and fresh every evening to those whose hearts are attuned to it, in the song of Moses and the Lamb.

"OH, THE BLESSEDNESS—THE 1335 DAYS."

A move of nineteen years, as the brother suggests above—or for that matter a change of even one year—would affect all the time prophecies of Vol. III. of the DAWN. The 1260 days, the 1290 days, the 1335 days, the 2300 days of Daniel, would all be thrown out of gear, out of the beautiful relationship shown in the Parallel Dispensations.

We all remember how we were thrilled when first studying we found that the parallels of dispensation showed that our Lord was due to be present in October, 1874, as the *exact parallel* of the beginning of his ministry and the "harvest" of the Jewish age; and how this thrill was intensified when we found the same date exactly marked by the Jubilee type; and how we almost shouted for joy when we found that Daniel's "1335 days" ended at precisely the same date; and, finally, how we repeated over and over the Prophet's words, "Oh, the blessedness of him that waiteth and cometh unto the 1335 days."

What a blessedness indeed! As the Apostle intimated it would be, so we have found it, "Times of refreshing!" Take away these parallels, disjoint this testimony by changing any part of the chronology, and you have a still mightier work before you;—the [R3438 : page 299] work of accounting for the rich spiritual food the Lord has been supplying to us *since October, 1874*—since the time of his *presence*, and in full accord with his promise that he would gird himself and become the servant of his true ones at his second *presence* and serve them "meat in due season," sending it at the hands of his faithful servants. We have dealt with this subject at greater length than it may seem to deserve, believing that it may stimulate some to follow the Apostle's exhortation, "Let us give the more earnest heed to the things which we have heard, lest we let them slip."—[Heb. 2:1](#).