

NOTE: The following extract from the chapter, *The Importance of Accuracy in the Study of Holy Scripture*, of the book: *Selected Writings by the late E. W. Bullinger, D.D.*, was produced by scanning the first 13 pages. The resulting image file was then converted to a text file by means of an OCR program. The following intentional changes were made, (1) Hebrew and Greek words were replaced by English transliterations to avoid problems when e-mailing as an attachment, (2) the occasional scripture reference was added (these differ in style from Dr Bullinger's references), (3) a heading was inserted to mark the section on the 400/430 years to the Exodus and (4) a heading was inserted to mark the 70 weeks of Daniel. At that point the extract was stopped. Minor corrections were made for this March 8, 2007 reissue as a PDF file and on March 25, 2010 "Ref. P9" was added above. – H. W. Jens.

THE IMPORTANCE OF ACCURACY IN THE STUDY OF HOLY SCRIPTURE

"ALL Scripture is given by inspiration of God." The last five words of this declaration are represented by only one word in the Greek, *theopneustos*, which means literally, "God breathed". All Scripture is God-breathed – God-inspired. When, therefore, we are dealing with Scripture, how important it is that we should be most accurate in noticing each single word which God has inspired, however small or apparently unimportant.

Inspiration must be regarded by us as a fact, a great, grand and blessed fact to be believed and received, and not a system to be constructed or described. It is a fact which (as Gausson says) is denied in its existence, in its universality, and in its plenitude. Some deny that there is any such thing at all, some deny that the whole of Scripture is inspired, admitting only certain parts so to be; while others, granting that the whole is inspired, deny that it is fully so, admitting it as regards the sense, but not the words. With these I do not propose to deal. I am addressing those who, I trust, are depending on the faithfulness of God's word of promise for their salvation, and who extend the same confidence to all the other "words which the Holy Ghost teacheth". In fact, we may divide people into two great classes with regard to their treatment of the Bible:

1. Those who put the Bible above everything.
2. Those who put something above the Bible.

The first say "the Scripture cannot be broken". "Heaven and earth shall pass away, but My words shall not pass away". They have respect to the "jot and tittle", and thus treat the Scriptures as Christ and His apostles treated them. The second say that they, although they are only human judges, are lawfully entitled to sit in judgment upon Scripture, and actually do put something above it. The Jews put their Targums and Talmud above it, and "make void the Word of God by their tradition". Romanists put the Church and tradition above it. Philosophers and scientists put poor human reason above it. Mystics and others such as the Swedenborgians, Mormons and Shakers put new revelations above it, professing to have received them from heaven.

As disciples of the Lord Jesus Christ, we say, with one of old, "Speak, Lord, for Thy servant heareth" - "The law of the Lord is perfect".

The command to disciples or learners is "Search". "Search the Scriptures--- (John v. 39). Let us see what we may learn from noting accurately the meaning of the word here translated "Search" (Gk. *ereunao*). It means to trace out, to track, to follow or scent out as a dog or a lion; hence, to notice a word, follow it out, see how it is used elsewhere, trace it and track it out in all its usages, and thus learn the mind of the Spirit and the will of God. There is another word used in Acts xvii. 11, where it says of the Jews of Berea, "These were more noble than those of Thessalonica, in that they received the word with all readiness of mind and searched the scriptures daily whether these things were so". The word here is (Gk.) *anakrino*, and it means to divide up; hence, to estimate carefully, judge of or sift, and it shows us how, if it be an apostle speaking, or even an angel from heaven, we are to go to the Word of God, compare it with what He has said, and judge of it accordingly. Then will it be true of us, as it is written of them - "Therefore many of them believed".

Here we have at once, at the outset, a beautiful example of what we may learn by observing accurately the very words that are employed. "Thy word is Truth" (John 17:17). It will bear any amount of investigation or searching because it is Divine. No human mind can ever "by searching" exhaust the fullness of the word of God. "For what man knoweth the things of a man save the spirit of man which is in him? Even so the things of God knoweth no man but the Spirit of God (1 Cor 2:11)."

If we study a book written by man, a mind of equal power can exhaust it and fathom it. When it has done this, there is nothing more it can do. But the Bible is God-breathed, infinite wisdom has indited it, and who then can ever say he has exhausted it? There is just the same analogy between Divine and human works. God's works will bear any amount of investigation, whether by microscope or telescope. The higher the power the more shall we see and learn. Not so man's. His works are like his words. A lens of higher power than that used by the engraver or

the photographer makes manifest the coarseness of the material and of the work; and the higher the power the more are the imperfections and defects made manifest. We cannot bring study too close, or accuracy too exact, or investigation too searching. "The words of the Lord are pure words: as silver tried in a furnace of earth purified seven times." (Ps 12:6) "Every word of God is pure." They are not the words which man's wisdom teacheth but which the Holy Ghost teacheth", and hence, "the natural man receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God: for they are foolishness unto him; neither can he know them, because they are spiritually discerned" (1 Cor 2:14).

In this respect the Bible may be likened to a sun-dial. Earthly lights may bring out the beauties of its structure, its carving, its inlaid work or its decoration: but they cannot show us the one thing for which it exists - they cannot tell its the time of the day! No earthly light can do that, no candle, lamp or gas, not even the most brilliant electric light. Nothing but heaven's light can show us the hour. So it is with the Word of God. Mere human learning and knowledge can bring out its beauties of language and throw light upon its geography, history or antiquities; but they cannot tell us the one thing which it was given to reveal "the mind of God". The wisest "natural man" cannot discern the true time – the meaning of God's word. Nothing but heaven's light - the Spirit of God - can reveal it. "He that is spiritual discerneth it." Happy they who can say, "Now we have received not the spirit of the world, but the Spirit which is of God; that we might know the things which are freely given to us of God".

The prayer of the disciple now is – "Open Thou mine eyes that I may behold wondrous things out of Thy law". (Ps. cxix. 18.)

The promise is - "I will instruct thee and teach thee". (Ps. xxxii. 8.)

The performance is - "Then opened He their understanding that they might understand the scriptures". (Luke xxiv 45.)

I wish now to show by example, as I have already done by precept, how important it is that we should be accurate in our reading, and study and teaching of God's word. I propose first to give some examples where difficulties are thereby removed, and then some which are profitable for "instruction". Instead of seeking at random for examples. it will serve a double purpose if I take some, just as they are presented to us in an article on "Stephen" by Dean Stanley in Dr. Smith's Dictionary of the Bible, because I am not aware that they have been hitherto noticed as a whole. Speaking of what is called, and known as STEPHEN'S SPEECH, which is contained in Acts vii., Dean Stanley says - "No less than twelve of his references to the Mosaic History differ from it, either by variation or addition -

1. The call of Abraham before the migration to Haran (Acts vii. 2) not, as according to Gen. xii. 1, in Haran
2. The death of his Father after the call (vii. 4), not, as according to Gen. xi. 32, before it.
3. The seventy-five souls of Jacob's migration (vii. 14), not, as according to Gen. xlvi. 27, seventy.
4. The godlike loveliness (Gk. *asteios tō Theō*) of Moses (vii. 20), not simply, as according to Ex. ii. 2, the statement that he was a goodly child.
5. His Egyptian education (vii. 22) as contrasted with the silence on this point in Ex. iv. 10.
6. The same contrast with regard to his secular greatness, 'mighty in words and deeds' (vii. 22), compare Ex. ii. 10).
7. The distinct mention of the three periods of 40 years (vii. 23, 30, 36) of which only the last is specified in the Pentateuch.
8. The terror of Mows at the bush (vii. 32), not mentioned in Ex. iii. 3.
9. The supplementing of the Mosaic narrative by the allusions in Amos to their neglect of the true worship in the desert (vii. 42, 43).
10. The intervention of the angels in the giving of the law (vii. 53) not mentioned in Ex. xix. 16.
11. The burial of the twelve Patriarchs at Shechern (vii. 16), not mentioned in Ex. i. 6.
12. The purchase of the tomb at Shechem by Abraham from the sons of Emmor (vii. 16), not, as according to Gen. xxiii. 15, the purchase of the cave at Machpelah from Ephron the Hittite.

To which may be added –

13. The introduction of Remphan from the LXX of Amos v. 26, not found in the Hebrew.
It is significant as showing the freedom with which he handled the sacred history, and the comparative unimportance assigned by him and by the sacred historian who records his speech to minute accuracy. It may be said that the whole speech is a protest against a rigid view of the mechanical exactness of the inspired records of the Old Testament."

You will perceive at once why I have selected these examples. Here a distinct issue is raised. Our subject is "The importance of accuracy". Dean Stanley gives examples in order to prove the "unimportance" of "minute accuracy". Let us take then, in his own order, his own words –

"1. The call of Abraham before the migration to Haran (Acts vii. 2) not, as according to Gen. xii. 1, in Haran."

But Acts vii. 2 does not refer to Gen. xii. 1. It refers to Gen. xi. 31; and Acts vii. 4, refers to Gen. xii. 1. By a comparison of the two portions of scripture, it is clear that "the God of glory appeared unto our father Abraham when he was in Mesopotamia, before he dwelt in Haran". So far from being inaccurate, Stephen draws particular attention to the fact, and adds (v. 4), "Then came he out of the land of the Chaldeans and dwelt in Haran". That is exactly what is said in Gen. xi. 31. They "went forth from Ur of the Chaldees to go into the land of Canaan; and they came to Haran and dwelt there". The Holy Spirit by Stephen has told us why they started from Ur, and shows us how earthly relationships may hinder a perfect obedience to God's call. Until his father Terah, an idolater, died, the obedience was not complete. Special stress is laid on his death both in Gen. xi. 32 and Acts vii. 4; "and from thence, when his father was dead, he removed him unto this land,....". And hence Gen. xii. 1 begins, "Now the Lord had said unto Abram, Get thee" (Heb. lek-leka) go for thyself, no longer have regard to thy family, but go for thyself) "out of thy country and from thy kindred and from thy father's house" (the first call was simply "get thee out of thy country and from thy kindred" Acts vii. 3. Now it is added, with special reference to the previous hindrance "and from thy father's house") unto the land (Heb. ha-aretz; so LXX. Gk. tēn gēn), THE land) "that I will show thee". And, as though to draw special attention to the half obedience to the "call" of which Stephen speaks, when he stopped at Haran, he emphatically adds - Gen. xii. 5. "They went forth to go into the land of Canaan, and into the land of Canaan they came". Not, as before in xi. 31, "they came into Haran and dwelt there". But, if Moses does not record the call mentioned by Stephen, in Gen. xi. 31, or xii. 1, he does in Gen. xv. 7: "I am Jehovah who brought thee out of Ur of the Chaldees". The same fact is recorded in Neh. ix. 7. Thus the mere English reader, by noticing accurately the words employed, would have not only corrected Dean Stanley's mistake, but learnt some valuable lessons as to obedience.

"2. The death of his Father after the call (vii. 4), not, as according to Gen. xi. 32, before it."

This is answered above. But we may here remark that if the Holy Spirit mentions a fact in one place, and the reason of it in another, we ought not to be asked to regard it as a difference, an example of free-handling or of inaccuracy, and a protest against exactness.

"3. The seventy-five souls of Jacob's migration (vii. 14), not, as according to Gen. xlvi. 27, seventy"

It is neither Stephen nor Moses who is inaccurate here. Both are most exact. It is the Dean who is free-handling the scripture. He makes them say something which they do not say, and then says there is a discrepancy. Compare accurately what they do say, and notice what is put in italics.

Moses (Gen. xlvi. 26-27).

"All the souls that came with Jacob into Egypt *which came out of his loins*, besides Jacob's sons' wives, all the souls were *three score and six*, and the sons of Joseph which were *born him in Egypt* were two souls; all the souls of the house of Jacob, which came into Egypt, were *three score and ten*."
(Compare Ex. i. 1-5.)

STEPHEN (Acts vii. 14).

"Then sent Joseph., and called his father Jacob to, him, and *all his, kindred, three score and fifteen souls*."

Surely, if two persons are speaking of two different things, it is not inaccuracy if the numbers are different. But observe the accuracy. Stephen says all the "kindred" whom Joseph called were 75. Moses says those who "came out of his loins" were 66, and adding Jacob and Joseph, and his two sons, makes 70, viz. - "The house of Jacob". We could make a fourth numerical arrangement, but it would not necessarily be inaccurate. It is clear that Stephen includes what Moses excepts, and Moses excepts what Stephen includes. Is it not the critic who is himself inaccurate?

"4. The godlike loveliness (Gk. *asteios tô Theô*) of Moses (vii. 20), not, simply, as according to Ex. ii. 2, the statement that he was a goodly child".

As this is a point which involves the original languages, it will be merely necessary to point out that, in Ex. ii. 2, the Hebrew word *TOV* is rendered in the Septuagint by the very word used by Stephen, (*asteion*), as it is also in Hebrews xi. 23. The margin of Acts vii. 20 says "fair to God", the English of Ex. ii 2 says "goodly", i.e. God-like. Where is the inaccuracy?

"5. His Egyptian education (vii. 22) as contrasted with the silence on this point in Ex. iv. 10".

Stephen says that Moses was "learned in all the wisdom of the Egyptians" (vii. 22). Whatever may be the silence of Ex. iv. 10, or any other chapter and verse, Ex. ii. 10 tells us that Moses was "brought unto Pharaoh's daughter and he became her son". Is not this equivalent to his being educated in the wisdom of the Egyptians? Ex. iv. 10 speaks only of his want of eloquence, but neither then, nor now has eloquence ever been the necessary consequence of education. The contrary indeed, is proverbially the case. The spiritual mind will have no difficulty in discovering a great spiritual truth in the positive contrast and lesson taught by Ex. iv. 10. Notwithstanding all his proficiency in the learning and wisdom of the Egyptians, he had not the wisdom which God required for his service. It had to be all unlearned at the "back-side of the desert", and then Moses was taught of God. He confessed, "I am not eloquent, but I am slow of speech, and of a slow tongue".

"6. The same contrast with regard to his secular greatness, 'mighty in words and deeds' (vii. 22, compare Ex. ii. 10)."

But why compare a verse which is silent? Why not compare Heb. xi. 24, where it says, "By faith Moses when he was come to years" (Gk.) *me gas genomenos* (when he became great)? Here we have the corresponding equivalent. To say that the Holy Spirit, the Author of the book, may not in one part give particulars which He has not recorded in another, is to deny the power of doing that which is allowed even in the case of human composition and of a human author.

"7. The distinct mention of the three periods of 40 years (vii. 23, 30, 36) of which only the last is specified in the Pentateuch".

The last is specified in Deut. xxxi. 2, and xxxiv. 7, when his age at his death is given as 120 years (i.e. 3 times forty). The second is specified in Ex. vii. 7, "And Moses was fourscore years old" when he "spake unto Pharaoh". The third is implied in Ex. ii. 11.

"8. The terror of Moses at the bush (vii. 32), not mentioned in Ex. iii. 3".

No! but it is mentioned in Ex. iii. 6, three verses further on. "And Moses hid his face, for he was afraid to look upon God".

This is an example of the importance of accuracy in studying the scriptures, or even in reading them, which if attended to here, would have saved Dean Stanley from charging on Stephen and the Divine record a mistake which he has himself created, and which, in a school-boy, would be deservedly punished as gross carelessness.

"9. The supplementing of the Mosaic narrative by the allusions in Amos to their neglect of the true worship in the desert (vii. 42, 43)."

If these verses be read accurately, it will be seen at once that Stephen does not supplement "the Mosaic narrative by the allusions in Amos". He leaves the Mosaic narrative altogether, and pointedly quotes another scripture, introducing it by the words "as it is written in the book of the prophets. It has yet to be shown that the giving of additional information, by a quotation from another book, is a free-handling of the sacred history.

"10. The intervention of the angels in the giving of the law (vii. 53) not mentioned in Ex. xix. 16".

No! but if Dean Stanley read the Pentateuch carefully, and had not been possessed with the idea of the "comparative unimportance assigned ... to minute accuracy," he would have found that Moses does mention it in Deut. xxxiii. 2, if he does not in Ex. xix. 16. "The Lord came from Sinai, and rose up from Seir unto them; He

shined forth from Mount Paran, and He came with ten thousands of saints: from His right hand went a fiery law for them". It is also mentioned in Psalm lxxviii. 17 - "The chariots of God are twenty thousand, even thousands of angels: the Lord is among them, as in Sinai in the holy place". To which may be added the following passages, though of course they were not before the mind of Stephen. Gal. iii. 19 - It (the law) was ordained by angels in the hand of a mediator". Heb. ii. 2 - "For if the word spoken by angels was steadfast and every transgression,....".

"11. The burial of the twelve Patriarchs at Shechem (vii. 16) not mentioned in Ex. i. 6".

If we are accurate, we shall notice that special terms are employed which denote an exceptional fact. "They (i.e. our fathers) were carried over into Sychem and laid in the sepulchre". The word "carried over" is significant. It is (Gk.) *metatithêmi*, and implies that they were transferred. We are told positively in Ex. xiii. 19, that the bones of Joseph were thus "carried up", and may not the other patriarchs have first been deposited in Egypt or Hebron, and afterwards transferred to Sychem, where the Rabbinical traditions - traditions mentioned by Wetstein and Lightfoot - report them to have been buried?

"12. The purchase of the tomb at Shechem by Abraham from the sons of Emmor (vii. 16), not, as according to Gen. xxiii. 15, the purchase of the cave at Machpelah from Ephron the Hittite".

The conclusion is as gratuitous as the mode of reasoning is peculiar, to infer that the statement in Acts vii. 16 refers to that in Gen. xxiii. 15. Who can prove that Abraham did not buy a "sepulchre ... of the sons of Emmor the father of Sychem"? These words "the father" are in italics. The Greek expression *tou Suchem* would be usually translated "the son of Sychem". Shechem was the place where God at first appeared to Abraham in Canaan (Gen. xii. 6, 8), and here he built an altar. Is there any ground for doubting the inspired words of Stephen that Abraham afterwards bought a "sepulchre" there, and that Jacob in after days followed his example and bought not a "sepulchre" but "a parcel of a field" (Gen. xxxiii. 19), or "a parcel of ground" (Josh xxiv. 32), of the children or descendants of a younger Hamor, the father of another and younger Shechem? Probably it was the "field" containing or surrounding the "sepulchre" itself which Abraham had originally bought. It is clear that accuracy demands that the two statements cannot refer to the same event, or include the same purchase from the same descendants. It is also inconceivable that Stephen could have made any such blunders as have been frequently alleged by many, when we consider that he was speaking in the presence of the Sanhedrim which comprised the most learned men, in the whole nation; men who were "Masters in Israel", who knew every word of the law and the prophets by heart and even the very number of words and letters in each book. I say it is inconceivable that in the presence of such men, who sought his life, his mis-statements should have gone uncorrected, if he had been guilty of making the alleged inaccuracies. On the contrary, we read "they were not able to resist the wisdom and the Spirit by which he spake". In our day, men are found who are "able" to deny that he spake by the Spirit, and to question the wisdom and truth of his words. This is an ability which has been reserved for modern cavillers and critics to manifest.

Dean Stanley, at the close of these twelve examples of inaccuracy, says "To which may be added

13. The introduction of Remphan from the LXX. of Amos v. 26, not found in the Hebrew."

Nor is the word "Ethiopia" found in the Hebrew. Nor is the word "Syria". "Remphan" (Acts vii. 43) is the accurate equivalent for the Hebrew *CHIUN* (in Amos v. 26), just as "Ethiopia" is the equivalent for the Hebrew *KOOSH*; as "Egypt" is the equivalent for the Hebrew *MITZRAIM*; and as "Syria" or "Mesopotamia" is the equivalent for the Hebrew *ARAM*, in the Septuagint and English versions.

So much then for the examples furnished by Dealt Stanley.

THE 400 AND 430-YEAR PERIODS TO EXODUS

There is one other statement in Stephen's address which sceptics have stumbled at, and at which Christians have been perplexed. I allude to the periods of 400 and 430 years mentioned in Acts vii. 6; Gen. xv. 13; Ex. xii. 40, and Gal. iii. 17. These are generally treated as though they referred to the same period of time, and hence it has been assumed that there is a discrepancy. Critics first of all create the difficulty themselves by their inaccurate reading, and then resort to such means of getting rid of it that "they make the word of God of none effect" by their very attempt to explain it. If attention be paid to the exact words, it will be found that these two periods, while they have the same termination, do not commence at the same point of time. The 400 years commence at the birth of Isaac as the "seed" of Abraham. In Isaac shall thy seed be called". (Rom. ix. 7.) Acts vii. 6: "And God spake on this wise that his seed should sojourn in a strange land, and that they should bring them into bondage, and entreat them evil

four hundred years". Here, of course, the period embraces the whole sojourning, bondage, and evil treatment of the people from the birth of Isaac, "his seed", and is a reference to Gen. xv. 13: "And he said unto Abram, Know of a surety that thy seed shall be a stranger in a land that is not theirs, and shall serve them and they shall afflict them four hundred years". Here again, the period covers the whole strangership, servitude and affliction of the people from the birth of Isaac, "thy seed". The 430 Years commence from the call of Abraham (Gen. xi. 31; Acts vii. 2), from the promise made to him, and from his sojourning, and his descendants then "in his loins". Ex. xii. 40: "Now the sojourning of the children of Israel who dwelt in Egypt was four hundred and thirty years". Oh! what difficulties have been raised, and objections urged against these words, and what shifts have been resorted to on the part of commentators, by going to the ends of the earth and referring to the Samaritan Pentateuch and the Septuagint, because they failed to notice accurately what is really said. It is objected, "They were in Egypt only 215 years, and therefore, Ex. xii. 40 must be wrong". But stop! it does not say so! What is the verb? - "was". What is the nominative to it? "the sojourning!" The words "who dwelt in Egypt" form a relative clause defining who the people were, and the verse says that "the sojourning" of these people "was four hundred and thirty years". And so it was. Where did they sojourn? Heb. xi. 9 answers: "By faith he sojourned in the land of promise as in a strange country", and Ex. vi. 4 also answers "The land of Canaan, the land of their pilgrimage, wherein they were strangers". They sojourned in Canaan; they dwelt in Egypt; and the whole period covered by both was 430 years. The Exodus was 400 years from Isaac's birth, when Abraham was 100 years old (Gen. xxi. 5). Abram was 75 years old at the departure from Haran (Gen. xii. 4), and we must believe, therefore, that he was 70 years old when he first started from Ur of the Chaldees and commenced his "sojourning" five years before.

We have only one more passage to consider in which this period is mentioned, and that is Gal. iii. 17: "The covenant that was confirmed before of God in Christ, the law, which was four hundred and thirty years after, cannot disannul that it should make the promise of none effect". Here the statement is clear that "the law" was given 430 years after "the promise". "Now in Abraham and his seed were the promises made", and, lest there should be any mistake as to our thinking of Isaac or Jacob, he adds: "He saith not. And to seeds, as of many; but as of one, And to thy seed, which is Christ" (v. 16). Therefore, the promise referred to is that which was made to Abraham, and "confirmed before God in Christ". And this was 430 years before the giving of the law, viz., in "Ur of the Chaldees" (Acts vii. 2, and Gen. xv. 7), where the God of glory first appeared to him. This "promise" was repeated in various forms several times. the first recorded repetition being in Gen. xii. 2, 3. "The God of glory" did not appear without speaking, for in Neh. ix. 7, 8 we find it distinctly stated: "Thou art the Lord the God, who didst choose Abram, and broughtest him forth out of Ur of the Chaldees, and gavest him the name of Abraham; and foundest his heart faithful before Thee, and madest a covenant with him to give him the land ... to give it I say to his seed..."

This must now suffice for the alleged inaccuracies of Stephen's address. We will now pass onto a few other illustrations which show, how difficulties are removed by carefully noting the exact defining words: and then we will take a few which serve to bring out some hidden beauties which are thus brought to light.

THE SEVENTY WEEKS OF DANIEL

The seventy weeks of Daniel ix. 25: "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..." Now accurate attention to the words used, will save us from being led into error as to the starting point of the seventy weeks: "From the going forth of the commandment to restore and to build Jerusalem". There were four commandments or decrees that went forth –

1. Cyrus to Ezra (i. 1), 536 B.C.
2. Darius to Ezra (vi. 1-12), 519 B.C.
3. Artaxerxes to Ezra (vii. 7-11), 468 B.C.
4. Artaxerxes to Nehemiah (ii. 1-5), 455 B.C.

Unless we note the defining words we shall be at a loss to discover to which of these decrees reference is made.

1. Cyrus's decree to Ezra is confined exclusively to the building of the temple: and mention of this, and "the house", "the altar", the "house of the Lord", etc., is made in chapters i-v no less than 22 times. True their enemies "wrote a letter against" them (iv) accusing them of re-building "the rebellious and bad city", and so their work was stopped "until another commandment shall be given". This, then, cannot be the decree referred to in Dan. ix. 25, quite apart from any difficulty of fitting in the date.

2. Darius's decree to Ezra. In this chapter, twelve times do we find this decree confined to "the house", "the temple", "the house of God". This, then, cannot be the decree.

3. Artaxerxes' decree to Ezra. This decree is confined particularly to the permission that was given to "the people of Israel and of his priests and Levites in my realm which are minded of their own free will to go up to Jerusalem". it declares what they were to carry with them "for the house of their God which is at Jerusalem"; but there is not one word about building, either the temple or the city. This, then, cannot be the decree referred to.

4. Artaxerxes' decree to Nehemiah. This is declared specially to relate to Nehemiah's request "That thou wouldest send me unto Judah, unto the city of my fathers' sepulchres, that I may build it" (ii. 5). "So it pleased the king to send me" (ii. 6). Consequently we read now nothing of the temple, for that was already built. Many also of the people were there, but there was no city. We read nothing now but of building "the city",[End of extract]

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