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1932

## 749TH ORDINARY GENERAL MEETING,

HELD IN COMMITTEE ROOM B, THE CENTRAL HALL,  
WESTMINSTER, S.W.1, ON MONDAY, DECEMBER 7TH, 1931,

AT 4.30 P.M.

LIEUT.-COL. ARTHUR KENNEY-HERBERT IN THE CHAIR.

The Minutes of the previous Meeting were read, confirmed, and signed, and the HON. SECRETARY announced the following elections since the last Meeting. As a Life Member: Charles W. Pike, Esq. As Members: E. A. Benjamin, Esq.; L. Everard Jose, Esq.; W. N. Delevingne, Esq.; W. Williams, Esq.; M. A. F. Sutton, Esq.; Mrs. A. S. Tresham; and Leslie F. Marchant. As Associates: Rev. Wilbur M. Smith; Dr. H. Merrall; Douglas Dewar, Esq.; Rev. C. S. Carter, D.D.; Rev. C. C. Ellis, D.D.; Mrs. C. E. Moilliet; Mrs. E. J. Kirby; Director A. Ossian Gauffin; Dr. E. McKillop Young; James F. Spink, Esq.; Rev. G. W. King, D.D.; Mrs. E. Hardy; Rev. C. E. Edwards, D.D.; Rev. Barclay F. Buxton, M.A.; Rev. E. P. Herbert; Pastor J. G. Cooke; and as Corresponding Member, Mrs. Mary L. G. Griffiths.

The CHAIRMAN then called on Lieut.-Col. A. G. Shortt to read his paper on "The Chronology of the Kings of Israel and Judah."

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### *THE CHRONOLOGY OF THE KINGS OF ISRAEL AND JUDAH.*

By LIEUT.-COL. A. G. SHORTT.

#### § 1.—THE ASSYRIAN EPONYM CANON AND BABYLONIAN CHRONICLE.

THE reconciliation of the reigns of the kingdoms of Israel and Judah, both with each other and with profane history, has always been one of the problems of Bible study; and it is one, moreover, which it is necessary to elucidate before we can arrive at any real chronology of the Old Testament. There is, however, a considerable body of testimony from outside sources and, before attempting to co-ordinate the figures given in the Books of Kings and Chronicles, it may be as well to examine these contemporary records in so far as they bear on our main enquiry.

The Assyrian Canon is a year-by-year record of Eponyms from 911 B.C. to about 650 B.C. The Eponym was an official appointed for the year, a year which began in Nisan, or March, and therefore, as it is practically complete, the name of the Eponym for each year being given, it is a most valuable document. The series is located in history by mention of an Eclipse in the month Sivan, which astronomers are agreed as being that of 763 B.C. Working back from this, we find that the Eponym for 854 B.C. was Dayan-Assur, and from the Black Obelisk of Shalmanezzer II in the British Museum, and from an inscription of this monarch at Kurkh, in Armenia, we learn that, in Shalmanezzer's sixth year, in the eponymy of Dayan-Assur, he fought and defeated Ahab at Qar-Qar. In Shalmanezzer's eighteenth year (842 B.C.) we find, on a Bull inscription *Cuneiform Inscriptions*, etc., vol. iii, p. 5, No. 6), that he enacted tribute from Jehu, son of Omri, who therefore was reigning in that year. Other connections between Assyria and Israel as found from the Canon and inscriptions are as follows :—

- 737 B.C. Memahem pays tribute in the 8th year of Tiglath Pileser.
- 734-2 B.C. Siege of Damascus, when Pekah was reigning. (See Isa. vii, viii.)
- 729 B.C. Death of Pekah.
- 722 B.C. Accession of Sargon II and capture of Samaria.
- 713 B.C. Conquest of Media by Sargon.

A convenient reference book is George Smith's *Assyrian Eponym Canon*.

The Babylonian Chronicle is useful in corroborating the dates of Sargon and Shalmanezzer IV. A translation of it may be found in R. W. Rogers' *Cuneiform Parallels to the Old Testament*.

## § 2.—THE CANON OF PTOLEMY.

A list of kings of Babylon, with notices of certain astronomical observations of eclipses beginning with the eclipse of February 26th, 747 B.C., and ending with the reign of Alexander the Great. It follows the Egyptian vague year, and thus the beginning of each year recedes one day in every four years. It is of great importance, but the reigns being given as whole numbers it is not as accurate as the Assyrian Canon, and may vary by a year

or more from other evidences. In fact, throughout, if we base it on Alexander's dates, it is one year too low, probably from the above considerations.

It should be noted that in both Babylon and Assyria the year in which a sovereign died was reckoned to him, his successor calling it his "accession year," or "in the beginning of my reign." The first year of a reign, therefore, was the year following, the first complete year reckoning from March (Nisan). If, then, the figures in Ptolemy's Canon be taken to refer to the regnal years and not to the years of accession, the difference throughout of one year is explained. In the following table, therefore, it is the accession years which are shown :—

	Yrs.	Accession Year. B.C.		Yrs.	Accession Year. B.C.
Nabonasar ...	14	748	Iloaroudam ...	2	562
Nadius ...	2	734	Nericasolassar ...	4	560
Chinzer and Porus ...	5	732	Nabonad ...	17	556
Iloulaius ...	5	727			
Marco-sempad ...	12	722	PERSIA.		
Arcean ...	5	710	Cyrus ...	9	539
First interregnum ...	2	705	Cambyses ...	8	530
Bilib ...	3	703	Darius I ...	36	522
Aparanad ...	6	700	Xerxes ...	21	486
Rhegebel ...	1	694	Artaxerxes ...	41	465
Messimordac ...	4	693	Darius II ...	19	424
Second interregnum...	8	689	Artaxerxes II ...	46	405
Asaridin ...	13	681	Ochus ...	21	359
Saosdouchin ...	20	668	Arogus ...	2	338
Ciniladan ...	22	648	Darius III ...	4	336
Nabopolassar ...	21	626	Alexander ...	8	331
Nabocolassar ...	43	605			

In the above, Poros is the Assyrian Tiglath Pileser, Iloulaius is Shalmanezer IV, Marco-sempad is Merodach-Baladon, Arcean is Sargon II, Asaridin is Esarhaddon, and Nabocolassar is Nebuchadnezzar; and it will be noticed that, in this list, the accession dates of these Assyrian kings are the dates when they gained the throne of Babylon, which was not necessarily the same as those of their accession to the Kingdom of Assyria.

The Canon of Ptolemy is valuable as a check, but the method followed is not so accurate as either the Assyrian or the Greek, and may differ from these by a year or more on occasion.

### § 3.—GREEK EVIDENCE.

The Greeks had a system which was similar to that of the Assyrians in that they elected an archon for each year, beginning their year in midsummer. The names of these archons are obtainable from Diodorus and Dionysius of Halicarnassus, and have been collected by Clinton (*Fasti Hellenici*, vol. ii). They form an unbroken series from 480 to 303 B.C. The linking up of this series to chronology is effected by the eclipse which Thucydides (ii, 2 and 28) mentions as occurring in the first year of the Peloponnesian War, in the year after the archonship of Pythodorus, or, in other words, in 431 B.C. With this as a fixed point we have the following dates. Xerxes died in the archonship of Lysitheus, *i.e.*, 465 B.C., having reigned more than 20 years, and Artaxerxes succeeded, reigning 40 years (Diod. xi, 69). This gives 486 B.C. for the accession of Xerxes and 425 B.C. for that of Darius II.

After the summer campaign of the sixth year of the Peloponnesian War, ambassadors were sent to Artaxerxes, but, when they arrived, they found he had just died (Thuc. iv, 50). This confirms the death of this monarch in the winter of 425-4 B.C.

The battle of Salamis was in the archonship of Calliades (Herod. vii, 1, 3, 4) and therefore in 480 B.C. Marathon, Archon Phoenippus, was ten years before Salamis, and therefore in 490 B.C.

Marathon was in the 5th year before Xerxes (Herod. vii, 1, 3, 4), and therefore Xerxes succeeded in 486 B.C., confirming Diodorus, as given above. We have here, therefore, the dates of the death of Darius I and accession of Xerxes (486 B.C.), the accession of Artaxerxes (465 B.C.), and the accession of Darius II (425-4 B.C.), and a reference to Ptolemy's Canon shows how these dates are confirmed. These reigns cover the books of Ezra and Nehemiah.

### § 4.—THE CONTRACT TABLETS OF EGIBI AND SON.

The British Museum holds an enormous number of contract tablets of Egibi and Son, a firm of bankers in Babylon from the

reign of Nebuchadnezzar to that of Darius. They are dated month after month and year after year, and are of the utmost importance, as they give reliable evidence as to the chronology from the upper limit of the Greek records back to the fall of Jerusalem. The first and last tablets in each reign are the most valuable to us, and these are given in *Records of the Past*, xi, 87. They are as follows :—

Nebuchadnezzar	Access. yr.	7th Marchesvan	43rd yr.	11th Nisan.
Evil-Merodach	„ „	21st Tisri	2nd yr.	5th Sebat.
Neriglissar	„ „	27th Marchesvan	4th yr.	12th Adar.
Nabonidus	„ „	12th Tammuz	17th yr.	5th Elul.
Cyrus	„ „	16th Kislev	9th yr.	22nd Ab.
Cambyses	„ „	16th Elul	8th yr.	11th Tebet.
Bardes	1st yr.	20th Elul	1st yr.	11th Tisri.
Darius	„	(?) Nisan	36th yr.	5th Ab.

These tablets carry us back from the last year of Darius I, which we have seen to be 486 B.C., to the accession year of Nebuchadnezzar in 605 B.C., from where we can connect up with the Biblical line of Judah. They confirm the Ptolemy Canon in every particular except that the usurper Bardes is not mentioned by Ptolemy.

### § 5.—THE CALENDAR USED BY ISRAEL AND JUDAH.

It is usual to consider that the two Kingdoms used the same calendar, and the lengths of the reigns of the kings in each case are taken at their face value. In the case of Judah it is probably right to do this. If the attached table be examined we will see that Rehoboam, though he only reigned 17 years, was not succeeded by Abijam till the 18th Jeroboam, and he must have reigned, therefore, more than his allotted years. Abijam, however, who is given three years, only occupied the throne from the 18th to the 20th Jeroboam. It thus appears that the periods put against the kings of Judah were approximate, perhaps more, perhaps less, though we shall see that, in a series, they appear to balance out sufficiently correctly. That this was the method before the division of the Kingdom is shown by the length of David's reign, which, although consisting of two parts,  $7\frac{1}{2}$  and 33, is given as 40 years only. The building of the Temple also, which occupied  $7\frac{1}{2}$  years, is given as 7 years.

The Israel kingdom, however, used a different chronology, which was in later days adopted by the Jews, under which the

year of a king's decease was counted both to him and to his successor, and the result of this is that in each case one year has to be deducted from the figures given. This is clearly seen in the case of Nadab, who reigned two years, but who began his reign in the 2nd Asa and died in the 3rd. Baasha also began in the 3rd and died in the 26th Asa, yet he is given 24 years of rule. Elah, too, follows the same rule. We see it also in the case of Ahab and Jehu. Ahab, as we have already seen, was alive in the 6th year of Shalmanezzer II, and Jehu was reigning in that monarch's 18th year—12 years' interval. Ahaziah and Jehoram, who came between, reigned two years and twelve years respectively, which are two years too many, but by deducting a year from each for overlapping, it brings it exactly right.

Thus Ahab fought at Qar-Qar in the year 854-3 B.C., and died later in the same year, this year being counted to him. Ahaziah succeeded on Ahab's death, and the year was reckoned to him as well.

The question of the commencement of the year in the case of Judah is more difficult. We know in the account of the building of the Temple the first month was Nisan. But we also know that the Jews commenced their civil year in the autumn. Some colour is lent to this in the account of Solomon's two coronations. The feast which Adonijah made would seem to be a Passover, and when at its conclusion Solomon was made king there was no sacrificing of any kind. The necessity for a second coronation might thus have arisen from a feeling that it should be connected with one of the great feasts, and therefore it was repeated later, perhaps at the Feast of the Ingathering. A six months' interval also might explain the difference of half a year in the computation of David's reign, the one being to the joint reign and the other to Solomon's second coronation. On the other hand, "the ninth month" in Jer. xxxvi, 22, is clearly reckoned from Nisan.

In the case of Israel, however, we are on firmer ground. When Israel revolted, Jeroboam introduced the worship of the heavenly bull Taurus, making two golden calves for the people to worship. In addition, he ordained an annual feast of his own devising on the fifteenth of the eighth month. Now, whether Jeroboam himself was of Ephraim or not, Ephraim was the dominant tribe of the ten; it was equated to the constellation Taurus, and the month Zif was also connected with the same sign. Reckoning from Nisan as the first month, Zif was the second month of the year, but if we begin with Tisri it was the eighth, and the account



in 1 Kings xii, 25-33, makes it clear that Zif was chosen from its connection with Taurus. We can therefore take it that the beginning of the year, in Samaria at least, was in the autumn, Tisri being the first month.

### § 6.—THE KINGS.

We can now proceed to the examination of the Table of Kings, bearing in mind that the figures for Judah are accepted as given, and those for Israel are considered as overlapping. We have, in the period 854-42, a time, as has been shown above, which is rigidly fixed, since 854-3 was Ahab's last year and 842-1 was Jehu's first.

From the last year of Ahab up to the division of the Kingdom is a period of 79-80 years, whether we take it through the line of Israel or of Judah. The date for Rehoboam is thus fixed by two independent lines and must be put at 932 B.C., Solomon's accession therefore falling in the year 972 B.C. The corroboration of these two lines is important.

After the time of Ahab we are faced, in the case of Judah, with a series of joint reigns which destroy the value of its chronology down to the time of Hezekiah, since the amount of overlapping is not given except through the cross-references to Israel. We have therefore to turn to Israel, and here we find the remarkable fact that the direct line of the Kings of Israel is absolutely correct, in its upper stages, with that of Judah, and, below this, with the Assyrian records as far as Pekah, for, as shown above, Menahem paid tribute to Tiglath Pileser in his 8th year in 737 B.C., and Pekah is mentioned in his records in the year 734-3 B.C. This accuracy over seventeen reigns is an outstanding tribute to the general trustworthiness of the record, and a testimony to the correctness of the method we are using.

The reign of Hoshea is corroborated by the Eponym Canon, and the only error is in the reign of Pekah, with which we must deal presently.

We must now turn to Judah, from Asa to Hezekiah. All the figures in the Table are as given in Scripture, the B.C. dates for Judah being calculated from the cross-references from Israel, and certain points require to be noted.

Jehoram is shown as reigning three years before the death of his father. This is specifically stated in 2 Kings viii, 16, though the number of years of joint rule are not given.

## THE KINGS OF ISRAEL AND JUDAH.

ISRAEL.	Yrs.	B.C. dates.	Cross-references.	JUDAH.	Yrs.	B.C. dates.	Cross-references.
Jeroboam ...	22	932-910	—	Rehoboam ...	17	932-915	—
Nadab ...	2	911-909	2nd Asa.	Abijam ...	3	915-912	18th Jeroboam.
Baasha ...	24	910-886	3rd Asa.	Asa ...	41	912-871	20th Jeroboam.
Elah ...	2	887-885	26th Asa.				
Zimri ...	7 days	886-885	27th Asa.				
Omri ...	12	886-874	31st Asa.				
Ahab ...	22	875-853	38th Asa.	Jehoshaphat ...	25	871-846	4th Ahab.
Ahaziah ...	2	854-852	17th Jehoshaphat.	Jehoram ...	8	849-841	5th Joram.
Jehoram ...	12	853-841	18th Jehoshaphat.	Ahaziah ...	1	841	12th Joram.
Jehu ...	28	842-814	—	Athaliah ...	6	841-835	—
Jehoahaz ...	17	815-798	23rd Jehoash.	Jehoash ...	40	835-795	7th Jehu.
Jehoash ...	16	799-783	37th Jehoash.	Amaziah ...	29	798-769	2nd Jehoash.
Jeroboam ...	41	784-743	15th Amaziah.	Azariah (Uzziah)	52	784-732	27th Jeroboam.
Zachariah ...	6 mo.	744-743	38th Azariah.				
Shallum ...	1 mo.	744-743	39th "	Jotham ...	16	759-743	2nd Pekah.
Menahem ...	10	744-734	39th "	Ahaz ...	16	743-727	17th Pekah.
Pekaiiah ...	2	735-733	50th "	Hezekiah ...	29	727-698	3rd Hoshea.
Pekah ...	20 (5)	734-729	52nd "				
Hoshea ...	9	730-721	12th Ahaz.				

Fall of Samaria in Hezekiah's 6th year—722-1 B.C.

All figures are scriptural, the four cases of error being shown in italics.

The joint rule of Amaziah with his father is not actually stated except as worked out by the cross-references. In 2 Chron. xxiv, 25, however, it is said that before his death Jehoash was greatly diseased, and his son may have been raised to the throne on this account.

I have shown Azariah (Uzziah) as ruling with his father for fifteen years. The cross-references here—shown in italics—are necessarily wrong, and the account of Amaziah's last years is indicative of a joint reign. For Joash of Israel invaded Jerusalem and "took Amaziah." He afterwards "took the treasures of the King's house and the hostages and returned to Samaria"—2 Chron. xxv, 22-25. This was at least fifteen years before Amaziah's death and, if Amaziah had been retained by Joash and taken as one of the hostages to Samaria, Azariah would naturally have been raised to the throne in his place. This would account for the return references from Azariah to the Israel Kings from Zachariah to Pekah.

(It should be borne in mind that, as in the case of the Canon of Ptolemy, the method of reckoning in Judah may make the cross-references on occasion appear one or, in some cases, two years out.)

It is suggested that these errors in the time of Azariah are responsible for the excess of fifteen years in Pekah's reign, which is the only error in the line of Israel from the division of the Kingdom to the Fall of Samaria. No doubt Uzziah's long reign and the fact of his becoming leprous was the prime cause of the confusion, but it is eminently satisfactory that it can be narrowed down to so small a period, and that the rest of the chronology can be reckoned trustworthy.

#### § 7.—FROM HEZEKIAH TO ZEDEKIAH.

Hezekiah came to the throne in 727 B.C., it being in his 6th year that Samaria fell. There is an error in the account of his reign in that Sennacherib's invasion could not have been in Hezekiah's 14th year. Sennacherib did not begin his rule till 705 B.C., and his attack was in 701 B.C. We must expect to find errors sometimes in the history, and we are fortunate in that the mistakes are of a minor character and can be localized. Ahaziah of Judah, for instance, is said to have attained the throne in the 11th (2 Kings ix, 29) and also in the 12th (2 Kings viii, 25) year of Joram, and while this is probably

capable of explanation no amount of argument can reconcile his age at that time, being given as 22 and 42 years (2 Kings viii, 26, and 2 Chron. xxii, 1) respectively.

But we are more concerned here with the general chronological system, and the period with which we are dealing is too well buttressed to be easily upset. Hezekiah's accession, five years before the Fall of the sister kingdom, is fixed by more than one contemporary account at 727 B.C., and from this point to the Capture of Jerusalem by dead reckoning is 139 years and a half, and this brings us to the year 587 B.C. The city was captured in the 18th year of Nebuchadnezzar, which was 587-6 B.C., thus showing an entirely trustworthy chronology. I have said the 18th of Nebuchadnezzar because that was the year 832 captives from Jerusalem were deported (Jer. lii, 29). The city and Temple were not burnt till the following year (19th Nebuchadnezzar).

As, therefore, the Temple was burnt in the year 586-5 B.C. and rebuilt in 516-5 B.C., the land had been left desolate—without a House of God for seventy years.

This, however, is not all. The subjugation of Judah was a process which occupied twenty-three years—from 608 to 585 B.C., and its rehabilitation from the first year of Cyrus 538 B.C. to the completion of the Temple was the same length of time. The seventy years' captivity therefore began and ended with a period of twenty-three years, the beginnings of each, as also the endings, being seventy years apart.

#### § 8.—CONCLUSION.

I have endeavoured to set out before you the witness of contemporary history and its agreement or otherwise with the chronology of Scripture within the period under review. I think it will be found that in every part of the history there are at least two corroborative testimonies from quite independent sources, and there is thus formed a structure which is based on foundations which it is very difficult to traverse.

#### DISCUSSION.

The CHAIRMAN (Lieut.-Colonel Kenney-Herbert) said :—Let us confine ourselves to pointing out what we individually have gained from this condensed summary of many years of loving labour.

Anyone who studies the Bible, in a constructive sense, will receive some real reward for his work, something helpful to pass on. Last year Colonel Shortt gave us a valuable contribution on the date of the Fifteenth year of Tiberius. He proved to us, at least so I think, that the Bible meant exactly what it said, and in doing so settled two difficult points—the date of the birth of the Lord and the date of His crucifixion in terms of our reckoning. Incidentally, he showed that Josephus contradicted Josephus, and that, in consequence, we could, in this matter, dispense with his evidence.

Of the making of chronologies there is no end. The scholar will demand that due weight be assigned to his eclipses, his canons and his olympiads—and these ingredients can be mixed in almost infinite variety. The Bible student, seeking only to learn the will of God, as evidenced in the past, even if he rejects all other sources of information, will find that he is faced with three or four special problems, which can be understood in more ways than one. This paper sets out to solve one such problem, and incidentally throws considerable light on another.

To my mind, if Anstey's interpretation of the Hebrew of some of the difficult passages is good, he has harmonized the reigns of the Kings of Judah and Israel. But his facts reveal another problem in connection with the Captivity which he does not explain. If the Captivity began in the 3rd year of Jehoiakim, and ended in the 3rd year of Cyrus, as Anstey shows, the period was only 69 years, and not 70, as prophesied by Jeremiah. He suggests that this is a case of "inclusive reckoning."

But this period was a unit in God's plan of time, of which Gabriel said that there were to be seven other such units; obviously a slipshod period, with a bit over at each end, making 69 nearly 70, cannot be regarded as a unit to measure with. But the solution is easy if God intended us to understand prophetic years, in the statements He has given us through Jeremiah and Gabriel; for 70 prophetic years are within a day or two exactly 69 mean solar years. I had come to this conclusion some years ago, and now find that I am justified in this opinion by the records of the business house of Egibi, quoted in the paper. It is strange that the collection covers the exact dates necessary to confirm the proposition, as well as the 70 of desolation and the 70 of indignation.

It is easy for us, fundamentalists, to make out a *casus belli* against those who follow not with us in all things, but who are nevertheless seeking constructive work in the Lord's Vineyard. Every such student adds his quota to the common knowledge. For this reason I would personally thank the author of this paper for his contribution; in which I honestly believe that there are things to be avoided and things to be accepted with thankfulness.

The CHAIRMAN concluded by calling for the thanks of the meeting, and the same were accorded with much heartiness.

Mr. C. C. OGILVY VAN LENNEP said: Interesting and erudite though it certainly is, Colonel Shortt's paper seems to me to put the cart before the horse. All efforts to synchronize Bible history with profane, appear to me as pre-ordained to fail. For instance, the Eponym Canon, as shown, indicates that the 21st year of Ahab of Israel was 854 B.C. This I believe to be true; but it also indicates that 729 B.C. was the year of Pekah's death; thereby it implies that, then, it was only 125 years since the 21st of Ahab, whereas Anstey makes the Bible number about 170 (as also do I), and the A.V. margin makes it 157. This great difference casts doubt upon the reliability of the Eponym Canon.

Ptolemy's evidence is suspect also, for his Canon contains several names of kings that are unrecorded by any historian before him. The Greek Archons do not help us either, for the dating of these is anchored to Ptolemy's figures, by the general (secular) belief in his chronology, which restricts our freedom in our calculations of the possible dates of such eclipses as are recorded in the classics of the Archons' days. On the other hand, the earliest and the most explicit of all available chronological evidence, is in the Bible. Like our learned lecturer, all Bible students, admittedly, find difficulties in it; its chronologers, especially, often think that they are faced therein by irreconcilable contradictions. And yet, no really vital contradiction can be affirmed to occur in all the Bible chronology. All *seeming* contradictions should, no doubt, be studied, and solved, if possible; when, however, we find that we have been vouchsafed two exactly similar, and quite definite, statements of time, or of periods of time, it seems to me that we have

no alternative than to accept them, even though they appear to disagree with others that are parallel to them.

Thus it is with the history of the Kings of Judah. In 2 Chron., the lengths of their reigns are stated so plainly, so definitely, that, in my opinion, there is no scope for any alterations or modifications. But, to our present confusion, in the Book of Kings exactly the same figures are accompanied by another set of figures—the concurrent reign-lengths of the Kings of Israel. These are to be found nowhere else, and they are difficult to synchronize, throughout, with the reigns of the Judæan kings. Many a chronologer has tried to do this ; but can any student of their works aver that he is fully satisfied that any one of them has succeeded, so far ? Surely not ; because in all such attempts, certain alterations, either of actual figures or of the meanings of words, have been made in the narratives of the Kings of Judah, so as to make those *two* simple narratives agree with the admittedly more complex *one* of the Kings of Israel.

“In the mouth of two or three witnesses every word may be established” ; who shall say that the years of the Kings of Judah were not given by the two witnesses on purpose ? They are vital to the main line of Bible chronology ; therefore, it was important that they should have been given with chronological perfection. Surely, it is time that we began to accept them with simplicity ; and, having done so, to rebuild the profane chronology anew, upon the broad base of the Bible’s own, instead of the other way about.

#### WRITTEN COMMUNICATIONS.

Dr. NORMAN S. DENHAM wrote : While appreciating the labour involved in the paper, it is to be regretted that Col. Shortt has chosen to adjust Hebrew chronology by profane history rather than pagan records by the divine verities. He says : “ We know that the Jews commenced their civil year in the autumn.” I believe that no satisfactory proof of this is forthcoming. The dates that can be certainly identified are satisfied only with a year commencing with Nisan. The author does not make clear his authority for equating Jeroboam’s feast of the eighth month with Ziph rather than with Marcheshwan ; nor is it shown how the value of Judah’s chronology is destroyed after Ahab’s time because it is “ a series of joint-reigns.” Further on, the learned author states that the “ mistake ” as to the

age of Ahaziah is "probably capable of explanation." The reading of 2 Chron. xxii 2, as shown by Anstey, is, "A son of forty-two years was Ahaziah when he began to reign." That is, Ahaziah, being son of Athaliah, is reckoned as "an imp of the House of Ahab," whose evil line commenced with Omri's first year in 857 B.C. (Ptol. 936), while Ahaziah's accession year as co-rex with Jehoram in the latter's seventh year, was 815 B.C. (Ptol. 894). The difference is exactly 42 years. Can we not trust the sacred Word?

Passing to a further issue, I believe that the Persian era has to be telescoped by 79 years: *i.e.* the supposed 205 years from Cyrus to Alexander become 126. If so, all Ptolemaic dates prior to Alexander must be revised. I base my conclusions briefly as follows: (1) The 20th year of the Artaxerxes of Neh. viii, 2, was *Sabbatic*, for only in the *Sabbatic* year was the Law publicly read as commanded by Moses (Deut. xxxi, 10, 11). It was so read in Josiah's 18th year, 542 B.C., a *Sabbatic* year. The 20th year of Artaxerxes Longimanus, 445 B.C., was not *Sabbatic* (cp. 1 Macc. vi, 8; ix, 43; Jos. Ant. XIV, xvi, 2). (2) If Artaxerxes Longimanus was the Artaxerxes of Ezra vii and Neh. ii, 1, and Xerxes was the Ahasuerus of Esther, as is usually believed, then either there were two sets of eminent men with the same names, occupying similar positions at not remote epochs, or, they were the same men. In the latter case, Ezra would be about 141 years old when he read the Law at Jerusalem (Neh. xii); Nehemiah would be 103 years older when he returned to Jerusalem in Artaxerxes' 32nd year than when he came there in Cyrus' first year; Mordecai, who was taken captive to Babylon, would have been about 123 years old when premier of Ahasuerus; Jaddua would have been about 158 years old when he went out to meet Alexander at Sapha, and Sanballat would have been contemporary with Nehemiah in 445 B.C. and with Jaddua in 332 B.C., 113 years later. All these and other anomalies are caused by the slavish reliance placed upon the Canon of Ptolemy. They would all disappear if we identified the Artaxerxes and Ahasuerus above named with Darius Hystaspes. There are two striking confirmations of the revised scheme of dating:

(1) The 63 weeks, or 483 years of Daniel ix, 25, if they were computed inclusively from Cyrus' Decree in 457 B.C. (Ptol. 536), as they most certainly should be, would bring us exactly to the year



of the Baptism of our Lord, A.D. 26, a year shown to be a *Sabbatic* and *Jubilee* year by sundry tokens in the Gospels, notably by the "acceptable," or *Jubilee* year reference of Luke iv, 19 (see Colonel Mackinlay's *Recent Discoveries in Luke's Writings*).

(2) The total Solar Eclipse stated by Herodotus to have occurred as Xerxes started on his great Grecian Expedition would, if the above premise be adopted, necessarily fall 79 years later than 481 B.C. I say 481 B.C. advisedly, instead of the usually recorded 480 B.C., because Rev. W. B. Galloway shows that Dodwell, Hales, Scaliger, Wesseling and Duker all understood Xerxes to have set out from Susa (*Chain of the Ages*). No such eclipse visible to Xerxes took place in either 480 B.C. or 481 B.C., but the track of totality of a total solar eclipse swept from Sardis past Babylon and Susa on January 18th, 402 B.C. This is the only solar eclipse satisfying the conditions of the narrative of Herodotus (vii, 37). 402 B.C. is precisely 79 years later than 481 B.C.

These are some of the data upon which should be founded an entirely new dating of the profane and sacred records of these times, and consequently, of the reigns of the Kings of Judah and Israel.

Mr. G. B. MICHELL wrote: I welcome very heartily Lieut.-Col. Shortt's attempt to reconcile the chronologies of the Kings of Judah and Israel on sound and honest lines. I agree so closely with his system that I was inclined, at first sight, to accept it unconditionally. There can be no question that his dates for Solomon, 972 B.C., and consequently of 932 for Rehoboam (*and Jeroboam*) are correct, as are, of course, the dates that are confirmed by the Assyrian records. I would point out, however, that though a *contingent* from Ahab is mentioned as present at the Battle of Qarqar (see Schrader's *Cuneiform Inscriptions and the Old Testament*, Vol. I, pp. 183 to 190), it does not necessarily follow that Ahab was personally present, nor even that he was still alive. Indeed, he must have died in 855 B.C., the date of the Battle of Ramoth Gilead.

Colonel Shortt's system is so attractive that there can be little doubt that it was precisely thus that the compiler of *Kings* arrived at his synchronisms. By *computation*, and with a little latitude on account of the omission of fractions of a year, it is easy to see that the apparent difficulty of harmonizing the two lines is satisfactorily

disposed of. When, however, we come to set out in tabular form Lieut.-Col. Shortt's figures, year by year successively, as it must be done to provide a really rigorous *chronology*, I find that there are two fatal flaws in his system. Firstly, the year 843 was certainly the first of Jehu, and of Hazael of Syria, and consequently also of Ahaziah and Athaliah of Judah. And this figure is essential for Lieut.-Col. Shortt's dates of all the preceding reigns, both of Judah and Israel. Yet it will be found that the year 841 is equally essential for Lieut.-Col. Shortt's figures for all the *succeeding* kings. This is not a case of "overlapping." It is a definite hitch in the system, the first part depending altogether on 843, the latter part depending altogether on 841. Secondly, Colonel Shortt has failed to note that nineteen districts of Hamath revolted to *Azariah* of Judah in the fourth and fifth of Tiglath Pileser ("Pul"), *i.e.* in 742-0 B.C. (see Schrader, Vol. I, p. 214). Azariah, or Uzziah, was, therefore, alive at that time. In this Colonel Shortt agrees. But since he gives *Ahaz* as beginning to reign in 743 (and this is necessary for his scheme of the reign of Hezekiah), it leaves no place at all for an independent reign of Jotham. I quite agree that Jotham acted as regent for his father during a long period of the latter's reign—until Uzziah's death. But the statement in 2 Chron. xxvi, 23, is too categorical to make it possible to doubt that, however long was his regency, and however short may have been his independent reign, an independent reign of *Jotham* did certainly intervene between the death of Uzziah and the accession of *Ahaz*. "So Uzziah slept with his fathers . . . and *Jotham* his son reigned in his stead," precisely as in the case of his son and successor *Ahaz*, 2 Chron. xxvii, 9. Since, therefore, Uzziah was still alive in 742-0 B.C., it is quite impossible that *Ahaz* should have been reigning at that time.

Much as I should like to find a satisfactory clue to the synchronisms of the Books of Kings, and gladly as I welcome Colonel Shortt's system as a very attractive attempt at this, I feel that once we have to admit the four erroneous items that indicated in Colonel Shortt's table, there is little object in trying to explain away the rest. It is amply sufficient for historical purposes that we have in the line of Judah alone, as derived from the *Chronicles*, a perfectly sound and complete chronology, joining up at both ends and at all ascertainable points in the middle, with that of other nations.

Mr. LEONARD W. KERN wrote : As to the period under discussion, viz., that of the divided monarchy, most are agreed as to the fall of Samaria, there being only a minority of authorities following Bunsen forward to 719 B.C. (and even 709 on occasions) or Kittel backward to 725 B.C., except of course those who would repudiate Ptolemy altogether, and create what I choose to call a "Persian telescope" of anything from 50 to 100 years by the elimination as fabulous of those kings who are not mentioned by name by Josephus. This, however, opens out too wide a field to attempt to traverse to-day, and "Ptolemy on trial" might well be the topic of an adjourned hearing.

I confine myself to criticism of the duration of the kingdom of Israel, which the paper before us puts at 211 years. It purports to deal with Israel as Elliott in his *Horæ Apocalypticæ* (iv, 236) deals with Judah ; that is, by setting down the bare reigns as stated in Scripture, and totalling them, which in itself is at least honest and excusable. But—and it is a very big BUT—Col. Shortt then proceeds to send Pekah to his grave 15 years too soon, and to deny Jotham the 16 years' enjoyment of the throne which Scripture accords him. In my opinion these two shrinkages are co-related and interdependent, and necessitate labelling the scheme with the same name as its learned author. If the Scriptures are to be taken as authoritative, and surely they are, they would appear to raise the following objections to the present scheme : (1) Jotham's accession "succeeded" Uzziah's death (2 Kings xv, 7 and 2 Chron. xxvi, 23) instead of being 27 years before it. (2) Jotham and Pekah were contemporary monarchs of sister kingdoms (2 Kings xv, 37) instead of having an 8 years' gap between them. (3) Pekah must have reigned more than 5 years if Ahaz acceded in his 17th year (2 Kings xvi, 1). (4) Jotham acceded in Pekah's 2nd year (2 Kings xv, 32) when according to Col. Shortt he had been dead 11 years already.

For these reasons I regret that I must reject the scheme. To extend the period so as to give Pekah his full quota does not interfere with the earlier synchronisms of Ahab and Jehu, seeing that Shalmaneser reigned in Assyria for over 30 years acceding about 859 B.C. (*Cambridge Ancient History*) yet it does avoid attributing to the Inspirer of Holy Writ "these errors in the time of Azariah."

## LECTURER'S REPLY.

Dr. Denham complains that I adjust Hebrew chronology by profane history. It is surprising, therefore, to find that he adopts the apocryphal story, out of Josephus, of Jaddua and Alexander, and bases on it a system which upsets the whole course of ancient history. The dates, also, which he gives, for the 483 years, make 482 only.

Mr. Van Lennep's remarks, too, are puzzling. He insists on Biblical dates only, yet he finds a difficulty in Kings, and discards it in favour of Chronicles. I would remind him that, of the two, Kings has much the greater authority. Chronicles is not quoted in the New Testament, nor was it ever, like Kings, regarded as a prophetic book. Nor is his argument as to the "two or three witnesses" convincing. It would apply equally to the statement that Hezekiah was born when his father was eleven years old!

I disclaim any attempt to deal with either Jotham or Ahaz. I have worked up from the Fall of Samaria and down from the battle of Qar-Qar, and find a period of confusion in the leprous time of Uzziah. To deal with it would have taken much too much space, and then have been only tentative.

I cannot agree that Ahab was dead when Qar-Qar was fought, nor have I found any evidence that Ramoth-Gilead was in 855 B.C. But I am very much indebted to Mr. Michell for pointing out a slip, now amended, not in the Table of Kings as he suggests, which runs clearly and smoothly, but in the first paragraph of Section 6. The eighteenth year of Shalmaneser II was 842-1. This, and not 843-2, was Jehu's first year.

There is no question of any slavish reliance on Ptolemy. He can be cut out entirely, and the result would be the same.