THE FREE PRESS.

TUESDAY AFTERNOON, August 9, 1881.

Observations on the Chronology of the Kings of Judah and Israel.

1. It has been held by many eminent and learned chronologists, that the chronological details of the Book of Kings are contradictory, irreconcilable, and inexplicable. The accompanying table is an attempt to show that the difficulties connected with these details are not insurmountable, that the dates are trustworthy, and that there is an exact system of chronology laid down in these books. The plan adopted by the Hebrew chronologist accomplishes three important objects:

1st. It shows the contemporaneous sovereigns in the parallel lines of kings.

2nd. It excludes errors resulting from fragments of years at the beginning or end of reigns.

3rd. It affords a means of checking the total sum of the regnal years of both lines of kings.

The plan by which these important objects are attained is simple. *The year in which a sovereign of the one line ascends the throne is synchronized with the regnal year of the contemporaneous sovereign in the other.* The chronological details are thus interwoven, and a continuous check is maintained throughout the whole period of the monarchy of Israel.

2. Exact synchronistic definitions respecting the regnal era of each king is rendered necessary from the frequent occurrence of joint reigns in both lines of kings. *The recognition of the fact of joint reigns is the key to the whole chronological system of the monarchical period.* The rejection of the evidence in support of joint reigns leads to endless difficulties and inextricable confusion. Notwithstanding this, and in face of the express declaration of scripture and of plain inference, it has been maintained "that the whole "nation of joint reigns has not the "smallest foundation in fact." It would not be difficult to show that a considerable number of associate reigns occurred in both lines of kings. We give two examples:—

(a). In II Kings, vii:16, we read: And in the fifth year of Joram the son of Ahab, King of Israel, Jehoshaphat being then King of Judah, Jehoram, the son of Jehoshaphat, King of Judah, began to reign. Here we have an express statement that a joint reign occurred in the line of Judah.

(b). According to I Kings, xvi:23, Omri began to reign twelve years from the thirty-first year of Asa. From the 29th verse of the same chapter, we learn that Ahab began to reign over Israel in the thirty-eighth year of Asa. The inference is plain that Ahab was associated with his father on the throne of Israel for five years.

3. Five interregna occur in the history of the two monarchies—one in the line of the Kings of Judah and four in the dynasties of Israel.

(a). The interregnum in Judah is one of eleven years between the death of Amaziah and the accession of Uzziah.

Amaziah's fifteenth year corresponds with the first of Jeroboam II, and his twenty-ninth, (or last), with Jeroboam's fifteenth, (II Kings, xiv:23). Uzziah, his son and successor, began to reign in the twenty-seventh year of Jeroboam (II Kings, xv:1). There must, therefore, have been an interregnum in Judah, from the 15th to the 27th year of Jeroboam II, of Israel. As Uzziah was only sixteen years old when he began to reign, he would be about four years old when his father died, and it is probable that during his minority a regency was established.

(b). The first interregnum in Israel is one of three years, synchronous with the 28th, 29th, and 30th years of Asa, King of Judah. Zimri reigned seven days in the 27th year of Asa, (I Kings, xvi:15), and Omri, his successor, did not begin to reign until the 31st of Asa. The interval was no doubt one of civil war between Tibni and Omri, (I Kings, xvi:21-22).

(c). The second interregnum in Israel is one of twenty two solid years, extending from the 16th to the 37th years, inclusive of Uzziah, of Judah—This is evident when we consider that the 41st year of Jeroboam corresponds with the 15th of Uzziah, (II Kings, xv:1), and that the first year of Zachariah, his son and successor, synchronizes with the 38th of Uzziah, (II Kings, xv:8). This may be the period of desolation referred to by Amos (vii:9).

(d). Menahem began to reign in the 39th year of Uzziah, (II Kings, xv:17). His 10th year would end in the 48th of Uzziah, and as Pekahiah did not begin to reign until the 50th year of that King, (II Kings, xv:23), Uzziah's 49th year must have been an interregnum in Israel.

(e). An interregnum of seven solid years occurred between the reigns of Pekah and Hoshea. The 20th or last year of Pekah corresponded to the 4th year of Ahaz, (II Kings, xvi:1). Although Hoshea slew Pekah in 4th year of Ahaz, he did not ascend the throne until the 12th year of that monarch, (II Kings, xvii:1).

4. Admitting the facts of *joint* reigns and *interregna*, the correctness of the chronological details cannot easily be controverted, if it can be shown that the sum of the years from the division of the Hebrew monarchy into two Kingdoms to the destruction of Samaria by Shalmaneser is the same in both kingdoms. The following synchronisms divide this period into three isochronous sub-periods:

1st. The simultaneous accession of Rehoboam and Jeroboam.

2nd The simultaneous accession of Athaliah and Jehu.

3rd. The synchronism of Amaziah's last year with the 15th of Jeroboam II.

4th. The synchronism of Hezekiah's 6th year with the 9th of Hoshea.

The first sub-period is one of 88 years, the second, one of 72 years, and the third, one of 98 years, or a total of 258 for the duration of the kingdom of Israel.

An examination of the table will show the accuracy of the chronological details of each sub-period. For the first sub-period, it will be necessary to prove that the sum of the years from the accession of Rehoboam to the assassination of Ahaziah is equal to the sum of the years from the accession of Jeroboam to the assassination of Jehoram.

Not counting the years of joint reign twice, we have the following summary:

KINGS OF JUDAH.		KINGS OF ISRAEL.	
1. Rehoboam	17 yrs.	1. Jeroboam and 2. Nadab.	22 yrs.
2. Abijam and Asa.	3 "	3. Basha and Elah.	23 "
3. Asa and Jehoshaphat	19 "	4. Elah and 5. Zimri.	1 yr.
4. Jehoshaphat and Jehoram.	21 "	Interregnum.	3 yrs.
5. Jehoram and 6. Ahaziah.	4 "	6. Omri and Ahab.	12 "
		7. Ahab.	
		8. Ahaziah and Jehoram.	17 "
		9. Jehoram.	10 "
Total.	88 years.	Total.	88 years.

In a similar manner the second and third sub-periods can be shown to be correct.

The kingdom of Israel lasted from B. C. 976 to 719, and the Kingdom of Judah from B. C. 976 to 586.

R. LITTLE.

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