

ARTICLE II.

SACRED CHRONOLOGY.

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The uncertainty of ancient chronology and the want of agreement among chronologists have passed into a proverb. Scaliger complains that no two systems could be found to agree, and that he rose from the study more doubtful than ever.

It was the fond hope of Lord Bacon that "by persevering industry and scrupulous attention to genealogies, monuments, inscriptions, names, letters, traditions and archives, fragments of history and scattered passages from rare books on very different subjects, a venerable tablet might be preserved from the shipwreck of time; a work operose and painful to the author, but extremely delightful for the reader," — a plan worthy of Bacon's comprehensive mind to conceive, but alas! we fear, never to be realized.

Hales is persuaded that the whole of sacred chronology can be reduced to a simple, uniform, and consistent system, and the whole brought to the highest degree of probability, bordering on moral certainty. From an attentive examination of his Analysis, we think that he has failed, from want of sufficient soundness of judgment, to realize his own conception. While his work contains a vast amount of information, it is characterized by rashness of opinion and by unsound interpretations of Scripture. We are sorry to damp sanguine hopes of success in the attainment of certainty in this science; but when we remember that Sir Isaac Newton spent a great part of the last thirty years of his life in this study, and wrote over his system *sixteen* times¹ without settling the

¹ Whiston in his life says that Sir Isaac wrote out *eighteen* copies with his own hand, differing slightly from each other.

disputed points, and that this subject has exercised the great minds of an Usher, Scaliger, and Playfair, without much success, we dare not hope that, where they have failed, others will succeed. As long as we are deficient in historical and chronological data, so long the difficulty will remain. Our object will be, to exhibit what can be known as to the most important epochs in sacred and profane chronology, and to give general information on the subject, which is to be found scattered in a number of works, not generally accessible. Our hope is that this sketch may serve to some as an introduction to the study, and prepare the way for its further profitable investigation. It was in vain that we looked for a similar guide, when commencing the study. If it but teaches us how narrow is the horizon which bounds human investigation, of what an immense deal we are ignorant, and where information can be found, the lesson will not be wholly without profit. If we are ignorant of the great events which happened before we were born, we are, as Cicero tells us, always children. "Nescire enim quid antea quam natus sis, acciderit, id est semper esse puerum." — De Orat. Lib. II. 13, 14.

We have spoken of the want of agreement among chronologists. In proof of it we might mention that there are on record no less than *three hundred* different opinions as to the era of the creation, their greatest difference being no less than 3268 years. The amount of variation as to the date of the Deluge is no less than 1142 years, and of the period from the Exodus to the building of Solomon's temple 262 years. And in an event so recent and important as the nativity of our Saviour, there is a difference of some ten years.

Unfortunately, ancient chronology had no fixed and uniform era. Had there been such a one from the beginning, the confusion in which the subject is now involved might have been prevented.

It would require an observation of many years, and considerable knowledge of astronomy, to determine the true year, and without this no scientific system can be constructed. The lunar year of 354 days was in use till the time of

Julius Cæsar. He first introduced the solar year, and began it in January. To make up for the quarter of a day by which it exceeded 365 days, he inserted a day in every fourth year, which was called Bissextile or Leap Year. The confusion had become so great before this simple and ingenious mode of reckoning was adopted, that May had fallen back into March, and the vernal equinox fell on the ides of May instead of the 23d of March; and thus the civil months no longer corresponded to the proper seasons of the year, but had shifted their places.

Different nations have adopted different eras, which continuing for a limited period, have created great embarrassment in their comparison. The earliest mode of computing considerable periods of time was by generations. In the Hebrew language we find the word *generations* put for history. We have a specimen of this in the fifth and eleventh chapters of Genesis. The next mode was by reigns, a more variable and uncertain mode than even by generations. As Newton well says: "kings are succeeded not only by their eldest sons, but by their brothers; sometimes they are slain or deposed, so that it is very difficult to determine the average duration of reigns. There may be also minorities and interregna." There would be next a tendency to reckon from the date of any remarkable event, such as the Institution of the Olympic games and the Foundation of Rome. As the only mode of reckoning by the Greeks for so long a period was by Olympiads, they deserve here some notice. They were celebrated every four years or in the first month of the fifth year, and continued for five successive days. On each of these days were celebrated the different games of leaping, running, throwing the discus, darting, and wrestling. Not only did the inhabitants of Greece resort to Olympia, where they were held, but those of other countries. The first commenced July 19, B. C. 776, and we find them mentioned as late as A. D. 65.

The Romans reckoned from the foundation of Rome, which took place July 5, B. C. 753. In fixing this day as the true date of the founding of Rome, we have an admira-

ble illustration of the application of Astronomy to history. Livy says, "there was a total eclipse of the sun A. U. C. 566." Cicero and Plutarch both testify that there was a total eclipse on the day of the founding of Rome. Astronomers have demonstrated that there was a total eclipse visible at Rome July 5, B. C. 753.

But it is with sacred chronology that we are now most concerned; and, when we come to examine the most ancient documents, we find the Hebrew and Septuagint chronologies differing from each other more than 1300 years.

The Septuagint genealogies exhibit so uniform and systematic a deviation from the Hebrew text, as to lead us to suspect that they have been tampered with, to make them conform to current chronological opinions and to remove difficulties which lie in the way of the Hebrew. In the Septuagint no son is born before the father is 150 years of age. In case the Hebrew makes him out less, they add a century and subtract it from the residue of his life, so that they both agree in the sum total of their lives. Augustine observed the uniformity of the variation, and ascribed it to design, though ignorant of its cause; "*ignoro qua ratione sit factum. Videtur habere quandam, si dici potest, error ipse constantiam; nec casum redolet sed industriam.*"¹ By thus making the father a century older before paternity than the Hebrew, in the first *five* generations, and also in the *seventh*, and adding six years to Lamech's age before paternity, the Septuagint increases the interval between the creation and Deluge 606 years. In Jared's genealogy, the Hebrew and Septuagint agree, and do not differ, according to some MSS. of the Septuagint, in Methuselah's. In the post-diluvian genealogies, the Septuagint also adds a century to every generation after Shem to Nahor. It inserts Cainan, 130 years, and adds 50 years to Nahor, and thus adds to the Hebrew 780 years, in the period from the Deluge to Abra-

¹ Augustine: In his autem continuatur ipsius *mendositatis similitudo*; ita ut ante genitum filium qui ordini inseritur, alibi supersint centum anni, alibi desint; post genitum autem, ubi deerant supersint, ubi supererant desint, ut summa conveniat. Et hoc in *prima, secunda, tertia, quarta, quinta, septima* generatione invenitur.

ham. The cause assigned by Hales, why the Hebrew chronology has been shortened, that it was done to invalidate a prediction or tradition among the Jews, that the Messiah was to come in the sixth Millennium, and that appearing as he did in the fifth, he could not be the true Messiah, is very improbable; and the time he fixes upon for the interpolation, A. D. 130, is equally so. When so many copies were in existence, it would be quite out of the question. It would shake our confidence in the scrupulous care of the Jews, in preserving inviolate the lively oracles of God, and would go far in undermining our belief in the integrity of the Hebrew text. Why did they not alter the seventy weeks of Daniel for the same reason? To increase the difficulty, Josephus has a chronology of his own, sometimes agreeing with the Hebrew and sometimes with the Septuagint. Where he agrees with the Hebrew, Hales thinks his text has been interpolated; Michaelis thinks the same is true of his text where he agrees with the Septuagint. As his text now stands, he is certainly self-contradictory. His editors have been very careless, and there have been many errors of transcribers. The recovery of his genuine computation is probably out of the question.

The weight of antiquity and of the earliest fathers, with the exception of Origen and Jerome, the most capable of deciding the point, was in favor of the Septuagint. This may be explained from the general ignorance of the Hebrew original, and the extensive circulation and use of the Septuagint. The longer chronology was adopted in the church of Rome till the time of Bede. It was rejected subsequently, and Petavius is now the standard of the church of Rome. The Septuagint chronology has been defended by Walton, Vossius, Houbigant, Pezronius, Hudson, Whiston, Kennicott, Jackson, Hales; while Gesenius, Michaelis, Scaliger, Petavius, Usher, Newton, Kennedy, Playfair, Stuart, have adopted the Hebrew.

Gesenius, in his dissertation on the Samaritan Pentateuch¹ speaks of the departure of the Samaritan and Septu-

¹ Page 48.

agint from the Hebrew as the height of audacity; "eo processerunt audaciæ concinnatores Alexandrini et Samaritani, ut unusquisque textum Hebræum secundum commenta sua chronologica, modo similia, modo sibi invicem opposita, refigere non dubitaverit." Michaelis¹ is quite abusive of the Septuagint. He shows that according to it Methuselah survived the Deluge fourteen years; for he lived 167 years before the birth of Lamech and 802 after. Now Noah was born when Lamech was 188 years old, and the Deluge took place when Noah was 600 years old, which add, and you have 788. Subtract this from 802 years, which Methuselah lived after Lamech, and you have fourteen years.

Augustine detected this error, and ascribes it to the "mendositas codicum," for some Greek MSS. have differently divided the years of Methuselah's life, and make him out to have been 187 years old at the birth of Lamech, which would leave 782 after, and thus he would have died six years before the Deluge. The Hebrew, says Michaelis, takes a middle and independent course between the Septuagint and Samaritan text, and is supported by the Samaritan where that differs from the Greek. In case three witnesses deposed differently to facts, and one of them should be invariably supported either by one or the other, where they differed from each other, which would you believe? Prof. Stuart says: "the Septuagint chronology cannot compete with the Hebrew as to its claim for credence." We cannot believe that the Hebrew has been interpolated. The Septuagint was far more exposed to it, and it was probably done by the translators.

Having disposed of this difficulty, we meet with still another when we come to the Exodus of the Israelites. In order to determine the date of the Exodus, we must know how long they were in Egypt.

From Abraham to the descent into Egypt was 215 years; for Isaac was born when Abraham was 100 years old; from

¹ Michaelis *Ante Diluvian Chronology*. translated in *Biblical Repository*, July 1841.

which subtract seventy-five, his age at his call, and there remains twenty-five. Esau and Jacob were born when Isaac was sixty years old; Jacob was 130 years old at the descent, which add $25+60+130=215$.

From the descent to the Exodus the Hebrew and Septuagint are again at issue. In Exodus xii. 40 the Hebrew reads: "Now the sojourning of the children of Israel, who dwelt in Egypt, was 430 years;" with this statement, Gen. xv. 13: "They shall afflict them four hundred years," and Acts vii. 6: "They shall entreat them evil four hundred years, agree." But the Septuagint, Ex. xii. 40, adds: *They and their fathers in the land of Egypt and in the land of Canaan*; so also the Samaritan and Josephus. Gesenius remarks on this addition of the Septuagint: "There is another correction of the Hebrew text from the chronological system of later Jewish critics, who cannot bring themselves to believe that there were only four generations for 400 years, as appears from Ex. vi. 15-19, Num. xxvi. 58, 60. With them some modern critics, Morinus, Cappellus, Kennicott, Houbigant and Geddes, fond of emendation, agree. But Simon, Koppe, Michaelis, Jahn, and Vater have seen the truth and maintained the Hebrew text. That the passage Gen. xv. 13: "They shall afflict them 400 years," refers to the descendants of Jacob and to the bondage in Egypt, is unquestionable. In Gen. xv. 16 it is said: "But in the fourth generation they shall come hither again," — which shows that at that period a generation was estimated at 100 years, which agrees with the genealogies in Exodus and Numbers, before referred to, in which only four generations are reckoned from Levi to Moses. Further, who will believe that seventy men, who came down with Jacob into Egypt, would increase in 215 years to 600,000? It has been sometimes said that Paul in Galatians iii. 17, where he says that the law was 430 years after the covenant, endorses the Septuagint chronology. But it may be replied to this that the covenant was not only made with Abraham, but renewed with Isaac and Jacob, and that it is to the renewal with Jacob that Paul refers. Augustine main-

tains that Paul adopts the Septuagint chronology. Calvin follows the Septuagint in his commentary on Gen. xv. 13: "Ex sexto capite colligere promptum sit, non ultra ducentos et triginta annos, vel circiter, elapsos esse, ex quo descendit illuc Jacob usque ad liberationem." Lightfoot (Vol. II, 355) remarks: "From the giving of the promise to Abraham to the deliverance out of Egypt were 430 years." This sum of years divided itself into two equal parts; for half of it was spent before their going into Egypt, and half of it in their being there; for they spent in Egypt ninety-four years before the death of Levi, and 121 after; for Levi and Joseph were born in Jacob's second apprenticeship. Levi was forty-three years old at the descent, and from Exodus vi. 16, lived 137 years; so that they were there ninety-four years before his death, and from the genealogies, Exodus vi., 121 years after.

Köppen¹ maintains that the residence in Egypt was 215 years; for Joseph lived seventy-one years after the descent, being thirty-nine years old at that time, and he died at the age of 110 years. From Joseph's death till Moses's birth was sixty-four years; from Moses's birth to the Exodus, eighty years, which add, $71+64+80=215$. But how do we know that it was sixty-four years from Joseph's death to Moses's birth? It is said, Exodus i. 6, that the oppression began after Joseph died and all that generation. Kohath (Gen. xlvi. 11) was dead. He was 133 years old at his death, and survived Joseph sixty years. Moses, Köppen assumes, was born very soon after, when the oppression was at its height, say four years.

In summing up the authorities on both sides, we find Gesenius, Michaelis, Scaliger, Petavius, Usher, Newton, Kennedy, Playfair, Koppe, Jahn, Vater, Stuart, Jost, Millman, have adopted the Hebrew reckoning of 430 years as the length of the residence in Egypt; while Walton, Vossius, Houbigant, Hales, Pezronius, Calvin, Lightfoot, Hudson, Whiston, Kennicott, Jackson, Hammond, Whitby, Pat-

¹ Köppen, Bibel, Vol. I. p. 203.

rick, Doddridge, Geddes, have held to the shorter period of 215 years.

The most difficult of all chronological questions, according to Houbigant, now remains. How long was the period from the Exodus to the building of Solomon's temple? In 1 Kings vi. 1 we read: "And it came to pass in the four hundred and eightieth year after the children of Israel were come out of Egypt, in the fourth year of Solomon's reign over Israel, he began to build the house of the Lord." But in Acts xiii. 20 it is said: "God gave them judges for the space of about 450 years, until Samuel, the prophet." If the last statement is correct, then we must add to the 450 years the age of Moses and Joshua, sixty-five years, and the reigns of Saul and David, each forty years, and four years of Solomon's, eighty-four years, which will give us 599 years as the period from the Exodus to the temple. If we subtract the age of Moses and Joshua and reigns of David and Saul from 480, we have only 331 years for the time of the judges. If we add up the number of years each of the judges ruled, we have 500 years. So great are these difficulties that Hales, Kuinoel and others have regarded the Hebrew in 1 Kings vi. 1 as an error of the transcriber. In favor of this, Josephus computes the same period at 592 years. The Chinese Jews¹ who emigrated to China, A. D. 73, have the reading 592.

Lightfoot² thus reconciles Kings and Acts: "The Judges were for 299 years; the oppressors 111 years, and Eli's administration was forty years, until Samuel, the prophet." We might add that the Septuagint, 1 Kings vi. 1, reads 440, and Aquila, Symmachus, Theodotion, 490.

We come now to the era of the nativity of our Lord; and here we find a surprising diversity of opinions. We subjoin a table of these differences:

Tillemont, Priestly,	7 B. C.
Kepler, Dodwell, and Winer,	6 B. C.
Chrysostom, Petavius, Prideaux, Playfair, Hales,	5 B. C.

¹ Jahn, Heb. Comm., p. 80.
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² Vol. II. 164.

Usher, Calmet,	4 B. C.
Irenæus, Tertullian, Clem, Alex., Eusebius, Syncellus, Baronus,	3 B. C.
Epiphanius, Jerome, Bede, Scaliger,	2 B. C.
Dionysius, Luther,	1 B. C.

The Christian era was introduced by Dionysius Exiguus, a Roman abbot, and Scythian by birth, who flourished in the reign of Justinian. Before his time the era of Diocletian was in use; as his memory, in consequence of his persecutions, was abhorred by Christians, Dionysius was led to change the era. He was led to date the year of the nativity A. U. C. 753, four years too late, from Luke's account that John the Baptist began his ministry in the fifteenth year of the reign of Tiberius, and that Jesus at his baptism "was beginning to be about thirty years of age." For Tiberius succeeded Augustus at his death, U. C. 767; his fifteenth year was then U. C. 782, from which subtract the year of the nativity, 753, and the remainder is twenty-nine years complete. But Jesus was born, according to Matthew, before Herod's death, which took place, according to Josephus, just before the passover, U. C. 750. Some have maintained that the fifteenth year of Tiberius was to be reckoned from his admission by Augustus into the partnership of the government with him. But Ideler and Hengstenberg¹ have shown that history knows no other mode of reckoning than from the beginning of his actual reign, after the death of Augustus.

In the ninth chapter of Daniel it is predicted that from the issue of the decree to rebuild Jerusalem to Messiah's public appearance would be sixty-nine sevens of years, 483 years. The terminus a quo of this prophecy has been shown by Hengstenberg to have been 455 B. C. or 299 U. C., to which add 483, and we have 782 U. C. as the year of Christ's public appearance. Hengstenberg remarks: "Among all the current chronological opinions of this period, not one differs over ten years from the prophecy. The

¹ Hengstenberg's *Christology*, Vol. II. 393, 394. Stuart on *Prophecy*, p. 81. Winer, *Real-Lexicon*, Art. Jesus.

only one among them which is correct, makes the prophecy and history correspond with each other even to a year." Münter and Ideler have attempted to determine the year of the nativity by ingenious but uncertain astronomical calculations. Winer in his *Real-Lexicon* has fixed upon the year 747 as the true date of the nativity. The subject has been fully discussed by Wieseler in an Article in the *Bibliotheca Sacra*, vol. 3, 166, and we need not add anything more.

As to the duration of Christ's ministry and the year of the crucifixion, there has been much diversity of opinion. Eusebius declares that the whole period of our Saviour's teaching and working miracles was three years and a half, and this appears from a critical examination of John's gospel.

Hengstenberg (vol. 2, 408) has followed the suggestion of Eusebius, and has shown in opposition to Hug, Tholuck, Winer, and Lücke, that the feast spoken of in John v. 1 was not the feast of Purim but that of the Passover. It is called a feast of the Jews to show its importance. There was a Sabbath during it, for the sick man was healed on a Sabbath. It is not to be supposed that Jesus would go up to a civil feast, and neglect the passover a month later.

If we could determine in what year between A. D. 28 and A. D. 37 the passover occurred on Thursday or Friday, we might ascertain the year of our Saviour's crucifixion. If we suppose our Saviour anticipated the passover by a day, it will fall on Friday. If he partook of it at the legal time, then it will fall on Thursday. Roger Bacon found by computation that the paschal full moon, A. D. 33, fell on Friday; and this led him and Scaliger, Usher, Pearson, and Newton to conclude that this was the year of the crucifixion. Ferguson, in his *Astronomy*, has shown that in A. D. 30, there was a paschal full moon on Thursday, April 6, which Bengel thought was the true date. Usher adopts April 3, as the true date of the crucifixion.

We will not enter upon the vexed question, whether our Lord anticipated the legal time of the passover by a day.

It has been fully discussed by Rauch,¹ Tholuck in his Commentary on John, Hengstenberg on the Pentateuch, vol. 2, 308, Robinson's Harmony, p. 212, De Wette's Studien und Kritiken for 1834, p. 939, Prot. E. Q. Review, 1. 190, an Essay by Dr. Turner.

ARTICLE III.

GEOLOGICAL AND THEOLOGICAL ANALOGIES.

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THE precise force and value of analogical reasonings from the physical world to the truths of Revelation, are not yet clearly defined. It is even doubted by some whether they deserve any higher name than mere illustrations. But illustrations are sometimes arguments in their effect upon the understanding. They present solid truth in a clearer light, and no argument can do more. Some benefits at least result from a familiarity with such analogies; and it would be as unwise in us not to avail ourselves of their proper uses, as it would be to try to press them beyond those uses.

To a mind troubled about certain truths of the Scriptures, it is a substantial relief to find that the same sort and quality of difficulty runs through the kingdom of Nature also. This indeed does not solve the first difficulty; in one sense it enlarges it; but in showing that it is wide-spread, it shows that it is not peculiar to the Scriptures, but is a something which runs through the various departments of the creation, and therefore must have been comprehended in the original perfect plan of the creation. Convinced of this, we then fall back upon our confidence in the fundamental wisdom and benevolence of the Creator. As our confidence in the gen-

¹ Biblical Repository, Vol. IV. 108.