

the results thus gained. It is natural for those who reverence the Bible and are profoundly convinced of its Divine authority to follow its guidance in all departments of truth. It is also natural that they should prefer to understand its statements in the simple uncritical way in which they have always read them. But it cannot be repeated too often that the Bible was not given with a view to scientific instruction, and that all statements which seem to bear on matters of that character are given solely for their religious value, and in the conventional language of the day. In this case the genealogy is given apparently for the purpose of tracing the descent of the chosen people and ultimately of the Messiah. But so far as that purpose is concerned, it matters nothing, whether their lives should be found to be abnormally long or only of the average duration. This very genealogy appears twice again in the Bible, viz., in the first chapter of Chronicles and in the third chapter of Luke's gospel. In both cases the ages are omitted altogether as of no account. Nothing but stubbornness or an unwillingness to own that he may possibly have been mistaken will prevent the theologian from looking at the matter a second time in order to see whether he has not been too hasty in his deductions from Bible statements or too superficial in his interpretation of Bible phrases. We have always to take into account the possibility that we have been reading our own ideas into the words and understanding them in a different way from what the writer intended. Some simple suggestion may solve the whole difficulty and remove the apparent contradiction. This has occurred so often in the past history of the conflict between the Bible and science, that one is encouraged to inquire whether it may not be the case here also.

Suggestions of this kind have not been wanting. A few of them are worth consideration.

Some have endeavored to escape from the difficulty by supposing that the figures have been changed by the copyists in the process of transcription. None of the existing manuscripts