

garding the ages given as very improbable. It is not known that any animal of any species has ever lived to the age of Methuselah with his nine hundred and sixty-nine years, or to anything remotely approaching it. So far as is shown by anthropology or archaeology, no material change has taken place in man's structure since his appearance on the earth. The very earliest remains bear the closest resemblance to existing specimens. It is true that one primitive skeleton has been found in France of rather unusual size, requiring us to suppose that the man must have been about seven feet high. But there is nothing to prove that this was the rule then any more than now. Even if it were, it would not account for the extraordinary difference in the duration of life. The probabilities are that the limit of human existence has always been very much what it is now. A few succeed in passing the century mark, but they are very few, and the longest lives that can be authenticated by any reasonably good evidence is less than half the very shortest in the antediluvian list.

Theologians and commentators as a rule, have not taken the difficulty presented by these considerations very seriously. They have for the most part interpreted the Biblical statements in a purely literal manner and have contented themselves with saying that science is not in a position to disprove the statements made regarding the extraordinary longevity of these antediluvians. They suppose that the physiological conditions at that time may have been far more favorable for long life than at any later period or that the vigor of the original paradise state was only gradually exhausted. "The principles of modern physiology," says one writer, "are not applicable in such a case, for we are so entirely ignorant of the condition of mankind in an age so remote, and a state of the world so completely separated by an impassable wall from later ages, that we are not warranted to judge by present analogies."

Such a method of dealing with the matter can hardly be regarded, however, as satisfactory, save to those who are very anxious to be satisfied that the Biblical statements, as inter-