

for everything that we certainly know regarding the history of the remote past.

On the other hand, it is coming to be recognized that, while the Biblical figures are valuable as far as they go, it is by no means certain that the data furnished by them are sufficient to enable us to construct a complete chronology of the world. They are certainly not given for any such purpose, and it is always precarious to take statements, especially figures, for a different purpose from that for which they are given. The Biblical figures certainly seem, on the face of them, to be continuous. But then the genealogies are also continuous on the face of them, while we know that in reality they are not so. Generations are freely omitted, not from ignorance or any wrong intent, but simply to make them fit into a scheme that may be more or less artificial. Take, for instance, the genealogy of Christ, as given in the first chapter of Matthew's gospel, so neatly grouped into sections of fourteen generations each. It is sufficient for the writer's purpose, and probably misled no one at the time. But we know from the parallel genealogies in the Old Testament, which he must have had before him, that it would be wholly useless as a basis for any kind of chronological estimate on account of its numerous omissions. If this be true at a point where we can test it, the presumption is that it is true also at other points where we have no means of doing so. Hence it must be always with very considerable reserve that we accept any system of chronology resting upon these data. The total period may easily be longer than that found by adding up the items given, even if we accept these as wholly correct. The Bible was not given to teach chronology any more than it was given to teach astronomy or geology. Our deductions from its casual and apparent statements on these subjects must always be checked by the results of scientific investigation, arrived at by the usual methods. If the various sciences that bear on the antiquity of the human race should in the long run settle down upon any period greater than that which the Bible seems to suggest,