

back we go the more artificial and compressed the genealogies are.

Such an artificial arrangement would of course be adopted without any intention to deceive or misrepresent the facts. However unfamiliar it may be to us, at the time it was written it would probably deceive nobody. With us, comparatively little attention is given to family genealogies, and in the arrangement of them there is almost no technical terminology. But wherever the succession to real estate is determined by rigid laws of entail, as was the case among the Jews, such a terminology would be in regular use and would be understood by everybody without any special pains to interpret it. If we could think ourselves back into their situation, what must seem to us a non-natural meaning would often suggest itself to us as the only possible intention of the writer.* It is true the Talmud takes these statements literally, but there is no clear evidence that the earlier canonical writers did so. Some few passages have been alleged, such as Gen. 47 : 9; Ps. 90 : 10; Is. 65 : 20; but a glance at them will show that they do not necessarily carry any such implication. Gen. 6 : 3 is now generally taken as indicating the respite that should be afforded for repentance before the flood actually came. With the other sacred writers the plainest indication of the technical and artificial character of these genealogies was the fact that taken literally, they lengthened the duration of human life greatly beyond the bounds of all ordinary experience. To us the same fact may well be equally suggestive and at the same time deliver us from a wholly gratuitous conflict with modern science.