

ever that any ancient people ever counted long periods by lunations.

A third and more probable method of explanation is to regard the names in the genealogy as representing successive dynasties rather than individuals, each dynasty being summed up under one leading characteristic name, and lasting for centuries, though the individuals composing it enjoyed no more than the average longevity.

Such an interpretation of the genealogy is undoubtedly a little startling at first sight, and is perhaps not altogether free from difficulty. It is not the obvious meaning of the language and probably would not have occurred to any one in modern times had it not been for the scientific difficulty which the literal meaning involves. But an examination of the genealogical tables of the Bible shows that they are rarely to be taken in their strict literal meaning. All such terms as "begat," "father of," "son of," indicating descent, used so frequently in them, had evidently from the very earliest times come to be used as technical terms, implying relationship only in a broad general way, without much regard to their strict etymological meaning. Generations are freely omitted without any hint whatever that they are so, and single names stand for whole clans or lines. In the tenth chapter of Genesis we have a table of descent from the sons of Noah in which it is now pretty generally admitted that every name stands for a people, and in which the grouping is probably based on geographical distribution rather than on actual blood relationship. Altogether apart from genealogical tables, David sometimes means the family line of Davidic kings. Without any greater violence to the meaning of familiar terms, this antediluvian genealogy might easily have been intended to give us in brief outline the succession of ruling families that held sway throughout that long bygone age. It is at least suggestive of some artificiality in the arrangement when we observe that there are ten generations from Adam to Noah and exactly ten more from Shem to Abram. It is only what we might expect to find if the further