

of the Bible in any language are earlier than the fourth century of the Christian era, and this genealogy must have been copied and re-copied many times before that. Numbers are particularly liable to undergo change in this process. In all our existing manuscripts these numbers are written out in full, but for other purposes numbers have usually in Hebrew been expressed by the letters of the alphabet, and it is quite possible that this may have been the earlier practice in the text of the Bible as well as elsewhere. A copyist who had come under the influence of some current view as to the length of life in the earliest times might make the slight change necessary to have the text conform to this, and do it in all good faith. Once the change was made, it would be easily perpetuated under like influence. Attention has already, in the previous paper, been called to the fact that in these very genealogies the figures are given differently by the Hebrew text, the Samaritan version, and the Greek Septuagint, while a further variation is found in Josephus. This in itself is certainly suspicious as showing that liberties have been taken somewhere. But on the other hand, all four sets of figures, though differing by many hundreds of years from each other, agree in apparently making man's life then at least ten times as long as it is now. Their agreement on that point rather indicates that whatever the original may have been, it suggested something like that. Certainly, if the figures were raised by any copyist it must have been at a very early period—long before any of these versions were made.

Others have adopted the view that the years in this table are not solar years like ours, but lunations representing a period when time was counted by the moon. Therefore to get the real length of their lives, we must divide them all by twelve or thirteen. This would remove all difficulty, especially if we take the numbers in the Greek version. But unfortunately for the theory, the word in the original is the regular word everywhere used for the ordinary solar year, and there is no evidence what-