

of genealogical tables; and nothing can be clearer than that it is precarious in the highest degree to draw chronological inferences from genealogical tables. . . .

These genealogies must be esteemed trustworthy for the purposes for which they are recorded, but they cannot safely be pressed into use for other purposes for which they were not intended, and for which they are not adapted. In particular, it is clear that the genealogical purposes for which the genealogies were given, did not require a complete record of all the generations through which the descent of the persons to whom they are assigned runs; but only an adequate indication of the particular line through which the descent in question comes. Accordingly it is found on examination that the genealogies of Scripture are freely compressed for all sorts of purposes; and that it can seldom be confidently affirmed that they contain a complete record of the whole series of generations, while it is often obvious that a very large number are omitted. There is no reason inherent in the nature of the Scriptural genealogies why a genealogy of ten recorded links, as each of those in Genesis v. and xi. is, may not represent an actual descent of a hundred or a thousand or ten thousand links. The point established by the table is not that these are all the links which intervened between the beginning and the closing names, but that this is the line of descent through which one traces back to or down to the other.

A sufficient illustration of the freedom with which the links in the genealogies are dealt with in the Biblical usage is afforded by the two genealogies of our Lord which are given in the first chapter of the Gospel of Matthew. For it is to be noted that there are two genealogies of Jesus given in this chapter, differing greatly from one another in fullness of record, no doubt, but in no respect either in trustworthiness or in principle of record. The one is found in the first verse, and traces Jesus back to Abraham. The other is found in verses 2-17, and expands this same genealogy into forty-two links, divided for purposes of symmetrical record and easy memorizing into a three-fold scheme of fourteen generations each. And not even is this longer record a complete one. A comparison with the parallel records in the Old Testament will quickly reveal the fact that the three kings, Ahaziah, Joash, and Amaziah are passed over and Joram is said to have begotten Uzziah his great-great-grandson. The other genealogies of Scripture present similar phenomena; and as they are carefully scrutinized, it becomes ever clearer that as they do not pretend to give complete lists of generations, they cannot be intended to supply a basis for chronological calculation, and it is illegitimate and misleading to attempt to use them for that purpose. The reduction for extraneous reasons