

THE
PRINCETON REVIEW.

JANUARY, 1861.

No. I.

ARTICLE I.—*The State of the Country.*

THERE are periods in the history of every nation when its destiny for ages may be determined by the events of an hour. There are occasions when political questions rise into the sphere of morals and religion; when the rule for political action is to be sought, not in considerations of state policy, but in the law of God. On such occasions the distinction between secular and religious journals is obliterated. When the question to be decided turns on moral principles, when reason, conscience, and religious sentiment are to be addressed, it is the privilege and duty of all who have access in any way to the public ear, to endeavour to allay unholy feeling, and to bring truth to bear on the minds of their fellow-citizens. If any other consideration be needed to justify the discussion, in these pages, of the disruption of this great confederacy, it may be found, not only in the portentous consequences of such disruption to the welfare and happiness of the country and to the general interests of the world, but also in its bearing on the church of Christ and the progress of his kingdom. Until within a few years there was no diversity of opinion on this subject. It was admitted that the value of the union of these states did not admit of calculation. As no man allowed himself to count the worth of

ART. II.—*Antiquity of the Book of Genesis.*

IN considering the Pentateuch in a literary and historical point of view, the most obvious remark to be made is, that its first book is anonymous, while in the other four the writer is carefully and repeatedly named. And this fact is the more worthy of notice, inasmuch as that first book is first not only in order, but also in respect to time.

To the value of Scripture it no way imports who the original writer was. The authority of inspiration is of equal weight without the sanction of a human name. Can it be determined who penned the book of Job, or of Judges, or of Chronicles, or some of the most beautiful and affecting of the Psalms? and are those parts of Scripture of inferior weight because of that unsettled question? Is a psalm less the dictate of inspiration if not penned by David? It is not the human authorship which confers the authority of inspiration; but, on the contrary, it is inspiration which gives his weight to any of the prophets, no matter what his name. The word of God bears its own stamp, and stands in no need of a voucher in any name of human renown. There is that in it and about it whereby it is as truly distinguished from a work of the human mind, as a natural rose is distinguishable from an artificial one, or a natural landscape from one arrayed according to the laws of art. As the silent declaration of Deity rises from nature, so does it from revelation, self-sustained and sustaining its defenders, while borrowing nothing from them. Whether we know, or do not know, the name and genealogy of God's human instrument in the case, is, in respect to scriptural authority, a matter of very little moment. Where the name of the writer has been recorded, and we know about him, in other connections, it is certainly gratifying to feel that we have a sort of personal acquaintance with one so favoured of God; and yet it is undoubtedly not without a valuable design that the names of several Scripture writers have been withheld.

The book of Genesis came down from antiquity to the Hebrew nation with their laws, and through the hands of the

lawgiver, and was, therefore, very naturally, by them classed under the same head; but that traditional classification is not entitled to forbid its full weight to the obvious fact that the book is anonymous. Yet, anonymous as it is, no other portion of Scripture bears the mark of Divine inspiration more legibly impressed upon it than the book of Genesis. The aroma of the early time is about it—the time when men of simple but princely manners and elevated piety held oral communion with God; and the passage with which it opens is not only obviously revelation, but also the sublimest in human language. The man of science, who honestly studies its first chapter, the Christian, who reads its narrative of the fall of man and the words of promise to the seed of Abraham, and considers its relation to the whole plan of redemption, stands in no need of a human voucher for its Divine origin. The question of its authorship is merely one of literary history; but, under that head, a question of no common interest.

Moses is a writer very careful about affixing his name to what he writes. The other books of the Pentateuch consist of a great number of subdivisions or topics, and to almost every several one of them is the name of Moses attached, and to all that contain revelations, together with the authority of God, as “The Lord spake unto Moses,” or, “Moses wrote this law,” or some equivalent form of expression. And certainly if it was to him that God revealed the order of creation, or of primal mankind, there was the best of reasons for introducing that revelation with his usual sanction. Hence, we remark with the greater cogency, that in not one of the headings of the parts of Genesis, nor anywhere in their contents, does the name of Moses appear.

That the book was transmitted through the hands of Moses is a matter that admits of no dispute; but what he did for it must be determined otherwise than by mere tradition, however ancient that may be. Unsupported tradition is not competent to establish original authorship in a case of this kind. Because, in the first place, the book of Genesis treats of matters which had all taken place ages before Moses was born; its latest subjects were to him antiquity; and, secondly, the account which it gives of many events is circumstantial and personally

characteristic, descending even to details of conversations and descriptions of personal attitudes and incidents, which none could be cognizant of but the parties concerned. The very latest event mentioned in Genesis had occurred, at the shortest estimate, more than half a century before Moses was born; and the rest of its human history covers a period extending to more than two thousand years of a prior antiquity; the earlier parts of it standing in relation to Moses, chronologically, as the times of Homer and Hesiod and Thales stand to ours. It is clear that he could not have been the original author of such a history by any natural means. The book could have come to his hands in only one of four ways. Either the whole was revealed to him supernaturally; or its materials came down to him on the stream of tradition; or they were kept in detached records—written monuments of one kind or another, from which he composed the work; or, finally, the whole is an historical series, preserved in the usual historical way, and existing in its original historical integrity.

In the first place, the book of Genesis presents none of the features of a vision. Its simple directness, and plain daylight outlines, are such that, if it is a vision, it has no parallel in the rest of Scripture. In all the declared visions of the prophets there is certainly nothing like it.

Neither is it according to the analogy of Scripture to assume a retrospective revelation of human events. God has not, in subsequent time, suffered ages of important progress in the history of redemption to pass by unrecorded, and to be all forgotten, and then recalled them in a vision to some individual, thereby substituting the testimony of one person for that of whole generations. Other steps in the unfolding of the plan of redemption were recorded in their proper time, and preserved in true historical manner. If Genesis must be made an exception, we need to have some good reason therefor.

Nowhere else, in Scripture, do we find a gratuitous interposition of revelation. The work which man is competent to do for himself, is never taken out of his hands. But to keep a record of remarkable events, occurring under one's eyes, is both natural for man to wish, and, when the art of writing is known, easy to effect.

The Divine discipline has never been such as to render human industry unnecessary, but always to educe it—to move man to record his own history rather than to suffer his mind to lie dormant and forget all that God had done for him, and then to bring it up again, at the end of centuries, when it had still to be recorded, in the way that it might have been at first. That is not the kind of discipline which we have learned to expect at the hand of God; and for a case, which is claimed to be of that kind, as being unparalleled, we need some most cogent reason.

It is certainly very improbable that holy men, favoured with special revelation of the Divine will, should treat it with such neglect and forgetfulness;—that Noah, Abraham, Jacob, for instance, should keep no account of those wonderful revelations made to them, and which they understood were to affect deeply the well-being of future generations, and should coolly consign them to such utter oblivion, that, at the end of many ages, they had all to be revealed again, together with the very existence of the men to whom they were made.

Again, Moses was a man scrupulously careful to render God the glory of all communications received from him, and could not have neglected, through a whole book, to make the slightest recognition of a revelation so great and unparalleled; especially as that recognition would have been deemed a necessary voucher for the truth of the book. He would not have left to be assigned, in any degree, to the instrumentality of man, what he had received directly from God.

And, finally, the assumption that Genesis is a retrospective revelation, is entirely gratuitous. It is without the slightest foundation in any recorded fact. Scripture nowhere asserts, or implies, or gives the least countenance to it.

Such was the length of life among the patriarchs, that tradition had but few hands to pass through between Adam and Moses; but that, in the first place, is not like the certainty which God establishes his word upon. He has taught us to make a very broad distinction between the written word and oral tradition. And, secondly, the book presents not the slightest appearance of oral tradition, while it contains passages of a kind which oral tradition has never elsewhere been known to

retain—passages of recondite science, physical and ethnological, given in popular style, yet with perfect precision and order, as well as a number of long genealogical lists, some of them not belonging to the descendants of Jacob; and it contains a systematic chronology, not all arranged in relation to one era, but in each genealogy in relation to itself. In a matter of this kind, we are not concerned with what the human memory might possibly effect, or what some particular men of retentive memories can do. That belongs to mental science, or rather to the head of curiosities of mental phenomena. We have here to do with the law of oral tradition, among an unlettered people—not what a man might do, or can do; but what men, under those circumstances, are actually found to do. Now, Genesis contains materials, such as no production positively known to have taken its rise among an unlettered people, and its shape from oral tradition, is found to contain; and throughout, in all ascertainable matters—in geography, in ethnology, in history, in geology, in astronomy, and whatsoever it touches—it wears the stamp of the accuracy of writing. But might not tradition, as truly as writing, be supernaturally defended from error? True, it might; and we should promptly admit it, if God had given any instruction to that end; or, if the Saviour had not left a very strong testimony against tradition, as contradistinguished from the written word. And, thirdly, this is also a totally gratuitous assumption, founded upon another equally gratuitous assumption, namely, that none could be its first writer but Moses.

The halfway position that the book may have been composed from oral traditions, supplied and corrected by revelation, is liable to similar objections, and, like the preceding, is a pure assumption, without a particle of authority human or divine.

On the other hand, while the book of Genesis is nowhere in Scripture mentioned as either a vision or tradition, it is repeatedly quoted as Scripture, that is, holy writ. Thus, it is quoted in Romans, fourth chapter and third verse, Galatians, third chapter and eighth verse, and fourth chapter and thirtieth verse, and, in the twenty-second verse of that same chapter, it is referred to expressly as that which was written. We would not be understood to attach more to this fact than it fully

amounts to, namely, that it discountenances any supposition that Genesis was produced in a way different from that common to other books of the sacred canon. And this is to be taken together with that other fact, that no passage quoted from it in Scripture is ever referred to Moses, although his name is frequently mentioned in connection with quotations from other books of the Pentateuch, and he is expressly said to have spoken all the *precepts* of the law. Heb. ix. 19.

In the gospel according to Luke xxiv. 27, we find it said of the Saviour, that "beginning from Moses and from all the prophets, he expounded unto them in all the the Scriptures the things concerning himself;" and hence might infer a final settlement of this question. Because, if there are things concerning the Messiah in Genesis, as we hold there are, it must be comprehended under the name of Moses, from whom, together with all the prophets, he began his exposition. But in order to that conclusion, we must show that the words "Moses, the prophets, and the Scriptures," are designations of authorship, and not mere classification of the sacred books. Upon attempting, however, to make this point good, from parallel passages, and passages of direct reference or quotation, we find everything going to determine the opposite. In the 44th verse of the same chapter of Luke, "the law of Moses, the prophets, and the Psalms," is obviously a classification of the books of Old Testament scripture. So in Matt. v. 17; vii. 12, and xxii. 40, and Luke xvi. 16, "the law and the prophets" are used as general terms comprehending all Scripture. In these last mentioned instances it is clear that the words "law and the prophets" correspond respectively to Moses and the prophets in the first. The name of Moses, as the writer of the law, is used in a sense synonymous with law, according to a custom equally prevalent in our own language. And then either or both of them are used as terms whereby to designate a class of sacred books in which the law was the principal part. That group of books contained also history, poetry, and much else besides law, but the law was its great feature, and furnished a convenient designation of the whole, which every Hebrew rightly understood when so used. It was not, however, always confined to the Pentateuch. Jesus himself sometimes called the whole body of

Old Testament scripture the law, (John x. 34; xv. 25,) sometimes the two heads, the law and the prophets, were used as comprehensive of the whole, and sometimes three classes were made, the law, or Moses, or the law of Moses, being the name given to the first, the prophets designating the second, and the Psalms the third. It is clear that these names, so far from determining authorship, do just the very opposite, by grouping together under the same head books of acknowledgedly different authors, and of dates separate by hundreds of years. Thus, as Job, Ecclesiastes, and the Song of Solomon were classed with the Psalms, although certainly not Psalms, and Kings with the Prophets, although really historical, so Genesis was classed with the law of Moses, although not belonging to the law.

Genesis being thus arranged under the general head of the law by the Jews, the Saviour, by adopting, confirmed that classification; but did not, thereby, affirm anything else than that the classification was a proper one; just as much, and no more, as he affirmed of the other heads by adopting them.

So far then, we have the best authority for the historical connection of the book. It was correctly classed with the oldest books of the Old Testament.

But further, Scripture in several places makes a broad distinction between the materials of Genesis and the law, and in some of those places as distinctly assigns the book to a prior antiquity.

This position is remarkably illustrated in the ninth chapter of Nehemiah, where the people are said to have spent part of the day reading in the word of the law of the Lord, after which, in the course of their worship, they were addressed by the chief Levites. That address begins with a summary of what they had been reading, and presents an outline, first of the history contained in Genesis, continued down through the bondage in Egypt, and the exode, and then mentions particularly the giving of the law by the hand of Moses; thus recognizing the whole series of ancient writings as "the book of the law," and yet fully and carefully distinguishing the earlier history from the law properly so called. And this distinction we find uniformly observed in Scripture, wherever anything but mere classification is meant. In the seventh chapter of Hebrews, the period of

the promises to the patriarchs is very elaborately distinguished from that of the law. The apostle actually contrasts the one with the other; and in Galatians, third chapter and nineteenth verse, assigns the law to its proper place, as not only different from the preceding dispensation, but as only an addition thereto for a temporary purpose. The importance of that early history, as prior to the law, is set forth in many passages of subsequent Scripture, (*e. g.* Psalm cv., Acts vii., Neh. ix., Heb. vii., Gal. iii.,) which uniformly assumes its priority.

There was good reason for the classification of Genesis with the law, inasmuch as they had come down together from before the settlement of Israel in Canaan, and unitedly contained the preliminary history and national constitution of that people. In these very important respects, Genesis and the books of the law formed a group by themselves.

Such being the case, it is the more worthy of remark, that Scripture invariably observes a scrupulous discrimination touching their contents, purport, and authorship.

The law is discriminately said to have been given by Moses, and he is declared to have spoken every precept thereof; but a quotation made from Genesis is quoted simply as Scripture—that is, as the written word of God. And in one such passage, Gal. iii. 8, the form of expression implies that what is quoted was written in the time of Abraham. The written word is there said to have preached the gospel to Abraham.

Moreover, Genesis is never quoted, nor is any passage of it referred to as “the law,” or as “the law of Moses,” nor as the law, with any epithet; nor is it ever in any way alluded to as of contemporaneous origin with the law. This amounts to great cogency when we remember that Genesis is quoted many times, and the law, in one way and another, more than three hundred times, in Scripture; and yet never, in any instance, are the two confounded. Obviously this did not occur, in the case of books grouped together from such antiquity, without a careful intention.

Thus, in later Scripture, Genesis is repeatedly referred to as the written, and yet never assigned to Moses as the writer. Now, we hold that this discrimination is correct, and that it

will be borne out by a fair consideration of the book itself and its ascertainable conditions.

In the first place, the book bears the unmistakable marks of a composition originally written. For instance, one part of it is headed, "This is the *book* of the generations of Adam." Gen. v. 1. Another, "These are the generations of Shem," and so on. Then the structure of some of its parts is that dependent upon the composition of them in writing. The great argument, and in fact, the sole reason for leaving these particulars out of view, or shrinking from granting to them their proper importance, is the improved assumption that, in those days, writing was unknown.

Such was an utterly unjustifiable presumption at any period. Because the mere existence of an ancient book, bearing the features of written composition and the archaic character of the time to which it pertains, logically throws the presumption on the other side, which must hold its position unless displaced by some more cogent argument. Such an argument, as far as we know, never has been adduced, and the investigations of the last thirty years have now put it out of the question.

It is no longer a disputable point whether writing was practised before Moses or not; it is one of those things which to doubt is to betray a culpable ignorance; but we have also to add, that in the time of Moses the system of writing was already ancient, and that too, in the highest perfection it ever possessed among the Egyptians, with whom he was educated.

By the Egyptians various methods of writing were employed from very ancient date; but the most common, and really the basis of the whole, was, in its system, precisely the same as that employed by the Hebrews and Phœnicians. The Egyptian phonetic writing was only an elaborate multiplication of signs upon the same system which was common to them and the neighbouring nations of Asia.

Now, that system of writing, in all the completeness that ever belonged to it, is found, at this hour, upon monuments, which must have been inscribed long before Abraham left Ur of the Chaldees. Moreover, upon those same monuments we find pictures of books; and repeatedly occur the bound papyrus roll and the scribe's writing apparatus, as graphic signs—

evincing a preëxisting familiarity with the art. Under the fourth dynasty of Egyptian kings, at least two hundred years before the call of Abraham, such evidences of the antiquity of writing are both numerous and unmistakable.

A similar witness has recently arisen to testify to the antiquity of the same art in Assyria. Among the multitude of written monuments collected from the ruins of Babylon and Nineveh, some have come down from the very time of Abraham, and others, in the opinion of the most learned Assyrian archæologists, are probably older than that by more than two hundred years. And nothing has yet been discovered which intimates that research has entered upon the period when writing was invented.

Not only the art of writing, but also that of literary composition, had attained a high degree of excellence in the time of Moses. The works of that author bear no marks of incipiency, but rather of perfection in the art. More particularly, Hebrew style had already the completeness of its finish. The style of Moses does not stand to Hebrew as that of Lucilius to Latin, or that of Chaucer to English, but presents the features of its maturity. Hebrew, in his hands, has all the air of familiarity with literature, as if it had been long accustomed to artistic shape in letters. Although the Israelites were then only beginning to assume their place as a nation, their leaders and forefathers had been well informed, refined, and wealthy men, from time immemorial; and their language was not a narrow, peculiar dialect of their own, but belonged to the whole stock of which they were sprung. Nor was it confined even to the descendants of Shem. In dialects but slightly differing from one another, it was the language at once of the Canaanites and of the empire founded by Nimrod on the Tigris and Euphrates. From Nineveh to Sidon and to the borders of Egypt, it was spoken with little variation. Indeed, what are commonly called the Semitic languages, should rather, if regard is had to the people by whom they were first extensively used, be called Hamitic. Hebrew was not the sole possession of the family of Abraham. It was the language of Canaan, when Abraham migrated there, and was spoken at that very time both in Sidon and in Babylon. The use of the Hebrew language or of

a kindred dialect is no indubitable evidence of Semitic origin, unless associated with some more discriminate marks. These two branches of a common stock, Hebrew in the east, and Egyptian in the west, were the principal languages of the then civilized world.

Accordingly, the most ancient Babylonian inscriptions vary but little from the language of the book of Genesis. They are autographs of a date earlier than half of its contents.

Within these few months, announcement has been made of a discovery, which, if verified, must carry the history, not only of writing, but also of literature in Assyria, fully up to the date of the earliest Egyptian monuments. We refer to the Arabic translations of ancient Babylonian books, recently examined by Ghwolson, of St. Petersburg. Upon those books themselves we are not yet in condition to found an argument; but the reputation of the eminent scholar who makes the announcement, is such as to leave no room to question either his own entire belief in the reality of his discovery, or the honesty and laboriousness of the investigations by which it was reached. And the very fact, which is not now stated for the first time, that, in the days of the Abbassides, there were ancient Babylonian books still extant, is one not to be left out in this connection.

It is also to the point to add, that the Chaldees, among whom Abraham's father dwelt, are, by the earliest information we obtain of them, presented as an eminently learned people, while the ruins of their buildings, recently exhumed, give evidence of a literary taste, and zeal for the perpetuation of their records, hardly inferior to that of Egypt.

Now, Terah's family was just of the kind to value most highly such an art, being neither degraded by the pressure of poverty, nor enfeebled by the frivolities of luxury. They were pious, sensible men, of a regal style of thinking and acting, as well as of nomadic simplicity of manners—just such men as were most likely to have the best education that was going. And they most probably followed the manners and customs of their ancestry.

Writing has from ancient time been the favourite art of the sons of Shem. We do not mean to say that every tribe of

them, in every age, has possessed skill therein; but the great divisions of the people have from time immemorial cherished it as an ethnic feature. Most remarkably have they been the people of the book. A book has, in all recorded ages, been their rallying point—their national centre. Even in the present day, sunk as they are, crushed under the weight of ages of degeneracy, scattered refugees over the face of the world, wherever you find a little neighbourhood of the sons of Israel, you find readers—readers of the ancient language of Canaan. And even among the savages of Africa, the wandering or trading Arab has carried his national art of the pen. Consequently, we deem it exceedingly improbable, that, living in the midst of those who used writing, the Semitic patriarchs should have remained ignorant of it.

Here we are met by another class of those who seem bent upon diminishing the authority of Scripture by one way, if not by another, who inform us, with as much assurance as if they had been there and seen the thing done, that true, there were writings—documents call them—in the earlier time; but that they do not exist any longer; for Moses composed his book out of them, and then left the originals to perish. If such is the fact, we ask to have it well proved. For it is a singular one in Scripture, and not according to the analogy of revelation in this respect. It must be borne in mind that we have not here to deal with mere lists of names which might be copied from some secular register; but also with passages of holy writ upon which the stamp of inspiration is most clearly impressed, and with which the lists are connected as integral parts of the series. We cannot admit that the substance of Genesis ever was anything but inspired. For wisdom, and knowledge, and holiness, and justice, belong to the grain of its texture; and the whole bearing of its narrative is prophetic and from sin to salvation. Consequently we reject the hypothesis that Moses composed the book out of secular documents.

That it should have been composed out of inspired documents is not according to the analogy of Scripture history. The books of Chronicles, which are altogether peculiar, may be an exception to this remark. They appear to be an epitome of the national records made by an infallible hand. But when Ezra

edited the sacred books accumulated in his time, he did not presume to pick and choose among them, and to say what should be preserved and what not. Much less did he make a book of his own out of their materials. So when the books of the New Testament were arranged together they were reverently preserved in their respective forms, which had been given them under the dictate of inspiration. No hand dared to remodel them, or to leave out what might be deemed unnecessary repetition in one book of what had already been contained in another.

Now, if Moses could be shown to have done with previous books what later hands did not with later Scripture, we should be at a loss to account for it, and consequently are not prepared to admit that he did so, unless the fact is well proved. But it is not proved, it is only conjectured. Under the conditions, the conjecture is inadmissible.

It might be said that the inspiration which guided the hand of Moses would give authority to his selections and alterations. So was Ezra inspired, but he did not presume to alter what God had revealed to others.

Moreover, it is inconsistent with analogy to assume that God first revealed a series of writings, and then subsequently ordained another person to modify or amend them, or to select some of them and reject others.

Considered in itself, this document theory is to the last degree improbable.

And, finally, there is not a vestige of proof to sustain it in either the shape of the component parts of the book, or in the way in which they are quoted in subsequent Scripture. No ancient authority of any kind has been adduced as asserting it, or as referring to Genesis in such a way as to imply it. The internal evidences which are claimed, such as the use of the words Jehovah and Elohim, are all perfectly consistent with the integrity of the respective parts in their original form.

The book must be taken for what it appears and professes to be, unless it can be shown to be something else. It appears and professes to be a series of histories. All attempts to prove it a vision, or a tradition, or anything else than it professes to

be, turn out to be hopelessly lame. Consequently we hold that it is history.

Now, when we come to look into the book of Genesis, and consider its substance and structure, we find that view completely sustained. It is not a single composition, but a collection of smaller books, as the whole Bible itself is. Its structure, in fact, is just that of the Bible, on a smaller scale. The different parts of which it consists, have, in all cases but one, their respective titles, after the usual Hebrew manner, and all of them their proper unity and completeness, arising from an obvious purpose to that end. The oneness of historical effect, in their chronological arrangement, is similar to that of the whole Bible, and independent of any intention in the persons who wrote its parts.

The shape of these parts and their respective symmetry forbid the hypothesis that the book is a reconstruction out of previously existing documents. Each part is complete in itself, having its own proper beginning, subject and appropriate close, as well defined, and after the same manner as the later books of Hebrew Scripture. You may call them books, or sections, or parts, or what you will; we have their own authority for calling them books: one of the very earliest of them, Gen. v. 1, calls itself the Book of the Generations of Adam; in the word *sepher* employing a term which cannot be mistaken for anything short of writing; and by their very titles and shape they declare themselves to be of independent construction. Take any one of them and publish it apart, and it will tell its own story from beginning to end, and be found to stand in as independent a literary position as the book of Joshua or of Ruth. Each one of them bears every appearance of being now all that it ever was.

Genesis has no appearance of being a reconstruction from the materials of more ancient documents. It is the collection, in chronological order, of the ancient books themselves, without further trace of editorial work than that of modernizing the diction and prefixing the conjunction, in some cases, by way of linking the consecutive books together. The division into chapters, and even the older Hebrew division into sections, is one obviously made at later time by persons who paid no attention

to the original structure. Both these divisions, at different periods of the history of the book, have covered up and disguised its real proportions by designating it with new marks upon a different principle: as sometimes we find works of ancient architectural art overlaid with plaster, and marked with the features of another order by some later hands. We must break away the plaster and search beneath it for the moldings which reveal the original design. In like manner, by neglecting the division into chapters, and studying that of the original books, we shall obtain a much clearer idea of the nature and effect of the whole series.

Another evidence that we have the ancient inspired books, and not a reconstruction by any later hand, is that, in some cases they are found to overlap each other, the introduction of one book running briefly over the ground already traversed by its predecessor; as if originally standing by itself, it recognized the propriety of preparing the ground for its own position, which would not have been the case had it been composed consecutively with the preceding, as part of one work.

In all, this canon of early Scripture consists of eleven books. The first extends from the beginning of the first chapter to the third verse of the second chapter, and contains the account of creation until earth was prepared for the habitation of man, and the work crowned by the formation of man in the image of God. This first of existing books surpasses all that have been since composed, in grandeur of manner and of conception. It opens without a title, without a preface, in majestic simplicity, by a sentence which declares the birth of the universe. Its subject is of the order in which God made the heavens and the earth, and majestically as it opens, so it closes with the day on which God rested from all his works of creation. No other passage of Scripture bears more deeply the mark of having been not only inspired, but dictated by the Creator himself. It is a revelation, not adapted to the Hebrew alone, but to the whole human race, instructing them in the position to which they have been assigned in the order of the universe. They are created as the ministers of God upon this globe during the "period of its rest from the mighty revolutions of creation." Having in all ages sustained the flight of devotion, this part of

Scripture has also, in later time, served a most valuable purpose in science, by resisting tendencies to error, and constraining effort into the proper direction, where large results of truth reward the toils of investigation. And in this latter field we are convinced that its value is still far from being fully apprehended.

The opening of the second book is marked by a separate title, and treats again of the creation of man, but enters more particularly into the manner of it. For the subject is here of primal man, his original state of holiness, how he fell from it, the wretched consequences of that fall upon himself and his children, until the birth of Seth, in whose descent should come the Saviour. It extends from the fourth verse of the second chapter to the end of the fourth chapter. This history, complete in itself, is also of equal interest to all mankind, setting forth, as it does, the origin of that evil which is in the world, and the remedy for it, in calling upon the name of the Lord.

The third book is the genealogy of Seth, starting once more from the creation of man, and briefly recapitulating its principal facts. It records the degeneracy of men among the descendants of that pious patriarch, with the honourable exceptions of Enoch and Noah, and comes down to the five hundredth year of Noah's life on the verge of the flood. And there, as an antediluvian genealogy, it properly comes to a close. Of the fourth book, which extends from the ninth verse of the sixth chapter to the end of the ninth chapter, the single subject is the history of the deluge, and it closes with a few brief statements touching the subsequent life of Noah, and the date of his death.

In the fifth, which includes from the beginning of the tenth chapter to the ninth verse of the eleventh, we have the most valuable ethnological record in existence—positively the key of general history. It treats of the distribution of the family of Noah, with the original cause of their dispersion. Like all the rest, it has every element of a complete work. Nor should we overlook the internal evidences of its antiquity: first, that it makes mention of Sodom and Gomorrhah in such a manner as to show that when it was written those cities were still in existence, and occupying a distinguished position in the civil geo-

graphy of Canaan; secondly, that, in its account of national settlements, it contains no name known to have arisen at a subsequent period; and thirdly, that although belonging to a series of records chiefly concerned with the descendants of Shem, it gives as much space to the settlements of Ham as to all the rest of mankind together. Evidently its writer was deeply impressed with the existing superiority of that race, as in the present day a similar treatise would give most room to the Japhetic. When that book was composed, the sons of Ham were still the masters of the world. God's judgments had not yet fallen upon them, and Sodom and Gomorrhah, Admah and Zeboim were still in the unchecked career of worldly prosperity and vice.

From this point it was no longer consistent with the purpose of revelation to carry forward the history of the whole race. Accordingly, the stream of narrative is confined to the descendants of Shem through Arphaxad. And the sixth book, from the tenth verse of the eleventh chapter to the twenty-sixth verse of the same, presents the genealogical series from Shem to Abram, with whom it closes. It is merely a genealogical list, kept undoubtedly by the hereditary care of the ancestors of Abram. The seventh book is the life of that patriarch, and the most beautiful example of ancient story. Its object being throughout to set forth the call and faith of Abram, and the blessing which rested upon him and was promised to his seed, it properly comes to a close, at the eleventh verse of the twenty-fifth chapter, with the death of Abraham and the transfer of the blessing, according to promise, to his son Isaac. The eighth is a brief account of the family of Ishmael. And the ninth contains a fuller and more circumstantial history of Abraham's son according to the promise. Isaac's quiet and comparatively stationary life, however, occupies less space than do the adventures and animosities of his two sons. And the book closes, at the end of the thirty-fifth chapter, with his death, and the final reconciliation of his sons over his grave. The tenth, consisting of the thirty-sixth chapter, contains the genealogy of the descendants of Esau, and lists of their princes. It is composed of six different lists, is longer and more circumstantial than any other in this portion of Scripture, and bears

marks of having been enlarged at some subsequent time. Nothing is more natural than that such additional facts should have been appended, inasmuch as, of all their kindred, the Edomites were the most intimately connected with Israel, and these facts of their early history could not be inserted in a more proper place. And the eleventh book is the history of Jacob, from the time when he came to the patriarchal succession, together with the adventures of his children, until his death in Egypt, and princely funeral in Canaan, and closes with a brief account of the circumstances in which he left his family, until the death of Joseph. Here the early records come to an end. A long interval of silence succeeded. The sojourn among foreigners, and ultimately the hard bondage to which they were subjected, long crushed the Hebrew taste for letters, and in their degradation the Divine vision was withheld, until Moses was providentially prepared and miraculously called to effect their deliverance.

To account for such an array of complete productions, the hypothesis of oral tradition will not suffice. And there can be no call for it, until some fact is discovered which shall go to ascertain when writing was invented, or, at least, go far enough back to present it in some stage of incipiency.

It is equally unnecessary, for the same reason, to have recourse to the hypothesis of a retrospective revelation to Moses. The book has every appearance of being genuine history, preserved in the usual historical manner, and nothing in the conditions of the case can be shown to be inconsistent with that appearance which it bears. In structure, it is indisputably a series of parts, each complete in itself, and bearing every mark of an independent work; and there is nothing in the book itself, nor in other Scripture, which in any degree conflicts with the declaration which that structure makes.

The substantial facts of most of those early books must have been first put on record by contemporaries. The only one, which is not a simple account of facts observable by men, is the first; and we can see no reason why the revelation of it must be supposed to have been delayed until the time of Moses, when it was of as much value, and as comprehensible to the first man, as to him, and pertains not to the interest of the Hebrews

alone, but of the whole human race. Adam, or Seth, or Enoch, were much more likely to be the first recipients of that revelation. And it will hardly be claimed, that, coming from them, it would be less worthy of confidence.

As to authorship, seeing we have only probabilities to rely upon, the strongest claim would seem to belong to those eminent servants of God who lived nearest to the facts recorded. It is reasonable to think that the best qualified to record a revelation, and the circumstances connected therewith, must be the highly honoured individual to whom it was made.

In most of those ancient books, private conversations and other circumstances are given, which, by natural means, none but the persons to whom they occurred could possibly relate for the first time. There can be no doubt that Adam himself is the authority for the conversation held with God, in the primitive state of human holiness, and in connection with the fall. And who could possibly relate what took place in the ark, but some of the patriarchs who crossed the flood in it? We may remark similarly of Jacob's dream on the way to Padan-Aram, of Abraham's offering up Isaac, and of many other passages.

We can see no reason for denying the existence of a written revelation until the Hebrew exode from Egypt, except that of claiming the credit thereof for a well-known name. With all due reverence for the penman of the Divine law, we think it sufficient that the honour redound to God. If a prophecy was uttered by Enoch, or the truth preached by Noah, it was already as abundantly vouched for as if sanctioned by Moses. Of all men, none were so likely to seek a permanent form for the manifestations of the Divine presence and will, as the very men to whom they were made, both from the impulses of human nature, and because they, as the most eminently pious men of their respective times, would attach the highest value to every word of God. All things considered, the probabilities are certainly in favour of the position that those early books of Scripture were first penned by the patriarchs to whom they respectively pertain. This, however, we claim only as a probability. Others may think differently of it, without affecting in any degree the antiquity of the books.

Whoever were the penmen of it, the book of Genesis was composed after the manner of all the rest of Scripture, by successive addition of book to book, as it was revealed, and soon after its facts occurred. In other words, before the time of Moses, this collection of eleven books was already the volume of Holy Writ. It was the Bible of the Hebrews in Egypt, by which, in that long and hard bondage, the religion of their fathers, and belief in the promises of God were kept alive among them, as now in their dispersion over the world, the same people are held together and withheld from losing themselves in any other population, by the book of their completed canon.

That primal epoch of the church was separated from its successor by a long period of degeneracy; and a longer period intervened between the close of the revelations pertaining to the Mosaic epoch, and those which opened the Christian. In both these intervening periods the written word kept the spirit of the church alive. During the first dispensation the church existed only in the families of the faithful. And the whole series of revelation pertaining to it is addressed to that state of society. In the second, the people constituting the church had become a nation, and needed a code of national law and a land to dwell in. Accordingly the second series of revealed books consists chiefly of national laws, national instruction, and national history. Moses was the highly honoured instrument in writing out that law, which was to constitute the church into a separate nation: certainly the loftiest position that statesman ever occupied. In the third period, the church is prepared to be more than a nation. It is now the kingdom of heaven, and the books addressed to it are of a correspondingly higher spirituality and catholicity. In all three, the character of the sacred books is adapted to that of the dispensation. Thus a comprehensive view of the whole series of Scripture, as connected with the history of the church, goes to corroborate the more minute considerations of archaic criticism.

As the Bible of the Mosaic church closed its canon four hundred years before Christ, so the patriarchal series ended, at least, one hundred and fifty years before Moses was called in the desert of Horeb. The three different classes of books consti-

tuting our sacred canon, are remarkably separated from each other by these two intervening periods of silence. And as towards the close of the second, critics and copyists were raised up to collect, examine, and arrange, for the more careful preservation, the books then accumulated, so Moses, or some other pious and learned man, had discharged a similar office for the earlier canon, as the first dispensation drew towards its close. And when that early Scripture passed through the hands of Moses, as it certainly did, such was the reverence with which he regarded it, that, though he may have modernized its diction,* and adjusted its arrangement, he did not presume to make a new book out of its materials, but transmitted it just as he found it, leaving each book in its original form, as Ezra, at a later time, edited the fuller collection, and as we now edit the whole series when complete.

In what we call the book of Genesis, then, we have the Bible of the patriarchal church—the Bible of the church before Moses, containing literary productions from the earliest ages of our race, and the only historical authorities of the first two thousand years. It contains the patriarchal creed in that shape which was best adapted to the instruction of patriarchal times. Even before its narrative has got beyond the first sons of Adam, it has exhibited these fundamental doctrines: That God created the heavens and the earth; that God made man in his own image, in righteousness and true holiness; that man, though able to remain holy, was free to sin; that he did sin, and thereby involved himself and all his posterity in condemnation and misery; that human suffering is the consequence of sin; that God had provided a way of salvation through the blood of sacrifice, and that whosoever worshipped him thereby would be accepted, but that to any other attempt to approach him he would have no respect.

Succeeding revelations made progressively fuller exposition of the way of redemption, uncovering the subordinate features

* Occasionally we find ancient names followed by the explanation in the more recent name, as if the editor had not felt free to modernize the whole so far as to leave out the old and substitute the new, but preferred to retain the old, appending the new by way of explanation. Thus “Bela, (the same is Zoar.)” “Kiriath arba, (the same is Hebron,)” &c.

of that great mystery as the minds of men were prepared for it; but even for the family which first sinned, its essential outlines were distinctly drawn. Revelation has, from the beginning, been in every age a code of complete religious instruction in what God required of his people at that time, always adapted to the particular shape of the existing dispensation, and each preceding portion the most admirable preparation for that which was to follow, while possessing its own permanent value as a part of the whole.

Scripture is not only a revelation of God's will touching sinners, it is also a contemporaneous history of the various steps in the unfolding of the plan of redemption from the earliest day that man needed redemption, until in the fulness of time it was completed. To the first narrative left by Adam was added that of some other holy man, then that of another, and another, until that dispensation drew to an end. Then followed another and broader dispensation under the instruction of another series of inspired books, similarly adapted to it. And, finally, the Christian dispensation completed the order with a similar collection of sacred books, similarly adapted to its spirit and place, when it is found that the library, thus accumulated in the course of thousands of years, has been designed by the Holy Spirit, who inspired it, in the shape of one complete and symmetrical book. Thus it is that God effects the unity of his works. When man would make a plant assume a particular shape of his choice, he imprisons its growth within some hard material casing; when God would do so, he wills it, and the plant, obedient to the mandate, springs spontaneously into the shape designed, but with a native grace and finish which it transcends the art of man to confer.

The growth of Scripture has been of the same nature all along from the first Adam until the completed revelation of the Second. From the first sin of man until the manifestation of Him who came to do away with all sin, the accumulation of Scripture was commensurate with the unfolding of the plan of redemption, and its unity and purpose were due, not to a design of man, but to the decrees of God.