

Law to the Hebrew nation would be enhanced by their full acquaintance with the process by which God had separated them from all the tribes of the earth. In the matter of authorship great stress ought to be laid on the unbroken, and very remote testimony of Jewish tradition. It was never doubted by the Rabbinical writers, by the Elders of the people, by professedly literary men, Josephus and Philo, and so far back as a line can be traced, that Moses wrote the book of Genesis. And be it observed that a Jewish tradition on this question is of far more value than any tradition among any other people; for the Jewish literature was scanty, most carefully treasured and studied, and it was a national characteristic from the earliest date to pay wonderfully close attention to facts of genealogy and events connected with religious development. The difficulties of supposing the book to have had a later origin are infinitely greater than those involved in its Mosaic authorship; while the testimony of Jesus Christ and the Apostles, borne so frequently and emphatically, ought, with all candid Christian minds, to set the matter at rest.

Every book produced by a sound mind must have running through it some clearly defined purpose, and the more precise the purpose in the mind of the writer, the more obvious will the unity of the work appear to the reader, in the omission of unnecessary topics, and the inclusion of other topics which a less definite purpose would have excluded. The Bible is a book for setting forth Jesus Christ—the Second Adam—the Great Restorer—to the world;—and the general design of the book of Genesis as a part of the Bible, is to make clear the historical connexion between the first Adam, through whom sin and sorrow came, and Christ the Second Adam, through whom sin and sorrow pass away. Hence, only those events are recorded which serve to throw light on their connexion. Genesis is the pathway out of Eden—leading across wild and dreary wastes—till from Calvary we see another Paradise.

The book is only a small pamphlet of about forty pages, and yet it embraces the history of 2,315 years. Consequently we may expect to find many obscurities in the necessary brevity and passing allusions of the writer—obscurities which, like the uncertain outline of an old building during the twilight, would pass away were the full orb of events to appear. The long lists of names and the intricate relationships of families have great significance when viewed in the light of the general scope of the book. The amount of detail given of Adam, Cain, Noah and Abraham, is determined clearly by a desire to set forth the reasons for God's dealing with them in that particular way, which ultimately led to the selection of the line through which the Messiah was to come. It would have been worse than useless to have dilated on the general affairs of the world. What subsequent ages were to know was, simply how sin came, and how a way was prepared for One to put away sin.

The question as to the sources from whence Moses compiled the book of Genesis is one on which there may be a considerable diversity of opinion. Those who