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# REVIEW

OF

## COLENSO ON THE PENTATEUCH.

REVISED AND REPRINTED, BY DESIRE, FROM

“THE GUARDIAN” OF DECEMBER 3, 1862.

WITH A FEW ADDITIONAL NOTES.

To \_\_\_\_\_ Espin

\* \* \* The following paper has been reprinted from *The Guardian* of Dec. 3, 1862, by request. The writer has had, through the Editor of *The Guardian*, opportunity of perusing many communications which the publication of the book itself, and afterwards the appearance of the Review, have occasioned. He has not thought it right to make changes or additions to the original article which might not fairly be classed under the term *revision*. Neither, in truth, has he yet seen reason to alter in any material respect the statements to which his first perusal of the book, and the inquiries he had time and need to make before reviewing it, led him. He has inserted in the Notes some few qualifications, examples, and corroborations which further information or thought have suggested. Many parts of the argument might with very great advantage receive an expansion and illustration— forbidden alike by the limits of a newspaper article, and by the conditions which must govern a republication of it.

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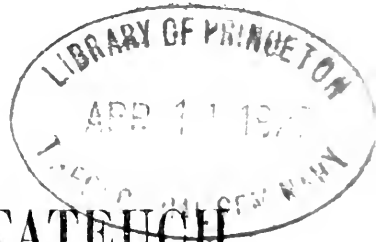
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Pentateuch and the Book of Joshua." Like our Lord, he "begins with Moses"—only it is to impeach his veracity, and to expose his prevarications, if one may reverently speak thus—not to adduce his authority for the conviction of gainsayers. Hereafter "should God in His providence call him to the work" (!) he will not "shrink from the duty" of carrying on his undertaking to the New Testament; and in the meantime endeavours in a very feeble page or two of the Preface to delude himself and his readers into the belief that it is not contrary to the words of Christ to assert that Moses did not write the Pentateuch. We wish that he had taken pains to make this point good first of all. Christians generally would be spared much tiresome reading of books like this if Dr. Colenso would kindly demonstrate once for all that the New Testament is quite independent of the Old, and that we may consistently regard Moses and the Prophets as—what we will not dare to name, and yet trust with all our heart and mind in the Saviour who appealed to them. To be sure the Thirty-nine Articles, and all theologians, ancient and modern, and we might throw in the Apostles, think differently. But the Bishop of Natal evidently does not agree with them.

The volume before us is the first instalment of a systematic attempt to prove that the Pentateuch is a fiction; or, as Dr. Colenso now prefers to say, "un-historical." The difference between these two terms is to our minds neither great nor practical. But the right rev. writer has thought it worth while to cancel the former word, and to substitute the latter; so let him by all means have the benefit, if any, of the distinction. "The so-called Mosaic narrative, by whomsoever written, and though imparting to us revelations of the Divine will and character, cannot be regarded as *historically true*." This is the result of Dr. Colenso's researches. Let us gain from himself an idea as to the sort of path through which he has travelled to it:—

While translating the story of the Flood, I have had a simple-minded, but intelligent, native—one with the docility of a child, but the reasoning powers of mature age—look up and ask, "Is all that true? Do you really believe that all this happened thus—that all the beasts and birds, and creeping things upon the earth, large and small, from hot countries and cold, came thus by pairs, and entered into the ark with Noah? And did Noah gather food for them *all*, for the beasts and birds of prey, as well as the rest?" My heart answered in the words of the Prophet, "Shall man speak lies in the name of the Lord?"—Zech. xiii. 3. I dared not do so. My own knowledge of some branches of science, of geology in particular, had been much increased since I left England; and I now knew for certain, on geological grounds, a fact of which I had only had misgivings before—viz., that a *Universal Deluge*, such as the Bible manifestly speaks of, could not possibly have taken place in the way described in the Book of Genesis, not to mention other difficulties which the story contains.

"If a man smite his servant, or his maid, with a rod, and he die under his hand, he shall surely be punished. *Notwithstanding*, if he continue a day or two, he shall not be punished; for *he is his money*."—Ex. xxi. 20, 21. I shall never forget the revulsion of feeling with which a very intelligent Christian native, with whose help I was translating these words into the Zulu tongue, first heard them as words said to be uttered by the same great and gracious Being whom I was teaching him to trust in and adore. His whole soul revolted against the notion that the Great and Blessed God, the Merciful Father of all mankind, would speak of a servant or maid as mere "money," and allow a horrible crime to go unpunished, because the victim of the brutal usage had survived a few hours. My own heart and conscience at the time fully sympathised with his. But I then clung to the notion that the main substance of the narrative was historically true, and I relieved his difficulty and my own for the present by telling him that I supposed that such words as these were written down by Moses, and believed by him to have been divinely given to him, because the thought of them arose in his heart, as he conceived, by the inspiration of God, and that hence to all such laws he prefixed the formula, "Jehovah said unto Moses," without it being on that account necessary for us to suppose that they were actually spoken by the Almighty. This was, however, a very great strain upon the cord which bound me to the ordinary belief in the historical veracity of the Pentateuch; and since then that cord has been snapped in twain altogether.

We pause for a moment to marvel that Bishop Colenso should have been able to find no better answer to the difficulty started by the Zulu on the last-named occasion; and still more that he should have thought of such a shocking one as that which he actually gave, except, indeed, as a temptation to be rejected with horror. We should have thought that the *principle* at least of a deeper and

truer answer would readily have suggested itself from our Lord's explanation (St. Matt. xix. 8) of a precept in the law of Moses not less cruel and revolting to a Christian mind than slavery itself,—we mean that which suffered the Jewish husband to put away his wife at pleasure. In the days when he had not yet “shaken off the incubus of a dogmatic education,” Dr. Colenso could, it seems, regard Moses as a deluded fanatic who dreamed that God had spoken to him things which He in fact had not. We prefer, as the least of two evils, Dr. Colenso's present heterodoxy to his past orthodoxy!

Such captious difficulties as these, however, set the Bishop of Natal on what he calls a close critical examination of the Pentateuch; but what we must take the liberty of terming a cross-examination of a witness who has no opportunity of explaining anything, with a predetermination to catch him tripping if possible, and to expose him thereupon unmercifully. He has written standard arithmetical works for schools; and his way of testing the truthfulness of Moses is to put the Jewish legislator through a strict and stiff series of arithmetical questions. The whole of the difficulties started, or nearly the whole, are, in fact, arithmetical. The chapters, as one takes them in succession, look, in truth, as if Dr. Colenso had been studying his Bible not for the use of edifying, but for the purpose of extracting out of its materials a new series of arithmetical puzzles for the enlargement of his school-books for youth. The number of the Israelites at the Exodus, the area of their camp, the quantity of food and water and fuel they must have required, the source of the supply of turtle-doves and pigeons for sacrifice in the desert, the number of the firstborn, of the priests, &c.—such are the kind of topics about which Dr. Colenso has been afflicting himself.

Now, let it be remarked in the first place that difficulties of this sort are of very little comparative importance at all in a very ancient document. Every scholar knows that the imperfection of the ancient methods of notation gave rise to numberless errors and confusions;\* which in the processes of transcription and translation become in long lapse of time complicated and aggravated beyond all rectification. It is, we suppose, admitted on all hands that there has been no miraculous interposition to protect the Scriptures from the casualties incident to other ancient records handed down through multitudes of hands in MS. Dr. Colenso might, if it suited his turn, parallel his sums which “won't prove” out of the Pentateuch by an equal or greater number from, *e.g.*, Herodotus. Professor Rawlinson tells us about the “Father of History,” that “if both the items and the total of a sum are given, they are rather more likely to disagree than to agree. Making the most liberal allowance for corruptions of the text (*to which numbers are specially liable*), it would still seem that these frequent disagreements must have arisen from some defect in the author: either he was not an adept in arithmetic, or he did not take the trouble to go through the calculations, and see that the statements tallied.”—(*Rawlinson's Herodotus*, vol. i. page 109, edit. 1.) It is needless to point out that every possible cause of error and corruption in numbers has been at work as regards the Scriptures, and most of all as regards the Pentateuch. Its extreme antiquity—its character—its transmission to us only in a transcription from a more ancient character of writing†—all would lead an experienced critic to expect *a priori*

\* “For figures the Jews after the Babylonish exile made use of the letters of the alphabet, as appears from the inscriptions on the so-called Samaritan coins; and it is not unlikely that the ancient Hebrews did the same, as well as the Greeks, who borrowed their alphabet from the Phœnicians, neighbours of the Israelites, and employed it instead of numerals.”—(*Kitto's Cyclopædia of Biblical Literature*, article “*Arithmetic*.”) In the same work the following remarks occur under the head of “*Chronicles*.” They have their application to other books than *Chronicles*, if in a less degree:—“But the principal contradictions relate to numbers. These seem to have been expressed in various ways; and copyists, having different methods of marking them, were naturally exposed to errors. Sometimes numbers were designated by letters, occasionally by ciphers; and again they were marked by words.”

† The Samaritan Pentateuch is indeed in characters similar to those of the ancient Hebrew; but after lengthened and learned controversies it seems now to be regarded by scholars as possessing but slender critical authority, and as ancient rather in its writing than its text.

endless difficulties about numbers. It may well be that in many of the passages excepted against we have not the numbers originally given by the writer; and when once a blunder had crept in and established itself, it would commonly carry with it intentional alterations of other passages to make the narrative harmonise. No critical scholar, assuredly, would ever, on the ground merely of difficulties about numbers, reject any ancient document whatever.

This reasoning may, as it seems to us, be pursued one step further. Everybody knows that in very early times standards of precision were neither known nor used. Vague and loose statements of numbers, dimensions, times, distances, &c., resulting commonly in inaccuracies on the side of excess, are partly natural to an imaginative and uncritical age, partly inevitable where all kinds of measurements were made on most imperfect principles. Such points were in truth regarded as quite unimportant. Mr. Rawlinson tells us about Herodotus—"Even when he seems to profess exactness, there is always some omission, some unestimated period, which precludes us from constructing a complete chronological system from the data he furnishes."—*Herod.*, vol. i., p. 112. The like may be said of his estimates on other matters. When, *e.g.*, he leads us to suppose, according to Mr. Grote's reckoning, that the male persons accompanying Xerxes amounted to 5,283,220 (*Grote's Greece*, vol. v., p. 46), we can hardly help thinking that his imagination has had more play in the computing than his arithmetic. Or when Cecrops, according to the Greek writers (quoted by Bishop Patrick on Numbers i.), took a census of his people by requiring every one of them to bring a stone and throw it down before him, the result assuredly would hardly bear the testing which Mr. Mann's figures are expected to stand. It is the wont, too, of old writers to square things off a good deal, and to bring them out in coincidences and parallels. To a sceptical mind such regularities and repetitions are vehemently suspicious, and suggest the trimming and adjusting of man's art rather than the variety and the irregular outlines of nature and fact. To a saner mind, however, these same things suggest simply the rude computations and the instinctive search after aids to memory which characterise primitive ages. Herodotus, again, will supply countless instances of what we mean.\*

Now, we are very far indeed from granting that the figures of the Pentateuch and its estimates stand on precisely the same footing as those of Herodotus or Froissart. But it is surely worth while to draw attention to the fact that *if they did*, even so Dr. Colenso's conclusions as to the character of the book would not be warranted. Conclusions, of course, these phenomena—granting them *argumenti gratiâ* real—would lead us to; but they would not justify the particular conclusion that the book which exhibits them is unhistorical. Scientific historians have not been wont to reason so as regards their more ancient materials. Why should the Pentateuch be treated worse than any other ancient record? The difficulties in question would at the most, supposing that they stand just as they came from the author's pen, and supposing them absolutely insoluble, indicate that the computations in question are not accurate; they may lead us to suspect that the writer's conceptions, like those of his age and country, were sometimes rather wide of the fact; but his testimony for all that might rest substantially unimpeachable on its own proper authentications.

It is surely, too, very rash and very illogical to start a number of objections against the narrative of a professed eye-witness, and then, without regard to his character, his guarantees, or internal evidences of honesty, to dismiss him peremptorily as an impostor. And yet Dr. Colenso does nothing less than this. The intrinsic improbabilities of the story of the Exodus are so great that Dr.

\* "Instances of improbable regularity are, the unbroken descent of the Lydian Heracleid Kings in the line of direct succession during twenty-two generations (i. 8), the exact correspondence in the number of Egyptian kings and high priests of Vulcan during a supposed period of 11,310 years (ii. 142), and the unbroken hereditary descent of the latter (ii. 143); the occurrence of salt-hills and springs of water at intervals of exactly ten days' journey along the whole sandy belt extending from Egyptian Thebes to the west coast of Africa (iv. 181); the wonderful productiveness of all the world's *extremities* (iii. 106—116)," &c.—(*Rawlinson's Herod.*, vol. i., p. 104, note.)

Colenso cannot believe it: such is the sum and substance of the book. On the like grounds Archbishop Whately has shown us that the whole history of Napoleon Buonaparte is incredible; and an ingenious contemporary has just now demonstrated that the whole of the news which we have been swallowing so greedily for this eighteen months about the American civil war is so fraught with inconsistencies, absurdities, and unlikelihooods, that we must regard it as a tissue of fabrications. The truth is that there are infinite *a priori* improbabilities in every set of transactions that history presents us with; which improbabilities, however, are readily surmounted by testimony. Now, the Pentateuch is supported by proofs, both internal and external, of a very strong kind. Let any of our readers, after reading a few of Bishop Colenso's chapters, take up Professor Blunt's *Undesigned Coincidences*. There they will find the sacred writers, Moses to begin with, checked each by his own statements and then by those of his fellows; and the strongest tokens of artlessness, consistency, and veracity result from the process. Surely, then, it is very unjust, in such a matter very cruel to his brethren, in Dr. Colenso to parade his objections and difficulties, and to give judgment summarily on the strength of them, about our sacred Scriptures, just as if there were nothing to be said on the other side. Let it be observed, then, that the reasoning of this book is one-sided throughout. It leaves absolutely unimpeached—never even takes account of—the vast body of evidences, internal and external, on which the Pentateuch has been ever received by the Church as genuine and authentic.\*

Again, a whole set of Dr. Colenso's difficulties is got rid of if we duly weigh what the professedly miraculous character of the main portions of the story involves. And here we must say that Dr. Colenso seems neither quite consistent nor candid. He says, indeed, that "the notion of miraculous or supernatural interferences does not present to my own mind the difficulties which it seems to present to some." And yet a great many of the cavils he raises are one after another disposed of if the legation of Moses be admitted to be divine. He perplexes himself greatly, *e.g.*, as to whence the Israelites in the wilderness could have obtained their supplies of fuel, and of water and fodder for the vast flocks and herds which are described as accompanying them. One might observe,—and illustrate the observation by referring to the Campagna of Rome,†—that the lapse of thirty-four centuries renders inferences from the present to the ancient resources of the Desert to the last degree precarious. But even if we allow,—what the reports of travellers forbid,‡—that the country is now in all

\* Amongst such evidences may be mentioned the accounts furnished by ancient historians of the sojourn of the Israelites in Egypt and the Exodus. Kalisch (Exodus § xvi. *sqq.*) enumerates *nine* different writers, of various times, countries, and languages, as rendering independent and unconscious testimony to the historical character of the Book of Exodus. He gives literal translations or abridgments from each of these. We extract his summary of the information they afford:—"The profane accounts of the Exodus are both interesting and important, for it is certain that none of them is in any way derived from the Bible; they are original information, taken from different other sources, especially, no doubt, from Egyptian records; and although they represent the events in a fanciful and exaggerated manner, they certainly corroborate the narrative of the Bible in every essential particular, which agreement must give additional authority to the sacred records, even in the eyes of those who are accustomed to value their religious importance higher than their historical accuracy."

† "The *Campagna* of Rome consists of undulating ridges, from which scanty harvests are gathered; but the chief use to which it is applied is the pasturing of vast herds of cattle. These, with the picturesque herdsmen, mounted on small and half-wild horses, and armed with long poles or lances, are almost the only objects that break the monotony of a scene where scarce a tree is visible, and where even the solitary houses are scattered at wide intervals. Yet anciently the *Campagna* must have presented a very different aspect. Even within sight of Rome it was thickly studded with cities, at first as flourishing as herself; and in those times, when 'every rood of ground maintained its man,' it must have presented an appearance of rich cultivation."—(*Smith's Dictionary of Greek and Roman Geography*, article "Roma.")

‡ Bishop Colenso would see at once the futility of arguing from what the valley of the Thames might or might not supply in the time of Cæsar to what it might or might not supply now. Yet the resources of the Sinaitic peninsula, native and imported, have differed at various times hardly less, perhaps more, than those of any district of England;

essentials as it was when the Israelites crossed it, still there are the supernatural succours which the chosen people enjoyed. Dr. Colenso allows that he reads occasionally of such, and admits that they might have met such needs as those he refers to, and he has no quarrel apparently with these statements. But he assumes, as of course, that where no special miracle is spoken of in the Bible, there the people must have had to rely on ordinary resources. Such an assumption is made up and down the book again and again, both tacitly and expressly. Now, this is manifestly not the way in which the narrative is meant to be taken. Throughout it Almighty God is represented as the ever-present guide, defender, and supporter of His people. "He led them through that great and terrible wilderness where was no water, and brought them forth water out of the rock of flint. Their raiment waxed not old upon them, neither did their foot swell those forty years." It is idle to suppose that Moses meant to record each and every occasion of Divine interposition. Rather is the whole set of transactions lifted in its entirety above the working of ordinary causation. It is open, of course, to a freethinker to reject the whole, if he cannot away with miracles on *any* evidence; but for one who has no such universal disbelief of miracles, it is preposterous to test by canons of probability drawn from ordinary circumstances a narrative which bears on its very face the profession of being altogether extraordinary, and accounts for its transactions by alleging nothing less or else than the perpetual and immediate operation of Omnipotence. But Dr. Colenso is well able already, as a rationalist must be, to strain at a gnat and to swallow a camel.

In one sense of the term the Pentateuch is doubtless "unhistorical," for it was not meant primarily for a history. So long as critics will persist in applying Scripture to ends alien from its manifest design, so long shall we be afflicted with openrose disputations, leading to no end, on points such as those raised in the volume before us. Endless chronological, genealogical, geographical, and physical difficulties will start up, as they have done from the creation of commentators to the present day, to those who will systematise on such subjects from Scripture data only. Such difficulties will be answered, satisfactorily or otherwise, and the answers will have their rejoinders. The seesaw will go on for a few years, or, in these fast times, weeks; and the results will be buried in old pamphlets and dusty tomes; die out; and then revive again, as have done these old knots over which Dr. Colenso is once more fumbling. It is not the purpose of the sacred writers to obviate these difficulties. They do not supply complete sets of data from which tabular statements about the chosen people might be compiled by a registrar.\* They had quite other and unspeakably more

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*e.g.*, there are, near Mount Hor, the ruins of a great city, once the emporium of a mighty traffic, but which for ages was simply lost, till rediscovered by Burckhardt—we mean Petra. The theatre of Petra is calculated to hold 3,000 persons. What would be thought of a man who should try to discredit the accounts of the ancient populousness and power of Egypt by inferences drawn from its present fallen state? Let it be observed, however, that it is not maintained that the wants of the Israelites in the Wilderness were furnished by the resources of the country, nor yet by purchase. What is insisted on is this—that objections against the veracity of the Pentateuch are obviously ill-grounded when they go on the assumption that the state of the Wilderness is the same or nearly the same now as it was 1,500 years before the Christian era. Now, the argument in Dr. Colenso's twelfth chapter assumes this throughout.

\* The folly of objections founded on the implicit assumption that the Bible must be treated as furnishing complete historical data has been of late strikingly illustrated in a number of instances. We extract a specimen or two from one of the best books which recent attacks on Holy Scripture have produced—viz., *The Bible and its Critics*, by the Rev. E. Garbett, pp. 117, 118:—"For instance, it is recorded in the Second Book of Kings (xx. 12), and in the historical chapters of Isaiah (xxxix. 1), that Merodach Baladan, King of Babylon, sent letters and a present to Hezekiah, because he heard that he had been sick. It was objected that no such king existed, and that Babylon was not a separate monarchy at the time. But the information supplied by a fragment of Berosus removes all the difficulty, and informs us that Merodach Baladan was an usurper, who reigned independently at Babylon for six months, and was then overthrown by Sennacherib. Another instance is that of Belshazzar, mentioned in the Book of Daniel (v. 1). The narrative of the prophet appeared to be in absolute contradiction to the statements of Berosus, that the last Babylonian monarch was absent from the city at the time of its capture by the Persians, was



important ends in view. It may, of course, seem to some self-opinionated persons that a revelation, if given at all, ought to have been so ordered as to be absolutely unassailable by human criticism—that it ought to have been conveyed in scientific modes of thought; calculated to prove satisfactory to chronologists, historians, ethnologists, geologists, &c.; constructed proof against all kinds of objections whatsoever, whether from the discoveries of *savans* or the acumen of statisticians. Similar speculative notions have been continually entertained about creation generally and God's government of it. Lucretius could not believe that the world was framed by the hand of God, "*tantâ stat prædita culpa.*" A wiseacre is somewhere on record who fancied that he could have arranged the universe a great deal better than he found it, had he been consulted. Something of the same presumption is infused into the attacks on the Bible of sceptics like Dr. Colenso. It is true he does not deny that the Pentateuch, "by whomsoever written, imparts to us revelations of the Divine will and character," but then he considers the main portions of its story as undoubtedly fictitious, and has no sort of guarantee to offer us as to the rest. Even his qualified admission, too, is deprived of all significance, because he is at pains, in his "Concluding Remarks," to inform us that "the same Divine Teacher" who "specially inspired the writer to conceive and then to express the transcendent, divine thought" set forth to us in the 3d and 6th of Exodus, as to the Name of God, "revealed also to the Sikh Goroos such great truths" as he proceeds to lay before us; and, further, to clear up the matter beyond doubt, he gives us, from the *Journal of the Asiatic Society of Bengal* (pp. 156, 157), some examples of the "direct teaching of the Spirit of God." These are apothegms of a stoico-fatalistic character, intended, we presume, as the book ends with them, to speak a few words by way of "something to fill up the aching void" which the Bishop feels guilty of having caused by demolishing our faith in the Pentateuch. "Whatsoever Rám willeth that without the least difficulty shall be: why therefore do ye kill yourselves with grief, when grief can avail you nothing?" So speaks the Brahminical divinity, and the Christian Bishop of Natal, his prophet, for our comfort. He indeed may be content "to take for his spiritual food the leaf and water of Rám;" we meanwhile have to note that in uttering this arrant blasphemy Bishop Colenso has for all practical purposes rejected the Scriptures as of any special Divine authority. The Bible doubtless is inspired according to his lordship; but then so are good and wise men of all countries and persuasions. Christian and heathen alike speak "living truths" under direct prompting of the Spirit: so also do the Prophets and Moses. But in either case there is nothing outside of ourselves, and our own recognition of what is inspired, to trust to or to lean on. Where all are inspired, there is practically nobody inspired; and Pantheism, as is its wont, collapses at once into Atheism. But the fundamental reason why we are called on to abandon the belief in Holy Scripture taught us in our childhood, guaranteed by the Church universal, and of which Bishop Colenso himself proposes still to require "unfeigned" acceptance from all who are to receive ordination at his hands, is that they—or at least the first five or six books of them—are full of alleged blunders as to matters of fact. "The case certainly is," we are assured, as Dr. Colenso represents it. Now, we particularly wish it to be noted that the faults charged against the records of Moses are faults *in detail*;

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afterwards taken prisoner, and treated with much kindness by Cyrus. But documents found at the ancient Ur by Sir H. Rawlinson have again removed the difficulty. They show that Nabonadius, the last king of Ptolemy's canon, associated with him on the throne, during the later years of his reign, his son Bil-shar-nzur, and allowed him the royal title. A third instance is supplied by the title ascribed in the Acts of the Apostles to Sergius Paulus, the Roman Governor of Cyprus. It was urged that this particular title implied the proconsular dignity, and that officers of such a high rank are known not to have been appointed to govern so small a dependency. Moreover, that the island was one of the imperial provinces, and would therefore be governed by a pro-prætor or consular legate. Yet both difficulties have been removed. The latter by a closer examination of the passage of Dio Cassius on which the objection was founded; the former by the subsequent discovery of a coin of the time of Claudius, dug up in the island, and bearing on its inscription the precise title given to Sergius Paulus by the sacred historian."

precisely similar and such as may unquestionably be detected in any historical work extant which at all partakes of the literary character of the Pentateuch; which are discovered, or rather *supposed* to be discovered, by applying the tests of scientific history and cross-examination in statistics. When due allowance is made for the antiquity of the records, which is so great as necessarily to deprive them almost entirely of corroborative and independent evidence, and to leave them through a large part of their course a solitary source of information; for the character of the books, which do not even profess to be drawn up for historical so much as for didactic, moral, and spiritual purposes; and for the miraculous nature of the transactions which they make known to us—which Dr. Colenso does not profess to disbelieve *because of the miracles*,—we say that the objections and difficulties in question are by no means of a number or a size to stagger any reasonable person. But, in truth, minds of the type of Bishop Colenso's would never acquiesce contentedly in anything which made demands on their faith. To suppose Moses supplied by express Divine interposition with the mental habitudes and carefully exact modes of notation which render Thucydides a historian of the highest rank, is probably to suppose a psychological impossibility. But even if it had pleased Almighty God, when He intervened to teach mankind what is necessary to their soul's salvation, to work a further special, sustained, and utterly irrelevant miracle, and to bestow on Moses such mundane benefits as an exact chronological era, even then our sceptics would not have been satisfied. Just as, when a prophecy is specially clear and definite, they will have it that it was written after the event,\* so assuredly had Moses penned his records to meet the historico-critical demands of modern censors, would that have been cited as demonstrative proof of a late date of composition. But having, on the other hand, written on the facts he has to hand down to us after the manner of his age and country, he is pounced upon at every turn by such a man as the Cambridge Wrangler before us, called upon to verify every statement *exanimissim*, disallowed in everything he says that cannot be adjusted from his own data by rule and square, and dismissed as generally a romancer.

For we must maintain that Dr. Colenso's objections resolve themselves substantially into one principle—viz., that Moses is to be treated as a professional historian, who has undertaken to give us an adequate account of the events comprised within his plan, and who is to be at once condemned as "unhistorical" when he fails to do so. It is looked for at his hands that he should make it clear to us how the people in question came to be so many; how and why they came to be at a particular place at a particular time; how and whence they got their arms and their tents, their support, and that of their cattle;—that he should give a full, true, and particular account of the several institutions he names, and the method of their observance; and should enlighten us as to the mode in which the public transactions he alludes to were carried out. Whatever he does not tell us as to such matters he is at once set down as ignorant of: and if his silence

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\* Thus Professor Jowett (*Essays and Reviews*, p. 343) brings it forward as a complaint against the received principles of interpreting Holy Scripture, that "the mention of a name later than the supposed age of a prophet is not allowed in Scripture as in other writings to be taken in evidence of the date (Isaiah xlv. 1)." And yet if a prophet speaks in terms which admit—as so many prophecies do—of an immediate and lower reference to David, or Solomon, or the Jewish nation, whilst a deeper and higher fulfilment of his words is claimed for Christ or the Christian Church, then that prophet is regarded simply as having "the power of seeing the ideal in the actual, or of tracing the Divine government in the movements of men" (*Essays and Reviews*, p. 70). On these principles all actual prognostication of events must, to be consistent, be altogether disallowed. For if a passage is brought forward which is clear and precise in its predictions, those very characteristics are taken as proof that it is an imposition,—written after the event. If, on the contrary, the prophet speaks in comprehensive language, then his sayings are regarded as merely examples of those pregnant words which gifted men utter from time to time out of their human sagacity. Such reasoning can only be logically maintained on one of two assumptions—either that Almighty God does not foresee what will happen in His own universe, or else that He has not been pleased to communicate supernaturally any of His foreknowledge to man. In one word, Prophecy, in the common and proper sense of the word—one might add, Revelation altogether, is rejected on *a priori* reasoning.

as to any details leaves us in doubt and difficulty as to how certain things came about, this is proof positive that he is "unhistorical"—or, in plain words, that he is telling us as facts things that never came to pass. Moses, *e.g.*, is commanded "to gather the congregation to the door of the tabernacle;" but then the congregation is estimated by some at 1,800,000 souls, by some at 3,000,000 (how strikingly do these gigantic differences show us the futility of this sort of argument!), and it is "inconceivable" to Bishop Colenso (chapter iv.) how such a spot could possibly have been here assigned for the meeting of so vast a multitude. And again (chapter v.) Moses, and afterwards Joshua, is said to have "spoken to all Israel;" but since nothing is said about the voices of the speakers "being strengthened by a miracle," nor any sort of hint given us that they spoke by deputy, or to detachments of the people at a time, or to those near them, the rest being merely present at "a dumb show," the statement, forsooth, is to be rejected as no fact. Such criticisms are perfectly childish. Public transactions of a parallel kind are not uncommon, and might, one would think, have supplied Bishop Colenso with an explanation had he really desired one. The *Times* correspondent at Athens the other day was present when the Greek army took the oath of allegiance to the Provisional Government; and the whole city turned out in gala to witness the spectacle. The Patriarch is described as addressing the army and the citizens, much, we suspect, as Moses and Joshua did the "assembly" of the Jewish people. Had Moses attempted to enter into such particulars, no doubt he would have given us an interesting photograph of the daily life of the vast camp of the chosen people; but assuredly "the world itself could not contain the books that should be written." On such matters our critic is very intolerant of the explanations of commentators. Making no allowance for the necessary brevity of the narrative of Moses, nor for our inability to supply its deficiencies from profane history, he dismisses at once as sophistical every hypothesis advanced to account for the difficulties he raises unless some ground for it be found in the text itself. He cannot believe, *e.g.*, that the vast number of two or three millions of people could have sprung from the seventy persons of Jacob's family during the interval of 215 years between the going down into Egypt and the Exodus. He is reminded by Kurtz that Jacob and his sons must certainly have taken with them their menservants and their maidservants as well as their cattle; that Abraham had 318 servants fit for war; that all the males would have been circumcised, and become part and parcel of the Hebrew people. But, replies Colenso, "there is no word or indication of any such *cortège* having accompanied Jacob into Egypt." So on other occasions, "assumed without proof;" "pure conjecture, without a shadow of ground for it," &c., are the kind of notice he vouchsafes to the well-meant and often most ingenious labours of believing expositors. Now, no proceeding can be more unfair than this. It assumes that nothing but what is expressly stated in the narrative is to be taken as having occurred; it assumes, in short, that the writer intended to afford complete information, when, in fact, it is no part of his plan to do so. Difficulties are raised out of the omissions in Moses' statements, and then when those gaps are supplied from the only available source, they are rejected because they have no basis in what Moses says. Why, if they had they would not be needed at all! The commentators proceed on the assumption, for which surely they are not without warrant—that Moses is a *bonâ fide* and intelligent deponent. On that assumption, difficulties in his relation must have *some* explanation; and that is the best which has most verisimilitude and cohesion with what precedes and follows. To reject an explanation intrinsically likely, simply because it is pure conjecture, is to beg the very question in dispute, and to assume that the narration is a baseless fiction, and a bungling fiction too.

As we have mentioned the wonderful increase of the Israelites in Egypt, and as many of the difficulties raised by Dr. Colenso and others gather ultimately round this point, we may remark another characteristic unfairness in the way in which it is presented in chap. xvi. of the book before us. The Bishop considers it "an indisputable fact, that the story, as told in the Pentateuch, intends it to

be understood—(1) that the children of Israel came out of Egypt about 215 years after they went down thither in the time of Jacob; (2) that they came out in the *fourth* generation from the adults, in the prime of life, who went down with Jacob.”

With a perverse literalness he will have it—in spite of sundry indications in the narrative to the contrary—in spite, too, of common sense—that only four generations of men and women can be allowed for the multiplication of the patriarchal household of Jacob into vast numbers which followed Moses, and for bridging over the whole period of the sojourning in Egypt. On such a supposition, of course, it is utterly impossible that the Hebrews could have increased to the number of two or three million souls. But then the hypothesis is itself childishly absurd. The promise to Abraham (Gen. xv. 16) that “in the fourth generation his seed should come hither again,” evidently imports that the great-grandchildren of those who went down into Egypt should be contemporaries of the Exodus. And so according to Moses it came to pass; for he and Aaron were fourth in descent from Levi. But there may have been, and doubtless were, many successive generations in descent from the Patriarchs alive simultaneously; and as the Orientals often marry at fifteen or even younger, it is obvious enough that the 215 years must have seen at least ten or a dozen generations of Hebrew parents concerned in the production of the vast multitudes for which Moses legislated. The fact that Aaron was eighty-three years old when he and Moses “stood before Pharaoh” (Ex. vii. 7) might have helped Dr. Colenso to see his error.

For our own parts we think the explanation of Kurtz, though rejected summarily by Dr. Colenso, a pretty certain one. It seems to us plain enough that the “family of Jacob” was in fact a tribe of the patriarchal kind,—with considerable numbers of servants and followers. When Simeon and Levi, two of the sons of Jacob, took each of them his sword, and came on the city of Shechem boldly, and slew all the males (Gen. xxxiv.), we have always been used to think that they must, like Abraham, have been aided in their bloody deed by a large body of male dependants. But Dr. Colenso cannot find a trace in the sacred story of Jacob being like his great ancestor in this particular; and, thoroughgoing literalist as he is, would unquestionably insist on it that Genesis is pledged to the assertion that two men took by storm a whole city. However, as he sometimes quotes Kalisch, we commend to him an illustration from that commentator, of the marvellous increase of the Israelites in Egypt; and Kalisch for our purpose is the more serviceable because his rationalism is tolerably advanced:—“We refer the reader further to the authentic and interesting account concerning the Englishman Fine, who was, in the year 1589, by a shipwreck, thrown, with four females, upon a deserted island, south-east of the Cape of Good Hope, and whose descendants had, after seventy-eight years (in 1667), increased to more than 11,000 souls.” (On Ex. xii. 37.)

There are undoubtedly many difficult questions connected with the Pentateuch—questions on which we not only fear no new light, but earnestly desire it. A Bishop who should, out of the sacred studies to which his profession binds him, discover and impart to his brethren any such light, would deserve all honour. But the book before us in all such respects is utterly worthless and utterly unworthy of an Episcopal pen. Dr. Colenso is little fitted to deal with the intricate inquiries of various kinds which arise out of these venerable records. He blunders from ignorance of the Hebrew original, or at least inattention to it; and he blunders from the commonest and stupidest of all causes of blundering—want of attention to the context. He has neither the habits of caution which experience in exegesis begets, nor the philological attainments which make his acceptance of particular words and phrases of any authority. Take, *e.g.*, the mare’s nests he has discovered in his sixth chapter. The camp of the Israelites was, it seems, “*a mile and a half across in each direction, with the Tabernacle in the centre.*” Scott, indeed, considers it “to have formed a moveable city *twelve miles square.*”\*

\* Such language is inaccurate. It is more strictly correct to speak of the *camps* than of the *camp* of the Israelites in the Wilderness, as indeed is done sometimes, *e.g.*, Numbers x. 2.

How, then, could the priests—there were, says Dr. Colenso, only three of them—Aaron, Eleazar, or Ithamar, act as commanded in Leviticus iv., and carry the refuse of certain sorts of sacrifices “without the camp,” and burn them with fire? For, argues he from the letter of the text, it was *the priest himself* that was to carry them! Now, had our critic looked at the original, he would have seen that the difficulty is purely of his own manufacturing, for the original, strictly taken, means plainly that the priest is to *cause* these things to be carried without the camp: or had he taken the trouble of looking at the Septuagint, he would scarce have missed the true sense, for the Greek having spoken all along of ὁ ἱερεὺς offering the sacrifice, &c., changes suddenly in verse 12 to ἐξήσουσιν ὅλον τὸν μόσχον, which of course simply imports that the whole victim *should be carried out*.\* Bishop Colenso, in the same page, and on the same assumption about the size of the camp, has constructed a notable proof of the unhistorical character of the narrative, from “the daily necessities of the people.” “They could not surely all have gone outside of the camp for the necessities of nature, as commanded in Deut. xxiii. 12—14. There were the aged and infirm, women in childbirth, sick persons, and young children, who could not have done this. And, indeed, the command itself supposes the person to have a ‘paddle’ upon his ‘weapon,’ and, therefore, must be understood to apply only to the *males*, or, rather, only to the 600,000 *warriors*.” Now it is truly astounding that, when the passage from Deuteronomy was before his lordship’s eyes, he should have overlooked the fact, apparent on the very surface of the text, that the regulation in question was one which pertained only to an army in a campaign. Like so many of the Mosaic precepts, it is partly typical, and partly sanitary; and we should have supposed would have been readily enough appreciated by one who should not be altogether unfamiliar with life in tents. Bishop Colenso would do well to remember that there are many things necessary to be ordered in some way or other, but which are nevertheless, as Hooker observes, “very unsavoury when they come to be disputed of.”

It would seem from his remarks in the Preface that Dr. Colenso considers many of his objections to be quite new, or, at least, that they will be novel to the English public. We believe the two last mentioned are new, and should by no means wish to go shares in any renown which may redound to him from their discovery. But the important and substantial difficulties on which those who would sensibly and seriously maintain the position taken up in this volume must mainly rely, are old and familiar ones; often and carefully appraised by those who have defended the credit of the Pentateuch both in England and elsewhere. Take, for instance, that which is placed by Dr. Colenso in the forefront of his array, we presume as one of the strongest of his instances, the difficulty arising out of the statements in Genesis respecting the family of Judah. Dr. Colenso refers to Genesis xlv. 12, where the children of Judah “which came into Egypt” are recounted: proves—or thinks he proves, in a note, that Judah was only forty-two years old at the removal into Egypt; and then reasons thus:—

But, if we turn to Genesis xxxviii., we shall find that, in the course of these forty-two

For the people were in fact divided amongst *five* camps (see Numbers ii.). The Tabernacle with Moses and Aaron, the Priests and the Levites, together with the waggons, &c., belonging to their service, formed one camp in the centre: the other twelve tribes were divided into four camps of three tribes each, under separate standards, and placed round it. The expressions “without the camp,” &c., need not, always at least, be understood to import the space beyond the utmost limits of the whole encampment. It is enough to refer it to the particular camp in question.

\* For further examples of the like kind we must be content to refer to a letter of Dr. Hermann Adler, Chief Rabbi of England, in the *Athenæum* of Dec. 6. Dr. Adler, after exposing the mistake into which Dr. Colenso has fallen, in ch. viii., p. 45. by adopting the rendering of the English Bible in Lev. xxiii. 40 (“Ye shall take you on the first day the *boughs* of goodly trees”), when the original, and indeed the margin of our translation, has *fruit*,—observes, “The author does not seem to have consulted the original; he suffers himself to be bound in the trammels of the Authorised Version, and servilely copies its mis-translations.”

years of Judah's life, the following events are recorded to have happened—1. Judah grows up, marries a wife—"at that time," v. 1, that is, after Joseph's being sold into Egypt, when he was "seventeen years old," Genesis xxxvii. 2, and when Judah, consequently, was *twenty* years old—and has, separately, three sons by her. 2. The eldest of these three sons grows up, is married, and dies. The second grows to maturity (suppose in another year), marries his brother's widow, and dies. The third grows to maturity (suppose in another year still), but declines to take his brother's widow to wife. She then deceives Judah himself, conceives by him, and in due time bears him twins, Pharez and Zarah. 3. One of these twins also grows to maturity, and has two sons, Hezron and Hamul, born to him, before Jacob goes down into Egypt.

Now, we must observe in the first place that the data on which it is argued that Judah was only forty-two years old at the removal are very loose and uncertain. Estimates of age based on such points as Judah being the third of Leah's children, and therefore born in the third year of his mother's marriage; and being so many and no more years older than Joseph; who is spoken of as "thirty years old when he stood before Pharaoh," &c., are for critical purposes like Dr. Colenso's utterly unsatisfactory. It is even uncertain how long Jacob was in Padan-Aram. Kennicott, as is well known, will have it that the Hebrew of Genesis xxx. points to a connection with Laban of *forty* years instead of twenty, as is generally assumed. Dr. Colenso may see the whole point well argued out in so accessible a book as *Adam Clarke's Commentary*. Collateral circumstances, *e.g.*, the age of Dinah in Genesis xxxiv.—and in truth the whole of the events in that chapter—seem to point to a longer period than is ordinarily supposed having intervened between Jacob's marriage and his rejoining Joseph in Egypt. The truth is, there are no materials in these chapters for exact chronological calculations. It is probable enough that the sequence of the chapters has but a distant relation to the actual order of occurrences. But waiving this point, it seems clear to us that Hezron and Hamul, and probably some other of the seventy who are loosely spoken of as constituting the family which went down into Egypt, were not born till some time afterwards. Dr. Colenso, of course, will not allow this for a moment. He recalls the writer to the very letter of his expressions, construes them with legal accuracy, and will have it that neither more nor less than seventy persons must have been born to Jacob at that time. He dismisses peremptorily the explanations given by Patrick, Scott, Kurtz, &c., that "the heads of families born in Egypt in Jacob's lifetime are included; that the grandsons and great-grandsons of Jacob, though not yet born, were in their fathers, and therefore entered Egypt with them," &c. "Why not also the great-great-grandsons, and so on *ad infinitum*?" rejoins Dr. Colenso. Why, the reason is obvious, and one would really think, in the chapter entitled the "Explanations of Expositors considered," that the Bishop had twisted himself every way in order to escape catching sight of it. The writer had to give some account of the family of Jacob at the time of the removal, and he has governed himself whilst doing it by genealogical rather than chronological considerations. We have here, in fact, the roots of the genealogical system of the Jews; and Moses, writing in after time, sets out the family of Jacob as it was regarded by those who traced their ancestral lines to it. It is probable, indeed, that the leading males of Jacob's household are all recounted; but assuredly there were amongst the grandchildren and great-grandchildren of Jacob more than two females. Yet two only are named. Let us hear Kalisch on these points:—

The text distinctly observes, "All the souls of the house of Jacob that came into Egypt were seventy" (ver. 27). The same statement is as clearly repeated in other passages (Exod. i. 5; Deut. x. 22). It is therefore scarcely possible to doubt that this was a historical tradition generally received among the Israelites. However, the tenour of the present list certainly leads to the inference that the total number of Hebrew settlers in Egypt was considerably larger than seventy. For, 1. Jacob had daughters (ver. 7), and yet Dinah alone, known from a former occurrence, is mentioned in this place (ver. 15). 2. His sons came *with their wives* (ver. 26), none of whom is here counted. 3. They had likewise daughters (ver. 7); but Serah only, the daughter of Asher, is introduced. Further, are these names fictitious and chosen at random? or which was the author's source or guide? The reply to these questions will lead us to a solution of the difficulty just pointed out. Our text evidently embodies the chief families which subsequently became important or

powerful in each tribe; as in almost all preceding genealogies, the names are, on the whole, not those of individuals, but represent divisions or clans; and if the introduction of Dinah is explicable from the preceding narrative (xxxiv.), Serah may later have become noted in the organisation of the tribe of Asher (comp. Numbers xxxvi. 1—5).

The narrative itself appears to us to indicate that the writer was well aware that *all* the persons he here names were not born before the descent into Egypt. We are sorry to have to remark that Dr. Colenso appears to have misquoted the text Genesis xlv. 12 to serve his own purposes; anyhow, it is misquoted so as to do so. He cites it thus:—"And the sons of Judah, Er, and Onan, and Shelah, and Pharez, and Zarah; but Er and Onan died in the land of Canaan; and the sons of Pharez, Hezron and Hamul." Now, the passage stands in our Authorised Version thus:—"And the sons of Judah; Er, and Onan, and Shelah, and Pharez, and Zarah: but Er and Onan died in the land of Canaan. And the sons of Pharez were Hezron and Hamul."

Now, the difference in punctuation, and the little omission of the word *were*, are not unimportant. This word is in the Hebrew text. It is even emphatic in the Septuagint (ἐγένοντο δὲ υἱοὶ Φαρίξ Ἐσρὸν καὶ Ἰεμουήλ). Plainly, therefore, Hezron and Hamul are intended to be *separated off* and *distinguished from* the others whose names are recounted. The full stop after the word Canaan in the verse is wrongly altered by Bishop Colenso to a semicolon. The effect of that alteration is that Hezron and Hamul are aggregated with those who "came into Egypt," contrary, as it seems to us, to the plain intent of the writer. He takes opportunity to give a description of the family of Judah *apropos* of the migration of the whole clan. He mentions, of course, Er and Onan; remarks that they died before the removal; and subjoins, for obvious tribal reasons, the names of Hezron and Hamul, who were born subsequently, and completed the family system once more, according to the notions of the Jews. If Dr. Colenso will expend a little more arithmetic on the passage, he will find thereby additional grounds for giving up, partially at least, this particular objection. He remarks in chapter iii. that the writer's language about the family of Judah is "inaccurate;" though it is on the supposition of his intending to be precise and accurate that the whole objection ultimately rests. He refers to verse 15, which sums up the offspring of Leah. In it we read, "All the souls of his sons and his daughters were thirty and three." The Bishop truly remarks that Jacob himself is here incorrectly included amongst his own sons and daughters by Leah. Now, instead of persisting throughout that each and every one of the persons named, except Er and Onan, is to be supposed to have gone down to Egypt, we beg to suggest to Dr. Colenso to take the matter the other way; to count Er and Onan as amongst the thirty-three of verse 15, as the letter of that verse plainly requires; and to exclude Hezron and Hamul from those who are to be counted as having gone down into Egypt, as verse 12 plainly suggests. To be sure, this course will occasion a verbal collision with verse 8; but, then, Dr. Colenso's own interpretation clashes with verses 8 and 15. The truth is that there is no difficulty at all as to the family of Judah arising from Genesis xlv., if only the writer receive that candid and equitable allowance which is readily accorded to other writers, and if the reader employ a little common sense. Unfortunately, however, these are just the articles which the Bishop of Natal has for Biblical exegesis least on hand. We were much struck, on taking up the book, to find that the first two or three references we tested would not verify. Dr. Colenso is often—we have seen one instance above—loose in the important matter of citations.\*

\* We cull a few specimens, taking at random p. 35, and testing such references as books at hand allow. The page, too, is a short one, nearly half its space being occupied by the commencement of a new chapter, title, &c. On it, however, the text, Josh. viii. 34, 35, is slightly misquoted. The reference to *Kurtz* iii. p. 149 is wrong; it should be, ii. p. 149; that to "*Horne's Introd.* iii. p. 205" is unsatisfactory. There have been ten editions of *Horne's Introduction*, differing very widely indeed from one another. The reference will not verify by the last edition. The reference to "*Kalisch, Exod.* p. ii." is unintelligible to any one who knows the work. In turning over the leaves we observe many others in all parts which we have had occasion to test and to mark: *e.g.*, the passage given as a quotation from

Such a person is the last who should commence an attack on writers of established authority for self-contradictions, improbabilities, &c. Should a new edition of this work be called for—which we should be more sorry than surprised to hear of—Dr. Colenso should work over it all again; or compile at least a long list of errata.

Amongst the more serious difficulties put forward is that which occupies chapter xiv., “the number of the firstborns compared with the number of male adults.” The first-born males, of a month old and upwards, were numbered according to God’s command (Num. iii. 43), and found to be 22,263. The total number of males in the host may be reckoned at about a million. Hence we shall have apparently only one first-born male to every forty-four. Adding on the females in equal numbers, we have apparently the astounding result that every mother in Israel must have had on an average above forty children! The usual proportion of “firstborns” appears to be one to every eight or ten persons. Hence no doubt there is a difficulty, worthy of hermeneutical ingenuity. The commentators furnish a good many aids towards its solution, which are rejected of course one after another by Bishop Colenso, but which to us appear to do something towards satisfactory explanation. The Bishop, however, does not notice the likeliest of them all—viz., that the strict enforcement of the decree of Pharaoh, “every son that is born ye shall cast into the river,” had greatly diminished at the time in question—some fourteen months after the Exodus—the natural number of “male firstborns” “from a month old and upwards.” We contribute a further observation from Rosenmüller, a scholiast sufficiently free from prejudice in favour of orthodoxy to merit Dr. Colenso’s sympathy—“*Vel hodie apud nos e septem, octo, aut decem conjugijs, etsi omnibus illis masculâ prole numerosissimis, vix unum alterumque reperiemus, quod primam prolem filium susceptum alat; reliqua omnia, quia in illis puella primi partus honorem præcepit, omni spe primogeniti alicujus unquam habendi sunt exclasa.*” Even at this day amongst ourselves out of seven, eight, or ten marriages, although all very fruitful in male offspring, we shall scarce find one or two which rears a first-born son; all the others, because a girl has preoccupied the honour of the first birth, are excluded from all hope of ever having a first-born son. The learned commentator might have strengthened his case had he been aware of a curious fact which the accurate records of the last sixty years have brought to light—viz., that the rate of mortality in stillborn and very young infants is much greater as to males than females—in the ratio, indeed, of 3 to 2 (*Quetelet on Man*, ch. v., sec. 2). The statistics of the subject, in truth, considered along with the rule Exod. xiii. 2, reduce considerably the dimensions of the difficulty. Such points had not altogether escaped Kurtz, who observes that “statistical tables show that the firstborn is more frequently a female than a male;” but is abruptly set aside by Bishop Colenso, with the remark that “whatever may be the case generally,”

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Zech. xiii. 3 is not strictly a quotation at all. The reference to *Kurtz* on p. 42 should be iii. 201 instead of iii. 20; on next page, *Kurtz* ii. p. 202 should be, iii. 202; on p. 84, *Kurtz* iii. p. 209 should be, iii. 205. Dr. Colenso’s book, in fact, is full, from end to end, of blunders of this kind, and yet the student can neither trust him to quote accurately, nor to tell accurately where the alleged quotation is from, and must test everything for himself. Neither are the errors clerical only. It is a very serious thing to find Dr. Colenso quoting and arguing as he does on p. 66—“Why have ye brought up the congregation of Jehovah into this wilderness, that we and our cattle should die there? And wherefore have ye made us to come up out of Egypt, to bring us into this evil place? It is no place of seed, or of figs, or of vines, or of pomegranates; *neither is there any water to drink.*”—N. xx. 4, 5. From this passage it appears also that the water from the rock did *not* follow them, as some have supposed. “Beware that thou forget not Jehovah, thy God, who led thee through that great and terrible wilderness, wherein were fiery serpents, and scorpions, and drought, *where there was no water.*”—D. viii. 15. In the last passage the Bishop has just stopped short of the words “who brought thee forth water out of the rock of flint,” which complete the verse, but do not favour his argument about the resources of the Sinaitic peninsula. The former passage, quoted likewise to show the drought of the desert, and on which an inference is founded, that the water miraculously supplied “from the rock” did not follow them, is actually the introduction to the *second* miraculous supply at Rephidim! Dr. Colenso appears to have thought that the smiting of the rock in Exod. xvii. was the only transaction of the kind.



in most of the recorded instances amongst the Hebrews the firstborn was more frequently a male! But is not the whole of the Bishop's objection based on what appears to be "the case generally?" It appears then—independently of the absurdity of arguing from a very few cases in which it chanced that the children of a family are on record *nominatim* to a whole nation—and those cases by no means ascertained ones (for the eldest born may in some of them have been a female who died)—that the results of modern statistical science are to be respected when they supply an argument against Moses, but thrown overboard at once if they happen to support him!

Our readers will excuse us if we decline to discuss any more of these difficulties. One or two of the weightiest of them we have noticed, and exhausted in so doing our own space and our reader's patience. We do not say that these difficulties have been thoroughly solved, nor even that they can be so. But their dimensions and their significance have been ludicrously exaggerated by Dr. Colenso's restless and hypercritical mind. The book throughout exhibits one and the same manner of treatment. Its writer is quick to see a mote in Moses' eye, but never seems to suspect the huge beam which obscures his own. Lax and reckless in his habits of thought and statement himself, he is the severest of censors over Moses and all his apologetists and expositors. His attitude of mind is unfair; his main principle of criticism is slight, and in large measure irrelevant; his applications of that principle are sometimes conspicuous misconceptions, often pure failures. And yet we fear that, in spite of all its weakness, the book will do much mischief. Never was there anything written which more strongly confirmed the line, "a little learning is a dangerous thing." To find the first and perhaps the greatest of the Old Testament writers put to the question, and pronounced unable to stand an audit, by a great arithmetician and a Christian Bishop, will stagger many who are unused to this kind of investigation. The book will give a wider circulation to a number of pettifogging criticisms which look awkward enough at first sight, especially when brought forward with professions of reluctance and a semblance of candour. We would entreat those who have not made theology their study above all to avoid this book; and to rest assured that very much of it admits of decisive refutation, whilst the remainder is far outweighed by the irrefragable testimony and the solid and manifold argument adducible to evince the actual historical matter-of-fact truthfulness of Moses. If they must needs take up the subject for themselves, let them not do so by halves. There is a serious task before them, demanding for its adequate fulfilment no little both of learning and leisure. If they cannot afford these, they ought faithfully to abide by the Church's constant witness to the Holy Scriptures. If, like St. Thomas, they cannot rest in mere testimony, let them search and try the whole of this great question to the bottom, with prayer, with humility of mind, and with diligent use of all accessible aids, and all the talents God has given them. By either way, thank God, the goal reached will be the same. Such conduct, and nothing less or else, befits those who undoubtedly have before them no meaner stake than their hope in Christ. For let us all be sure that if we go with Bishop Colenso as to the Pentateuch, we cannot stop there. The selfsame sort of arguments have been many times urged, with quite as much speciousness, against the other books both of the Old Testament and the New. The attestation of Christ our Lord is beyond all challenge of any candid person's reason accorded repeatedly and beyond recall to that book of the Law of which He has declared that "not one jot or one tittle shall fail."

Men who have thought at all deeply, or read much, will see, without entangling themselves in the barren labyrinths of figures to which Bishop Colenso invites them, that the whole set of objections in reality proves nothing, and adds not the smallest power to any party or opinion in the controversies about these venerable books. The difficulties, granting them all, are superficial, and may find parallels in abundance in books of undoubted authenticity and historical value. The true sceptic will look far deeper than such a book as this for momenta which shall turn the quivering scales in which hang suspended faith and

unfaith. As to these difficulties of Colenso's, some of them, he will see, can be answered; as to others, the explanations offered are weak enough certainly, but the defence is about as good as the attack. Kurtz and Keil and Hengstenberg savour, indeed, strongly in many places of special pleading, but assuredly not a whit more so than Ewald, or De Wette, or Bishop Colenso: as to the rest of the objections, he will rightly hold them cheap, because they are founded, not on knowledge, but on ignorance.

We would desire to speak with all gentleness of Bishop Colenso himself. We will not question his integrity; his honesty of purpose; his sincerity when he describes his distress of mind whilst the convictions here avowed were being formed; his regret at feeling himself constrained to lay these convictions before his brethren. But, granting all this, we cannot exonerate him from severe and grave censure. From what he tells us it is clear that it is but a few months since his doubts about the Pentateuch gathered head, and assumed the shape in which they are exhibited in this unhappy book. Is it wise to obtrude such hasty notions thus ostentatiously on a Christian public? Is it modest to do so with that assurance and self-confidence which mark these pages? Is it so very certain that present opinions will prove more durable than past ones? or more invincible by further investigation and reflection? It is indeed a striking proof of self-ignorance to find Colenso recalling with a sort of half pitying half envying regret the days when he was, if we may be permitted to describe his notions of himself, "after the straitest sect," a Bibliolater. Those who have known him longest would, we suspect, be most puzzled to name the time when his views were sound and consistent. His theological notions have ever been shifty, misty, and heterogeneous; and threaten only now at last to settle on their lees into something even more pernicious and corrupt than their foretokens. Such a man certainly ought not to have taken orders at all; and having taken orders, ought least of all to have been made a Bishop. But the responsibility of these solemn steps attaches far more to himself than to any one else. He has freely taken on him an office of the very highest trust—trust so high and so utter that the Church has little if any more security for fidelity in it than the pledged word given to her at consecration. But the very unreserve of the Church's confidence in a Bishop involves him in a more searching responsibility and a nearer obligation to scrupulous faithfulness. Bishop Colenso must ere long see that his plain duty is to carry out his mission in the spirit and with the intentions which governed its bestowal; or if that may not be, frankly to lay it aside. It is high time that amiable and conscientious persons, such as he is, ceased to deceive others and themselves by the shallow talk with which he closes his Preface about the Church "representing the religious feeling of a free nation," and "requiring us to protest against all perversions of the truth," &c. The Church of England is a religious society which takes pledges as to the tenets of her office-bearers before she commissions them. In truth, no religious society can be carried on at all except on some such plan as this. It is not open to an honourable man to accept her places of influence and dignity, and then to employ these advantages in subverting the very principles on which she is founded. That Bishop Colenso has controverted those principles, and is even now labouring with all his might to discredit and to destroy them, we fear that his own friends and sympathisers of former days cannot at present deny.