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## ARTICLE II.

## AUTHORSHIP OF THE PENTATEUCH.

BY SAMUEL C. BARTLETT, D.D., PROFESSOR IN CHICAGO THEOLOGICAL SEMINARY.

(Continued from Vol. XX. p. 865.)

AUTHORSHIP is a matter of testimony. Resemblance in style and thought, and apparent conformity of circumstances, though they may confirm the testimony, can never take its place as evidence. The presence of certain qualities in the composition cannot dispense with actual testimony; because those qualities admit of skilful imitation. Nor can the absence of those qualities, unless in extreme degree, outweigh the force of testimony; because the same writer, in different moods and at distant intervals, sometimes greatly differs from himself. Abundant instances show the facility with which acute judges may be misled when they rely merely on their critical powers; while the frequent conflicting decisions of the most dogmatic of literary critics ought to be a standing admonition to all such arrogance. Men like Hume, Lord Kames, and Robertson, fully deceived at first by the poems of "Ossian," and some of them never undeceived; Sheridan and many other literary men of London accepting the "Vortigern" of the boy Ireland as a relic of the myriad-minded Shakspeare; Sir Walter Scott commenting on the "Raid of Featherstonehaugh" as a genuine ancient ballad; Gesenius, Hamaker, and Rochette imposed upon by spurious Greek and Phœnician inscriptions from Malta; German scholars (including Tübingen Reviewers) maintaining the antiquity of the "Amber Witch," till the author found it hard to prove his authorship; the enigma of "Junius," baffling Europe for half a century;—cases like these are memorable and instructive. Questions of authorship are to be settled chiefly by testimony.

We bring testimony, positive and various, to sustain the received opinion that Moses was the author of the Pentateuch.

*First*, it has been shown that this position is entirely credible by the known circumstances of the case: The art of writing was in abundant use around the Israelites at that period; the requisite impulse — a great national and religious epoch — had arrived; the occasion for *such* a composition now existed in the fixed establishment of a nation's institutions and religion; the requisite person had also appeared, in the remarkable man who is admitted, not only to have delivered the nation, but to have founded their civil and religious institutions, and in whom, legislating for the present and the future, it would have been the height of folly to dispense with written records. *Secondly*, it has been shown that there is positive, abundant, and uncontradicted testimony to sustain the position: This testimony is found, first, in the volume itself, which ascribes to Moses, and to him alone, a direct agency in its production. None deny that most of Deuteronomy, and portions of Exodus and Numbers are therein referred to Moses; no other author is hinted at; the specifications in those cases exclude no other portions, but virtually include them, and the more especially as the reasons for a record in other instances were still more urgent; distinct indications are given that these passages were but parts of a larger whole; special provision was also made, on the one hand, for a record of all God's utterances to Moses, and a claim was set up, on the other, to be that exact record; and meanwhile the portions admitted to claim a Mosaic authorship rehearse and authenticate the essential features of the whole Pentateuch. Again, the later books of the Old Testament often refer to the Pentateuch, in whole or in part, frequently ascribing it to Moses, and never, either in whole or in part, to any other author. Still further, it was the undisputed belief of the Jewish nation at and before the time of Christ, known to be handed reverentially down from the past, — a testimony so well known that its echoes are to be found even in heathen

writers. Furthermore, the Saviour and his apostles reasserted the received opinion, clearly committing themselves, by positive statements, to that view. In addition to all this, there is an entire absence of any other claimant, either affirmed or hinted at in the course of history. *Thirdly*, it has been shown how this testimony is confirmed by other indications: The manner of the volume accords with the notion of a record made in the time of the main transactions recorded; most of the other books of the Old Testament contain traces of its previous existence; various archaisms are found in it; fresh marks of a residence in Egypt appear upon it;<sup>1</sup> traces of the wilderness are not wanting; no later period can be suggested whose characteristics would have given rise to such a book; and finally, those who deny that Moses was the author cannot present, much less maintain, a plausible substitute, there being among them no agreement as to the number or the date of the alleged writers.

A more remarkable instance of testimony lying entirely on one side of a question cannot be found. Nor is it easy to mention any legitimate kind of evidence which is wanting. An additional sweeping declaration in the Pentateuch, that the volume as a whole was written by the great lawgiver, would not have helped the case; not only because of possible questions as to changes made subsequent to the declaration, but also by reason of the entire nonchalance with which the masters of the "higher criticism" summarily set aside such testimony. Thus all these critics, De Wette, Knobel, Davidson, and the like, freely admit that the whole

<sup>1</sup> In addition to the correspondences of Hebrew and old Egyptian names of familiar objects, mentioned in a former Article (Bib. Sacra, Vol. XX. p. 845), we may give the following from Seyffarth: שֹׁפָר, Egyptian *s'pr*, trumpet; אֶבֶן, *ab*, finger; אֵר, *art*, span; כַּף, *s'p*, palm; אֲבַת־חַיִּים, papyrus, *km*, represented by a picture of the plant, and forming the symbol of lower Egypt; חָרֶץ, *harz*, harp, Egyptian *nfr*, represented by the outline of a harp, though having the derivative sense of "good;" and several other words, of which the connection is in most instances very clearly traceable through the Coptic. — Seyffarth's *Theologische Schriften der Alter Aegypten*, p. 117.

book of Deuteronomy (except the beginning and the ending) claims to be the exact utterance of Moses. But the statement goes for nothing with them. Says De Wette:<sup>1</sup> "The author of Deuteronomy, as it appears, would have us regard his whole book as the work of Moses; but," adds this judicial personage, "the obscurity and unfitness of these claims deprive them of all value as proofs." After the same manner, Dr. Davidson proceeds in his latest work:<sup>2</sup> "A late writer," he says, "represents the whole of Deuteronomy, or at least chaps. iv. — xxx., as proceeding from Moses's hand (ch. xxxi). This was a bold step for the unknown author; and had not this been a time of some literary activity, the thing could scarcely have suggested itself to his mind, or been successfully executed." He thinks "the deception was an innocent one," and proceeds to deal both with the moral question and with the extraordinary phenomenon he has conjured up, of such a forgery palmed off upon Moses in "*a time of some literary activity*," in the following mode: "The *sentiments* conveyed by the Deuteronomist are essentially those of Moses. In this manner we reduce the fiction of the writer to a very harmless thing. Nor is it without example in the range of the national history of the Jews; for the book of Ecclesiastes presents a parallel. Why it was not challenged we are unable to say [!]; but there were comparatively few persons in the nation at the time who had a knowledge of literature,—some Levites and prophets being the learned class. And it is possible that at the particular time and among the people of the Jews the work would not be regarded as reprehensible simply on account of its envelope. The temper of the times was favorable to the reception of the work, even though it may have been recognized in its true character, since it is unreasonable to look for a high standard of Christian morality in a period of Jewish degeneracy. Comparatively innocent as the fiction was, we cannot blame the age for accepting it

<sup>1</sup> De Wette's Introduction (Parker's Translation), Vol. II. p. 159.

<sup>2</sup> Davidson's Introduction, Vol. I. pp. 375, 376.

without hesitation; though it may have been aware of the dress chosen by the author for his work. But perhaps not many knew the real case; the learned class being small."

We do not pause to analyze this notable piece of reasoning, and point out either its lofty standard, its consistency with itself and the writer's connected statements, the distinctness of its solutions, the certainty of its assumptions, or the firmness and cloudlessness of its whole theory. We only wish to show the estimation in which an author's own deliberate testimony is held by such writers.

Of course, this whole class of writers, from De Wette to Davidson, make no account whatever of any assertion of Christ and his apostles on this subject. "Such a prejudice should have no weight at all in criticism," says De Wette;<sup>1</sup> and Davidson echoes: "the higher criticism must decide the question independently" of the New Testament;<sup>2</sup> Dr. Davidson admits that Christ and the apostles not merely assume but affirm that Moses was the author of the Pentateuch or principal portions of it;<sup>3</sup> but, with some show of hesitancy, he finally subsides to the same level with Colenso, that the Saviour was mistaken: "considering therefore the human limitations to which the Son of God was subjected on earth, we are not irreverent in supposing that he shared the common views of the Jews of his day in regard to points ethically or doctrinally unimportant."<sup>4</sup>

The external evidence in the case is certainly all, perhaps more than all, that could be looked for on a question of ancient authorship. In its amount and unanimity it is, for that class of cases, quite extraordinary. The opposers of the Mosaic authorship clearly show that their view is not influenced in the slightest degree by the amount or kind of testimony. To individuals who can so easily despatch the express statements of Deuteronomy as a "harmless fiction," it would of course make no difference if similar statements

<sup>1</sup> De Wette's Introduction, Vol. II. p. 160.

<sup>2</sup> Davidson's Introduction, Vol. I. p. 126.

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 125.

<sup>4</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 15"

had recurred in every chapter from the first of Genesis. Men who can not only dispose of the reverential belief of the whole Jewish nation, coming down unbroken, uncontradicted, and entwined with the very institutions which they confessedly received from Moses, but can also blur over a grand problem of stupendous imposture in the unconscious slipshod method of Dr. Davidson, could find no weighty evidence in the past. The position taken is really that of abrogating all historic testimony in a case of literary history, and substituting the supposed acuteness of a modern critic. We proceed, therefore, to our fourth proposition.

IV. The concurrent evidence that Moses was the author of the Pentateuch is exposed to no decisive or even formidable objection.

It is not necessary to deny that there are points requiring explanation, and difficulties needing solution. How could we, for a moment, suppose it to be otherwise? Who could be so simple as to expect that a volume of such immense antiquity, ranging so far back of all contemporaneous and explanatory writings, should present no perplexing questions as to its form and history? The absence of all such matters would be really suspicious and indicative of artifice. Many of the alleged difficulties may appear to be imaginary, others more or less real, but all of them capable of a fair solution — such a solution as, with a similar weight of evidence on the other side, would be admitted at once in the gravest judicial investigations as sufficient. We shall endeavor to touch upon all that require attention; and for this purpose shall have in mind prominently, though not exclusively, the collection of objections industriously arranged by Dr. Davidson in his recent Introduction to the Old Testament. We fix upon this as the latest, as well as one of the most deliberate and laborious, presentations of the case against the claims of Moses.

Now in reply to the varied and positive testimony to the fact of authorship, it was competent to the objectors to take one or all of three courses: first, they might, if possible,

have introduced conflicting testimony ; secondly, they might show, if they could, that the present testimony is worthless, and might point out why it is not to be received as other similar but far weaker testimony is received ; or, thirdly, they might destroy its force by finding in the contents of the volume inseparable portions which *could not* have come from the alleged author ; such as misstatements of facts that he must have known, or facts betraying a later date or a different residence. In the last case, however, it is not enough to point out a supposed improbability, but a real incompatibility. It is also necessary to the validity of the objection to show that all theories of occasional emendation or interpolation are absolutely inadmissible. Nothing less will satisfy the course of a judicial investigation.

Of these three possible courses, the first and simplest is not even attempted. Unfortunately for the objectors, the whole sweep of testimony points only to Moses. Not the slightest hint can be ferreted out from any quarter, in the course of ages, implying that any other person than Moses was responsible for our present Pentateuch as a whole.

The second course has been almost equally given up. Supercilious and contemptuous dismissals of the claims of these witnesses are abundant enough ; but a calm and manly examination and refutation of these claims in comparison with such testimony as that on which the writings of Josephus, Tacitus, or Thucydides are received as genuine,— where is it to be found? Nowhere. Nothing would better disclose the unfairness of the objections than the attempt.

The actual argument is reduced chiefly to the third method. It is the application of what is called “ the higher criticism ” to the contents of the volume. It comprises a considerable variety of material, collected with an industry that is out of all proportion to the logic, and presented with an air of assurance which lacks only a valid basis to be truly formidable. As matter of fact it comprises much that is unsupported, considerable that is irrelevant, and some things which, though bearing on the point, are entirely indecisive.



None of them, as we shall endeavor to show, are insuperable objections to the view received on testimony.

The objections may be classed as positive, negative, and irrelevant.

1. Positive objections. Statements and allusions in the Pentateuch alleged to be incompatible with its having been written by Moses.

(i.) Here belongs the attempt once made to show that the Pentateuch contained numerous palpable errors in its statement of Egyptian customs. This effort, of which Von Bohlen was the leading exponent (in his work published in 1835, *Die Genesis erläutert*), now deserves mentioning only for completeness of enumeration. Had that ill-fated author made good his attempt, it certainly would have been a valid disproof of the composition of the Pentateuch by Moses; inasmuch as such glaring errors would have been incompatible with the knowledge which Moses, as a resident of Egypt, must have had of that country. As matter of fact, the attack was so completely demolished in every particular as to result in a remarkable proof of the minute accuracy of the sacred volume, and to become strongly corroborative of the received view. Hengstenberg's reply is too well known to require mention.

(ii.) It has been alleged that there are "certain arithmetical errors in the narrative," which are unquestionably inconsistent with the ascription of the whole Pentateuch to a contemporaneous author.<sup>1</sup> In view of the abundant replies which have been made to this class of objections, we shall deal with them but briefly now, and only as they affect the question of the contemporaneousness of the composition.<sup>2</sup>

To the chief of these objections — that a nation of 600,000 warriors, implying more than 2,000,000 souls, could not have

<sup>1</sup> Such is even Canon Stanley's inconsiderate assent to the computations of Colenso. Stanley's *History of the Jewish Church* (Am. ed.) p. 567.

<sup>2</sup> For a fuller statement of our views (though still brief) we refer to a criticism on Colenso, in Vol. XX. of this Periodical, pp. 660-670. Dr. A. Benisch has written on the whole the most satisfactory of the more extended replies to Colenso which have fallen under our notice. There are points of his argument which admit of improvement.

sprung from the alleged ancestry — the Bible furnishes its own sufficient answer when it specifies ten generations (1 Chron. vii. 23–27) from Joseph to Joshua, and seven from Judah to Bezaleel. This fact alone removes all impossibility from the case. But other suggestions are at hand: Jacob certainly, before the descent to Egypt, had, like his father and grandfather, a large retinue of servants (Gen. xxx. 43; xxxii. 5, 7, 10), two of whom were the mothers of four of his sons. That the sons had servants of their own is not only probable from the universal custom, but seems necessitated by the statement that Simeon and Levi (xxxiv. 25–29) captured the city of Sichem. That they must have been accompanied on that occasion by their servants (as was Abraham by his three hundred and eighteen, xiv. 4), is so obvious that Knobel does not hesitate to speak of it as done by “Simeon and Levi and their domestics” (mit ihren Leuten). But when Jacob and his family went down into Egypt, they went with “their flocks and their herds and *all that they have*” (Gen. xlvii. 1; xlv. 10). The omission of these in the enumeration of the “seventy souls” (Ex. i. 5), was in accordance with the writer’s evident principle to specify only the pure original stock of Jacob; a principle so rigidly adhered to that the sons’ wives are not included in the list. This retinue and their offspring becoming identified with the fortunes of Israel in Egypt, must, from the necessity of the case, have been fully incorporated with them. Besides, we know incidentally that there were intermarriages with Egyptians. Joseph had married the daughter of Potiphar. Moses himself had an Ethiopian or Cushite wife (Num. xii. 1), supposed by the majority of commentators to be a different person from Zipporah. We are told (Lev. xxiv. 10) of “the son of an Israelitish woman, whose father was an Egyptian.” And we find even that there was a “mixed multitude” (Ex. xii. 38. Num. xi. 4), which went up from Egypt with the children of Israel. And moreover there was a special provision in the fundamental law of the nation for incorporating the circumcised stranger with the chosen peo-

ple (Ex. xii. 48, 49; Lev. xix. 33, 34; Num. xv. 14-16; Deut. xxix. 11). All these considerations together leave no difficulty whatever in accounting for the alleged numbers.

In close connection with this point, it has been asserted that the assembling and departure of this multitude of people is related to have been done in a manner incompatible with a personal knowledge; that it is too hurried. But the objection overlooks the real facts of the case. The narrative has furnished all the necessary elements to form a satisfactory and consistent account. First, and chiefly, there is a leader, who, judged by whatever standard, must have been a great and competent commander. Secondly, the scheme of rescue, even to some of its details,—such as the consultation with the elders, the series of miracles, and the provision of money, jewelry, and raiment,—was laid before him before he went from Midian to Egypt (Ex. iii.). Next is related the actual consultation with the elders (ch. iv.) on his arrival, with a full statement of the grand scheme. Next begin the interviews with Pharaoh (ch. v.), the intent of which was from the first made known to the whole people by bitter experience (v. 8, 20, etc.), and was again distinctly stated to them by Moses, before the commencement of the miracles. Then follow the series of chastisements, which, from the indications of time connected with them, must have occupied at least several weeks, perhaps months. At length comes the destruction of the first-born, which, as Moses was forewarned (xi. 1-8), was to be the signal of departure. The exodus was to take place on the 14th; and the final order of preparation was given at some time previous to the 10th day of the same month (xii. 3),—an order including the arrangements for *sudden* departure on the night of the 14th of Nisan (xii. 11). These are the distinct statements of the narrative; and the attempt of Dr. Colenso to bring all this preparation within “twelve hours” on the strength of our English version “this night” (for “the same night”) in Ex. xii. 12, simply exhibits an ignorance of the Hebrew idiom in the use of לַיְלָה, which a consultation of Gesenius’s Hebrew

Lexicon would at once have dispelled.<sup>1</sup> It is not at all inconsistent with human nature or the well-known traits of this people, that, when at the last moment they were hurriedly driven out of Egypt, especially from the capital where Pharaoh dwelt, their bread should have been unleavened and their food not prepared. The final hurry would have been more urgent at the capital. There is no reason, however, to understand that they were all congregated at Rameses. Various circumstances in the narrative as well as repeated statements that they were driven out of "Egypt," imply that they were widely dispersed over the country. That they went out in various consolidated bodies is somewhat clearly stated in Ex. xii. 41, 51; of which bands the principal one, including Moses and the elders, and therefore termed pre-eminently "the children of Israel," would have departed directly from the capital. So ample is the time allowed for the subsequent march that we find (comp. Num. xxxiii. 3 and Ex. xvi. 1) a whole month to have elapsed between the departure from Rameses and that from Elim, a distance probably not much more than a hundred miles.<sup>2</sup>

A testimony to the completeness of preparation is undoubtedly found in the very word מִצְוֵי (Ex. xiii. 18, Eng. version "harnessed"), on which an attempt has been made to raise an objection. Modern commentators are nearly unanimous here in rejecting the specific meaning "armed;" and, though with some diversity in detail, agreed in finding the declaration of a somewhat thorough preparation for the march. The clue to its meaning, as Rosenmüller suggests, is found in its interchangeable use with מִצְוֵי, of which the

<sup>1</sup> In defining the word מִצְוֵי the Lexicon says: "in historical narrative, that which has just been mentioned is regarded as present." Examples given are Gen. vii. 11; Ex. xix. 1, both past periods. Instances of its future reference are Lev. xxiii. 14, 21, where it is joined with מִצְוֵי, and in verse 6th of the same chapter where it stands alone; meaning in all these cases simply "the same."

<sup>2</sup> In illustration of this great event Stanley alludes to "the sudden retreat of a whole nomadic people — 400,000 Tartars — under cover of a single night, from the confines of Russia into their native deserts, as late as the close of the last century." — *History of the Jewish Church*, p. 137.

known meaning is "girt about the loins," and thus in a state of readiness for some effort; thus compare Num. xxxii. 32 with Josh. i. 14, and Josh. iv. 12 with iv. 13. The Septuagint translates the word εὐζωνοὶ in Josh. i. 14, and διασκευασμένοι in Josh. iv. 12. And though the Vulgate invariably translates *armati*, supported by Aquila and Symmachus and many of the Fathers, the somewhat general consent of modern scholars is expressed by the broader terms "equipped, gerüstet, parati."<sup>1</sup>

We shall but allude, for completeness of statement, to certain other objections of the same nature, which have been already sufficiently answered elsewhere: alleged oversights or incompatibilities, which it is asserted imply a later fabrication. We would add that if the supposed oversights are real, this pseudo-Moses was certainly a very sorry bungler in the art of fabrication, and he found a still sorrier set of dupes in the whole nation who elevated him to Moses's seat, and for hundreds of years reverentially received his foolish utterances. But in truth nearly all the arithmetical difficulties raised by Dr. Colenso are not contradictions, impossibilities, or incompatibilities; they are simply unexplained or incomplete statements, in which no difficulty at all might have been seen if the writer had furnished one wanting link, and from which now all difficulty vanishes when some *admissible* supposition is supplied. The statements that Moses addressed all Israel, and that the congregation assembled within the court of the tabernacle, are relieved from being the most stupid of fictions by the simplest of explanations, viz. that as Israel was organized as thoroughly as any modern army, Moses in addressing them had only to proceed as does any modern general, and communicate through his inferior officers (as indicated Deut. xxvii. 1, 9, 14); and that the congregation could be, and often was assembled representatively, — a fact proved by

<sup>1</sup> Gesenius gives, "*acres, strenui, alacres ad pugnandum*," which Keil adopts. Fürst very widely, "*accincti, parati, instructi, armati*." Knobel, "in organized bands." Ewald revives an old view of Theodotion, "in five divisions," as from חֲמִשָּׁה, *five*, or a supposed חֲמִשָּׁה.

instances in which "*the elders*" are identified with the congregation and "the children of Israel" (Ex. xii. 3, 21, 28; xix. 7, 8; Deut. v. 1, 2, 3; Lev. ix. 1, 5, 23, 24).<sup>1</sup> The supposed impossible duty of the priest "to carry" the offal and ashes of the sacrifice without the camp (Lev. iv. 11, 12), becomes perfectly feasible by merely understanding the word *סָרַח* in its legitimate sense "remove," or "cause to go forth." Besides, the encampment consisted of five distinct camps (Num. i., ii., x.), one of which comprised the Levites alone. The specific direction for cleanliness in the camp (Deut. xxiii. 12-14), which has been cited as requiring an impossibility, is shown by the context to refer to the military camp of a future warfare in the promised land, where a much smaller number of persons was to be concerned; while the sanitary arrangements of the wilderness, in this respect, are not preserved in the narrative, but must of course have met the emergency. The method, very likely, was the same, except in the distance traversed: such is now the common custom of Asiatics. The Punjab Sanitary Report for 1862, says, that "In our jails all our refuse is *buried in the garden*, and being rapidly decomposed . . . . no inconvenience is experienced"; and the writer specifies the general custom as being conformed to the supposed custom of the Israelites.<sup>2</sup>

The objection that lambs enough for the passover could not have been procured in the wilderness is sufficiently answered by the facts, first, that the law was enacted primarily for permanent observance in *the settled home*, and irrespective of that protracted wandering; that we do not know whether it was observed in the wilderness after the sojourn at Sinai, or was superseded, like circumcision; and that, if it was kept, in an emergency a single lamb might suffice for a large number of persons, simply for a memorial observance. God never exacted impossibilities, and in some cases even then, waived ceremonial regulations, as when

<sup>1</sup> It is not asserted that this is always the case. The word *עָרַח*, like *קָחַל*, very commonly designates the people as a body. The context must determine.

<sup>2</sup> Cited by G. S. Drew in his reply to Colenso, p. 91.

(Lev. x. 4) the Levites entered the sanctuary to remove the corpses of Nadab and Abihu, and as in the marked case of circumcision. And whereas from the nature of the case we infer (and Colenso admits, Part I. p. 91) that such of the observances as hinged upon harvest gatherings must have lain in abeyance, we find also, in Deut. xii. 8, 9, and Amos v. 25, 26, intimations that there was, in practice, a large deviation from the law of sacrifices.

This, too, is a sufficient answer to the question how the small number of the priests in the wilderness could sprinkle the blood of so many paschal lambs, and how it could be done in the court of the tabernacle. If at any time the number of priests was then inadequate to their work, what difficulty in supposing an arrangement similar to what was admitted and commended in the time of Hezekiah, when the priests being "too few," were aided in their functions by "their brethren the Levites" (2 Chron. xxix. 34), and the course of Solomon, who finding the one altar inadequate to his sacrifice, consecrated and used another (2 Chron. vii. 7). These suppositions are perfectly admissible, being suggested by the sacred volume itself, and in full analogy with its spirit and method.

Several other peculiarities of number, which have been cited as objections, are disposed of by easy suppositions. The *exact* correspondence of the numbers of the poll-tax (Ex. xxxviii. 25, 26) and that of the census or military muster within six months following (Num. i. 1-46), taken in connection with the proximity of time, points conclusively to the *identity* of the reckoning; and may be explained either that the poll-tax registry was used for the military census so soon following, or (with Benisch) that the *free-will offerings* of the people (Ex. xxxv. 5-9, 20-29), being even more than was needed for the tabernacle (xxxvi. 5-7), were made to take the place of the poll-tax, which was destined for the same purpose (xxx. 16), the product of the poll-tax being (as matter of fact) identified with "the offering" (ch. xxxviii. 24, 29).<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Dr. Benisch supposes that from the superabundant offering enough was

It is objected that the number of the first census must be fictitious, from the great disproportion of families, e.g. Dan's descendants numbering 62,000 (Num. ii. 26), though but one son is mentioned at the descent to Egypt, and the descendants of Levi's three sons numbering but 22,000. To which we reply that the simple *disproportion* between the families is of no account; as great a disproportion as one to three, or to nine, may continually be found, for example, among the descendants of the first settlers of New England. The only question is, are the individual numbers impossible? The small number of Levi's descendants requires no explanation, even if it had been far smaller. The large number of Dan's descendants would be fully explained if the narrative had stated that Dan had other sons afterwards born in Egypt and reckoned in the family of Hushim (as was sometimes done, 1 Chron. xxviii. 11), and blessed with large families, or that he had a large retinue of servants to include in his tribe, or that he had daughters whose offspring were reckoned in the family of Hushim. We add in passing, that however regular the movement of population on a large scale under the same influences, nothing is more capricious in limited sections and in exceptional circumstances; and there can be no better evidence that the numbers in the Pentateuch are not "fixed up," than the diversity of the amounts given.

A remaining arithmetical question is: How could the number of first-born sons (Num. iii. 43) be but 22,273, when the fighting men amounted to 603,550,—a proportion of but one in forty-two, and requiring, at first sight, the supposition that every mother had forty-two sons? The peculiar disproportion at once suggests to a fair mind some limitations not here expressed; just as a foreigner who should read the United States conscription law and then observe the meagre results of the draft in many, or even all, sections

taken (and made into hooks) to bring the amount of silver to the exact amount which the prescribed poll-tax would have produced; the sums thus agreeing, because they were made to agree.



of the country, before declaring the latter to be fictitious, would do well to consider whether there might not be certain principles of limitation followed by the medical inspectors which are not found in the letter of the law. In this instance the difficulty is to decide what is the principle. "All the first-born males" may be fairly understood, with reference to the avowed object of the census, to mean all who were subject to the law of redemption, or possibly (with Benisch) all who would be liable to the tabernacle service. Two circumstances in the narrative point somewhat clearly to the belief that this could have been but part of the whole number: (1) The origin of the scheme—God having appropriated the first-born of Israel when he destroyed the first-born of Egypt; but the slain first-born of Egypt evidently did not include those who were themselves heads of families, but only the first-born *in* the several families (Ex. xii. 29, 30). (2) The redemption-money actually paid for the excess of the first-born over the number of the Levites (Num. iii. 46, 47), was that which was previously required (Lev. xxvii. 6) for the redemption of persons *under six years old*. This last fact has given rise to the theory of Baumgarten, that only those of five years and under were included, reinforced by Bunsen's suggestion that children of that age were by surrounding tribes devoted to destruction. The other fact gives rise to a limitation of Kurtz, which certainly seems warranted, that in the census of the first-born those were not included who had families of their own. Kurtz argues that, oriental marriages taking place on the average as early as the fifteenth or sixteenth year,<sup>1</sup> this would give to a population of 600,000 males over twenty years of age some 200,000 under fifteen; and the 22,273 first-born would be about one in nine of this number,—a proportion not incredible in itself, but possibly already reduced by rejecting the various deformed and blemished ones, who being incapacitated for the sacred office, therefore could not require a substitute or a redemption. These suppositions, consistent

<sup>1</sup> So also Bunsen, *Bibelwerk*, Vol. I. p. 161

with the narrative, and even suggested by it, are sufficient to explain the smallness of the number. Any man who should take the general terms of the United States Conscription Act, and compare with it the results of the first draft, without taking into account the previous million volunteers, or knowing the manifold grounds of medical exemption, might make the facts sadly unhistorical by the "higher criticism."<sup>1</sup>

None of the alleged arithmetical difficulties carry with them more than a superficial force. An objection which, at its highest point, only inquires *how* can this be, is annihilated by the suggestion of *any* possible mode.

(iii.) It is affirmed that the narrative contains grave errors in its representations and implications concerning the "wilderness," and therefore could not have been written by Moses.

This class of objections, like the previous one, is only an appeal to our ignorance of the facts. It is a blow in the dark. It is no counter-proof, squarely meeting the place and *time*; but an inference from the state of the country more than three thousand years later, and that exaggerated in the description.

The recklessness with which these allegations are made by some writers, is well illustrated by the statement of Colenso, that the law prescribing an offering of turtle-doves or young pigeons "could not have been written by Moses, but must have been composed at a later age," in Canaan, because "in the desert it would have been equally impossible for rich or poor to procure them."<sup>2</sup> To omit all other reply,

<sup>1</sup> Dr. Benisch's explanation that it includes only those fit for tabernacle service (*viz.* between the ages of thirty and fifty years) seems hardly consistent with the statement of Num. iii. 39, 43, "from one month old;" and the limitation of Basimgarten and Bunsen to five years of age, hardly compatible with the phrase "from one month old *and upwards*," as it appears in other instances throughout the chapter, though it *might* be taken as a brief designation of one of four classes enumerated in Lev. xxvii. 3-7. Bunsen reasons that such a limitation would be understood from a knowledge of the surrounding heathen custom of offering young children to Moloch.

<sup>2</sup> Colenso on the Pentateuch, Part I. pp. 188, 189.

it is not only true that the pigeon is a cosmopolite, and is found in the countries on both sides of the wilderness (in Egypt, Asia Minor, and Palestine), but travellers distinctly mention its occurrence in this very region. In the heart of the Peninsula, before reaching Sinai, Miss Martineau "saw a good many pigeons;"<sup>1</sup> Mr. Drew saw "a flight of birds, thousands in number," on the day of crossing el-Tih;"<sup>2</sup> and Robinson found the ruins of Abdeh (Eboda) "the resort of a multitude of pigeons, which flew out in a cloud."<sup>3</sup>

On this subject, however, objectors usually deal in vague and general denials. They broadly assert the physical features of the wilderness to be such as must have rendered it impossible to lead so great a company through it to Palestine.

In considering the objection drawn from the condition of the wilderness, two preliminary considerations are to be borne in mind: first, the journey through the wilderness, led by Moses, is one of the settled historic facts. It took place somehow, and with a large body of people. It is to be explained, not denied. Secondly, the event may be fairly classed, on the lowest view, with the great and difficult achievements, like Hannibal's entrance into Italy, or the grand military combinations of Napoleon. It is useless to conceal difficulties, which the narrative itself makes so prominent and memorable. With these preliminary words, we proceed to show that the objection limps on every foot.

(1). Nothing can be made of the term "wilderness," which is in scripture applied to this whole region. The Hebrew מִדְבָּר signifies a "pasture land," not a region of sand. As matter of fact, in the supposed track of the Israelites, sand deserts without vegetation are the exception.<sup>4</sup> This will be more fully shown presently.

(2). It is an unfounded opinion that the scriptures them-

<sup>1</sup> Miss Martineau's Journal, quoted in G. S. Drew's reply to Colenso, p. 66.

<sup>2</sup> Drew's Reply, p. 66.

<sup>3</sup> Robinson's Researches, Vol. I. p. 285.

<sup>4</sup> See Drew's Treatise, p. 58.

selves describe this *whole region* as utterly desolate. In the last resort Dr. Colenso repeatedly falls back on allusions to "the great and terrible wilderness," "where there was no water" (Deut. viii. 15; Num. xx. 4, 5; Jer. ii. 6).<sup>1</sup> But the Bible applies these statements to limited portions of the way. It is said of one place only before reaching Sinai (the uncertain place Rephidim, Ex. xvii. 1), "there was no water there." The desert which is described in Deut. i. 19 as great and terrible, we are told in the same verse, was after leaving Horeb by way of the mountain of the Amorites, as they came to Kadesh Barnea. The "evil place," where there was no water to drink (Num. xx. 4, 5), was (vs. 1) at this same Kadesh, in the desert of Zin. So in Deut. viii. 19 the writer makes the place distinct, by describing it as the place of the fiery serpents — the same general region again (Num. xxi. 4, 5) encountered after leaving Hor to compass Edom by the Red Sea, that is, as they returned upon their track. The description in Jer. ii. 6 is a graphic singling out of the worst horrors of the way, without a definite statement of localities; although, as Benisch maintains, the use of the technical word *גְּרָרָה* may be a specification of this same *Ghor*. So far from describing the whole region traversed as being so utterly desolate, the scriptures abundantly indicate the contrary. There is mention of a brook with running water at Sinai (Deut. ix. 21; Ex. xxxii. 20); a natural supply of water in "the wilderness of Moab" (Num. xxi. 13-18); wells at Elim (Ex. xv. 27); bitter water at Marah (Ex. xv. 1); special arrangements with two tribes on the way for water and food (Deut. ii. 28, 29); and the same proposal made to a third; a similar proposal afterward rejected by the Amorites and Moabites (xxiii. 5), showing the careful consideration of the whole subject. The same foresight appears in the proposal of Moses to Hobab to accompany them (Num. x. 29-32) in their future encampments, that "thou mayest be to us instead of eyes," i. e. as Rosenmüller suggests, that he may guide them to places where there

<sup>1</sup> Colenso, Part I. pp. 120, 128, 132, 134.

were pasturage and fountains. The immediate exercise of that care is shown in the same chapter (vs. 33), when the ark preceded them "to search out a resting-place for them."

Furthermore, all the incidental allusions to this region imply that it was not the Sahara that we are asked to believe. Abraham was able to pass from Palestine to Egypt (probably through the northern portion), and to return with all his riches of servants and sheep and oxen and asses and camels (Gen. xii. 16). Jacob made the same journey with all his flocks and herds (xvi. 6; xvii. 1). Moses pastured Jethro's flocks in the region around Sinai, and there first met his wife by a well (Ex. ii. 16). We find Abraham in the eastern part of the peninsula, dwelling between Kadesh and Shur (Gen. xx. 1), among the Philistines — a people with a king, court, and army. In the same region Isaac found an abode when there was a famine in Palestine (xxvi. 1), and dwelt there with flocks and herds (vs. 14), finding a productive soil (vs. 12) and wells of water (vs. 18-22). Amraphel carried his conquests, and therefore his army, to Paran and to Kadesh (xiv. 6, 7), stations of the Israelites (Num. xiii. 26). The same wilderness of Paran became the home of Ishmael (Gen. xxi. 21). While at Kadesh (Ex. xiii. 26), Moses speaks of "the inhabitants of the land," evidently of the surrounding region. The Amalekites, whose home was on the border of Canaan, fell on *the rear* of Israel at Rephidim (Ex. xvii. 8; Deut. xxv. 18) in the neighborhood of Sinai. The force was evidently large, and must have crossed the worst portion of the desert. Pharaoh evidently viewed the journey of Israel as possible; for he refused permission to go three days' march into the wilderness, unless they left their women and children (Ex. x. 10, 12), or "how<sup>+</sup>ever least their flocks (vs. 24) behind. Moses also mentions by" (Lwe passed in the midst of the nations which ye passed region in Num. xxix. 16). The Bible nowhere describes this (3). It is inconsistent with its own narrative. naitic penin: a gross exaggeration to describe the whole Si- la at the present day as a scene of utter deso-

lation, destitute of the means of subsistence for animals and men. In the eagerness to carry a point, certain intense statements of travellers concerning particular localities (and often in unfavorable seasons) have been sweepingly applied to the whole country. A careful inspection of its geography *in connection with the daily journal* of some accurate traveller, like Robinson, will at once dispel these broad assertions. The desolation, though great, is not total — nothing like it.

The present caravan route to Mecca, over which five thousand pilgrims annually pass in a body, lies directly through the whole length of the most desert portion of the peninsula.<sup>1</sup> Stanley, whose general statements have been quoted with much effect to prove the utter desolation of the desert, also informs us that “bare as the surface of the desert is, yet the thin clothing of vegetation is seldom entirely withdrawn, especially the aromatic shrubs on the hill-sides”; and that “springs, whose sources are for the most part high up in the mountain clefts, occasionally sending down into the wady’s rills of water,” and surrounded by tracts of vegetation, “occur at such frequent intervals that, after leaving Suez, there is at least one such spot in each successive day’s journey.”<sup>2</sup> Ruppell notices four perennial brooks : at Wady el-Ain, Salaka, Hibran, Feiran.<sup>3</sup> Mr. Drew, a recent and careful observer, remarks : “ ‘ Bare and barren plains,’ ‘ entire desolation,’ etc., are descriptions ridiculously unsuitable to immense portions of the 18,000 square miles which are comprised in the surface of this country, and especially to that portion in which thirty-eight of the forty years of the wanderings were passed. In the configuration and levels of its surfaces, and indeed in all its physical characteristics, the peninsula includes regions of the most varied character. In some parts no waste places can exceed its arid and dreary barrenness ; in others, it is fertile, abundantly watered, and romantic in the beauty and

<sup>1</sup> Stanley gives this number. — Sinai and Palestine, p. 26. Mr. Stephens gives the number that left Cairo in the caravan which he saw, at 30,000. — Travels in Egypt, Vol. I. p. 171.

<sup>2</sup> Sinai and Palestine, pp. 23, 19.

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 19.

even magnificence of its prospects.”<sup>1</sup> He instances especially as of the latter description the Paran highlands, which probably may have been occupied for many years by the Israelites; and he sustains his general statement by ample quotations from his own journal and that of Miss Martineau. The latter traveller informs us that “there is abundant rain in the peninsula, usually in December and January.”<sup>2</sup> Mr. Stephens, who visited Sinai apparently as late as March, tells us that there was rain there twice during his brief stay, and on leaving he was, the same night, overtaken by a rain-storm that fell in perfect torrents during the evening and night.<sup>3</sup> Dr. Robinson was assured by the Arab guides that “in those years when there is plenty of rain, *grass springs up* over the whole face of the desert.”<sup>4</sup>

As the proof of general statements is found in details, let us follow the general track of the Israelites, with brief notices from the careful Robinson, mostly in his own language: At Ayoun Mousa (the Wells of Moses), opposite Suez, he found seven fountains of brackish water, and ruins of a former village; next day, a small quantity of sweet water at Abu Suweirah; the same day, the fountain Hawarah (Marah), a basin six or eight feet in diameter and two feet deep, flowing with bitter, brackish water—and the “cup of Sudr” lying off the route. (In the first half of this distance, between Ayoun Mousa and Wady Sudr, a space still swept by sand storms, Drew mentions two miles of mounds covered with rich green tufts, and a large flock of gazelles seen through the sand-storm.) Half an hour further is a small fertile plain, with a rich loam and abundant vegetation, cultivated by the modern Arabs; two hours further, wady Ghurundel (Elim, probably), with numerous shrubs, straggling acacias, tamarisks, and small palm-trees, with fountains of water and a running brook near by;<sup>5</sup> the following

<sup>1</sup> Drew's Examination of Colenso, p. 66.

<sup>2</sup> Ibid.

<sup>3</sup> Stephens's Egypt, etc., Vol. I. p. 240; II. p. 10. Stanley also encountered a “sharp rain-storm” in wady Sayal.—Sinai, p. 79.

<sup>4</sup> Researches. Vol. I. p. 172.

<sup>5</sup> Other travellers speak much more enthusiastically.

day, wady Useit, with a few palm-trees and a little water standing in holes; wady Thal, with shrubs, acacias, a few palm-trees, holes of brackish water, and two gazelles in sight; wady Taiyibeh, a fine valley with many trees and a little water, and near it a large plain with many shrubs, a bitter fountain (el Murkbah), and a reservoir of rain-water not far distant; wady Humr, with fresh herbs and shrubs, and traces of recent running water; and later yet, "an extensive plain with many shrubs," of at least six different kinds, and good pasturage for the camels. In this vicinity is the almost undoubted encampment by the Red Sea (Ras Selimeh); the plain, shut in by a wall of rocks, stretches out three or four miles in length and three-fourths of a mile in width along the shore.<sup>1</sup> From wady Taiyibeh however, Robinson deviated from the probable track of the Israelites to visit the old Egyptian ruins and inscriptions of Surabit el-Khadim, finding as he proceeded excellent water in a side valley (while wady Humr spread out into a broad plain sprinkled over with herbs), seeing a flock of sheep and goats pastured in wady Suwuk, and a wild goat on the rocks above. The next day he entered a wide valley (Khumileh), with many shrubs on each side and abundant inscriptions; he soon came to an open space and another valley, both containing an unusual number of Seyal trees; then to a side valley (Ibn Sukr) with good water; at about noon, to "a great sloping plain, several miles in breadth, covered with tufts of herbs, furnishing abundant pasturage in seasons when rain falls," where a part of the Tawarah Arabs were encamped; at three o'clock, to still another plain, with many shrubs; and at evening he procured good water at a spring near the encampment. From that point during the remainder of the approach to Sinai, he found no necessity to make any special provision for water, although it had

broad and full of trees," Burckhardt; "a glorious oasis" where "we reposed in grass as tall as ourselves," Tischendorf. — Kurtz's *History of Old Covenant* Vol. III. p. 189.

<sup>1</sup> Kurtz's *History of the Old Covenant*, Vol. III. p. 19.



been for two years a season of great drought in the peninsula.<sup>1</sup>

Returning to the probable course of the Israelites, from the Encampment by the Red Sea, a shadeless march of twelve miles across the plain of Murkhab (the supposed "wilder-ness of Sin"), and most likely the exhaustion of their supplies would give rise to complaints and to the despondency which God thenceforth relieved by the supply of manna (Ex. xvi). The further stations on the way to Sinai are uncertain. If Dophkah be Seetzen's el-Tabbakkha in wady Mokatteb, and Alush be, as Bunsen thinks, wady Feiran,<sup>2</sup>—both which valleys invited their steps,—these marches were, for many miles, through a comparatively fertile region. The wady Feiran, especially, is a delightful region, according to the testimony of all travellers. It has a fertile soil, a perennial brook, abundance of trees, shrubs, and even flowers. Robinson says: "It is well watered, and has gardens of fruit and palm trees."<sup>3</sup> Lepsius mentions it as "a fertile oasis, abounding in wood and water," where "we walked on soft black earth, obliged to defend ourselves with our arms from the overhanging leafy branches, and we heard singing birds warbling in the thick foliage."<sup>4</sup> The wady es-Sheikh, the longest and broadest valley of the peninsula, — connected with a multitude of side valleys, — well watered for a considerable portion of the year, and containing many tracts of meadow land and a large number of tarfah-trees<sup>5</sup> would then bring them to the plain of er-Rahah at the very foot of mount Sinai. Rephidim cannot be identified, but might have been some point in es-Sheikh. The plain of er-Raha, two and a half miles long, joined at right angles by the great wady es-Sheikh, and by numerous smaller valleys, lies directly in sight of Sinai, on the north, and so close to its abrupt wall that one can "touch" the mountain as he

<sup>1</sup> Researches, Vol. I pp. 120, 124.

<sup>2</sup> The name Alush is perhaps preserved in Wady Ösch, somewhat to the north.

<sup>3</sup> Researches, Vol. I. p. 126.

<sup>4</sup> Letters from Egypt, etc. (Bohn), p. 297.

<sup>5</sup> Kurtz's History of the Old Covenant, Vol. III. p. 69

stands at its foot.<sup>1</sup> The whole situation so remarkably conforms to the requirements of the narrative, in regard to the encampment of Israel, as to be, in Stanley's view, a "strong argument, not merely of its identity with the scene, but of the scene itself having been described by an eye-witness."<sup>2</sup> The same impression was made on Robinson and Smith.<sup>3</sup> The whole western side of mount St. Catherine "is covered, like the wadys, with tufts of herbs and shrubs, furnishing abundant pasturage for the flocks of Bedawin, as well as for the troops of gazelles and mountain goats which haunt these wild retreats."<sup>4</sup> On the mountain sides and in the multitude of valleys, to any needful distance from the central encampment (like the modern Bedawin, see this *Journal*, Vol. XX. p. 661), the Israelites could find pasturage during their stay of several months. Here they could find acacia (*shittim*) wood for the tabernacle. By a three days' journey they could, if need be, hold communication with the mining region, while they had silver and gold, besides their flocks, with which to purchase whatever they could not have transported from Egypt.

It was on leaving Sinai that Moses requested Hobab to be their guide; a precaution justified by the present condition of the region, since this two or three days' travel is found by travellers the most toilsome and discouraging part of their journey.<sup>5</sup> After crossing wady Murrah among the hills of drift-sand, it required all the skill of Robinson's guide to keep the road, while Burckhardt's lost the way.<sup>6</sup> Hence the murmuring for more substantial food, and the "graves of lust" at Kibroth Hattaavah. Kadesh Barnea is perhaps not

<sup>1</sup> Robinson's *Researches*, Vol. I. pp. 131, 141. The peak *es-Safsafeh*. Kurtz, following Laborde, Tischendorf, and even Ritter, still contends for the traditional *Jebel Musa* as the place of law-giving, and the *Wady Sebayah* as the place of assemblage. But Stanley, with the arguments before him, on the spot, rejects it.

<sup>2</sup> *Sinai and Palestine*, p. 42.

<sup>3</sup> *Researches*, Vol. I. pp. 130, 141.

<sup>4</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 162.

<sup>5</sup> We admit at present Robinson's identification of Hazeroth with Haderah. If it be at el-Ain in *Wady Salakah*, the statement is equally true.

<sup>6</sup> Robinson's *Researches*, Vol. I. 222.

to be sought, with Robinson, at Ain el-Weibeh, but, according to recent discoveries, in wady Muweileh (Moillahi), where the Arab name still remains,<sup>1</sup> and a copious spring gushes from the rocks. The immediate plain around is nine or ten miles long, by five or six miles wide. In the intermediate region Robinson enumerates seven springs of living water, known to run from the western mountain range into the valley el-Arabah;<sup>2</sup> and though crossing it *in a very dry season*, he constantly mentions the occurrence of dry water-courses, sometimes "full of herbs," and of trees, shrubs, grass, herbs, or vegetation in some form;<sup>3</sup> besides learning from the Arabs that in rainy seasons grass springs up all over the desert. He learned the names of some ten Arab tribes now inhabiting the great western desert.<sup>4</sup> Mr. Drew, who crossed the desert from a different direction (northwest from Nukhl) to the same point, gives a similar though stronger representation. He mentions successively, in his daily journal, "continuous vegetation"; "extensive spaces covered with vegetation"; "some acres under cultivation"; "a wady as fruitful and picturesque as Fciran, with grain growing on it, and birds singing"; "patches of ground under cultivation, and growing barley and oats"; and, further along, "extensive field enclosures." And of the whole region just north of where we incline to find Kadesh Barnea, he says, "the whole country was at one time evidently under cultivation."<sup>5</sup>

This last-mentioned region, it should be remembered, was the northern point of the Israelites' residence during the chief part of their exile — some thirty-eight years. Here, most likely, they spread themselves over the land, cultivating the soil and making the most of their situation. Their southern terminus was the head of the Arabian Gulf, where were

<sup>1</sup> So Knobel, Bunsen, Kurtz.

<sup>2</sup> Researches, p. 268.

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 260, 261, 265 twice, 266, 267, 271, 274. He found the "desert" to cease many miles south of Kudes.

<sup>4</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 268.

<sup>5</sup> Reply to Colenso, pp. 58, 59.

once the important cities Elath and Ezion-geber. Eastward, across the Arabah (Ghor), were the comparatively fertile lands of Edom and Moab. The whole northeastern portion of the wilderness rises from the general plateau into an elevated and even mountainous region, not only capable of cultivation, and in patches still cultivated by the Arabs, but exhibiting marks of still more extensive former cultivation, with ruins of habitations and even of cities. Did our limits permit, we could sustain this statement at large by extracts from Robinson's journal. But we must dismiss the subject in few words. Commencing at a point some fifty miles south of Beersheba, we find such entries as this: "our tent was pitched near a shallow watercourse, running off to wady el-Mayein, "full of herbs and shrubs, *like most of the wadys* we had passed, and affording fine pasture for camels." Three miles further, on a broad plain (wady Lussan) "were a few remains of rude walls and foundations, which we regarded at the time as marking only the site of a former Arab encampment. But from the many similar remains which we saw along the road, I am now inclined to suppose that they may have belonged to the substructions of Lysa." Then came an undulating, hilly country, and, some three miles from Lussan, the broad basin el-Muzeireah, which was full of herbs and vegetation, and seemed capable of tillage. Indeed, in several spots we saw traces of rude ploughing." Thence he ascended to the top of another long sloping ridge, where "vegetation continued quite to the summit," and camels were at pasture on the left. Then follow, during the same day, in rapid succession, "three broad and shallow watercourses, full of the shrub *retem*"; the Jaifch very broad and full of pasture, with many spots in it tilled and sown; wady Retemat, a wide plain with shrubs and *retem*; another wady with many herbs, and at some distance beyond the eastern mountain, a large fountain with sweet running water (el-Ain); the well el-Birein, a little to the right of the way; the top of the pass (beyond wady Retemat) everywhere sprinkled with herbage, and opening on a large, grav-

elly plain thickly covered, in many parts, with shrubs and coarse herbage; after twenty minutes' travel on this plain, several pits of bluish, brackish water, dug a few feet in a bed of blue clay, surrounded by an abundance of coarse bulrushes and rank vegetation; a wide gravelly plain, thickly covered with shrubs and herbage, divided by the deep gully wady el-Ain, which was bordered with grass, daisies, and other small flowers; after crossing the watercourse, a broad tract of tolerably fertile soil, capable of tillage and apparently once tilled, and across the whole tract were "the remains of long ranges of stone walls, which probably once served as the division of cultivated fields, and which obviously were not constructed by the present race of inhabitants."<sup>1</sup> The next day the aspect of the country continued to improve rapidly. Many patches of wheat and barley were passed during the day; grass increased in the valleys, and herbs were sprinkled over the hills; the songs of many birds were heard; the country became more open, "with broad, arable valleys, separated by low, swelling hills"; and at length the view opened on "a boundless plain, or slightly undulating tract, towards the East, often sandy, but everywhere sprinkled with shrubs and herbs like a wady." A little further along, Robinson found the ruins of the ancient city Eboda, with its foundations of houses, hewn stones, limestone quarry, columns, entablatures, and remains of a fortress. Around these are abundant remains of walls, enclosing fields once cultivated; some of them evidently designed to regulate the distribution of water, being built of masonry, six or eight feet thick. Here, as Robinson remarks, was once a numerous population; "but the desert has reassumed its rights, the hand of cultivation has been driven back; the race that dwelt here have perished, and their works now look abroad, in loneliness and silence, over the mighty

<sup>1</sup> It is proper to add that Robinson calls this region on the whole "barren and desolate in the extreme," yet superior to what he had previously passed, and that there had been recent rains to start the vegetation. Still "long ranges of low stone walls" speak for themselves.

waste.”<sup>1</sup> This place is some twenty-five miles southwest of Beersheba; and the country beyond continues to improve in character.

Now this whole region must form part of the territory occupied by the Israelites during the chief part of the forty years. The sweeping charges of utter desolation are dissipated before a detail of facts. It thus appears that the wilderness might be traversed, and, in parts, made habitable by large bodies of men.

(4). It is a grave error to assume that the present condition of this region is a fair index of its capacity or its former productiveness. Men who know the difference between the Egypt, Nubia, Sogdiana, Greece, Palestine of ancient and of modern times, should require no admonition against such a rash assumption. One who has witnessed the drying of fountains produced by a diminution of the forests in any mountainous country, or who has seen how deeply the drifting sands of Egypt buried Memphis for centuries, out of sight and out of knowledge, will be slow to assert that the present condition of this peninsula indicates its state three thousand years ago; especially if we know that among the mountains there has actually been a great destruction of the forests, and that drifting sand-storms are perpetually blowing across the eastern and the western portions of the peninsula.

In the present instance, we have facts to sustain a reasonable supposition. Very considerable changes are known to have taken place throughout this whole region. There is, for example, no doubt that the gulf of Suez extended much further north; Dr. Robinson observed evident marks of a gradual filling up of this portion of the Red Sea.<sup>2</sup> Indeed, there are reasons, both historic and scientific, for believing that the gulf of Suez once extended north-west to the Bitter Lakes.<sup>3</sup> Dr. Beke, of the Geographical Society, testifies to a

<sup>1</sup> The above statements are found in Robinson's *Researches*, Vol. I. pp. 272 - 284.

<sup>2</sup> *Researches*, Vol. I. p. 71.

<sup>3</sup> Kurtz's *History of the Old Covenant*, Vol. II. p. 366. Stanley's *Sinai*, p. 66.

gradual change of the shore-line of the Red Sea, both on the African and the Arabian coast, and to the fact that the Persian Gulf is known to be becoming shallower and more limited in extent; and he believes that the geological changes of the region will be hereafter considered sufficient to affect materially the physical condition of the region.<sup>1</sup> The ancient harbor of Klyasma, near Suez, is now buried in sand. There was once a flourishing port, with large business connections at Abu Selimeh, on the eastern coast of the Red Sea, not far from the Israelites' second encampment; an important position, says Lepsius, long before the time of Moses.<sup>2</sup> At Surabit el-Khadim, twenty-five miles east of this point, in the interior, there are ruins of an ancient Egyptian colony, including a temple, excavations in the rock, blocks of stone covered with hieroglyphics, among which are the names of several Egyptian kings; while the region around contains remains of ancient mining operations and traces of smelting furnaces.<sup>3</sup> Further along to the south-east, the wady Mokattab is covered with thousands of ancient inscriptions; and its excavations, mine-shafts, and ruins also contain the names of Egyptian kings.<sup>4</sup> These things, says Stanley, imply a degree of intercourse between Egypt and the peninsula, of which all other traces have long ceased.<sup>5</sup> Similar inscriptions are found in a multitude of valleys between Suez and Sinai, extending to the very base of Sinai and covering the summit of Serbal. It is well known that from the fourth century for a considerable time there was an episcopal see in the region of Sinai, and the seat of the bishop was in the city of Pharan, in the present wady Feiran. Robinson recognizes it as an unquestionable fact that during that time a very considerable Christian population existed in the peninsula, and at the same time a

<sup>1</sup> Quoted in Dr. Cummings's "Moses Right," p. 135.

<sup>2</sup> Letters from Egypt, p. 305.

<sup>3</sup> Ritter's Erdkunde, Vol. XIV. p. 793. Robinson's Researches, Vol. I. p. 113. Lepsius's Letters, pp. 301-302.

<sup>4</sup> Ibid.

<sup>5</sup> Stanley's Sinai, p. 299.

body of Saracens or Ishmaelites, numerous enough at length to overpower and expel them.<sup>1</sup> Meanwhile there is positive evidence that the acacia trees on the mountains have been, to a considerable extent, destroyed not only by natural influences, but by the charcoal trade of the peninsula.<sup>2</sup> Ritter reasonably maintains that there must have been a greater abundance of vegetation then.<sup>3</sup> Indeed, we can trace, from time to time, minor changes, apparently for the worse. The palm-trees in wady Ghurundel have diminished between the visits of Laborde and of Stanley.<sup>4</sup> At Ayoun Mousa Robinson found but seven wells (some of them lately recovered by digging in the sand) where, in 1810, Seetzen found seventeen, and there had formerly been twenty.<sup>5</sup>

When we pass beyond Sinai, we find that at the head of the gulf of Akaba, now desolate, once lay the port of Eziongeber, with a commerce to Ophir; and Elath, which in Roman times was an emporium of trade to India, and for some centuries the seat of a Christian church with a bishop. In the northern part of the eastern end of the wilderness, Robinson found the ruins of some four ancient cities, stretching over a space some fifty miles south of Beersheba, viz. Lysa, an unknown city near wady Rubaibeh, Elusa, and Eboda,—the last three, cities of some considerable size and pretensions.<sup>6</sup> At the same time the ruined cities of Edom, in the mountains east of the Arabah, and the remains and history of Petra (in the words of Stanley), “indicate a traffic and a population in these remote regions which now seems to us almost inconceivable.”<sup>7</sup> Such are some of the indications which lead the great geographer Ritter to agree with Ewald that this peninsula “could support far more people than it

<sup>1</sup> *Researches*, Vol. I. pp. 188, 185.

<sup>2</sup> Stanley's *Sinai*, p. 27. So the “cedars of Lebanon,” which once covered that mountain, are now found only in one small hollow.

<sup>3</sup> *Erdkunde*, Vol. XIV. p. 926.

<sup>4</sup> Stanley, p. 29.

<sup>5</sup> Kurtz, Vol. III. p. 16.

<sup>6</sup> Robinson thinks that the ruins of Elusa might indicate a city of fifteen or twenty thousand. But a city of that size implies a surrounding population.

<sup>7</sup> Stanley's *Sinai*, p. 28.



now does," and to assert that "from the small number of its present negligent population no certain conclusion can be drawn as to its former condition."<sup>1</sup>

Such, on the one hand, are some of the unfounded assumptions, and such, on the other, are some of the facts concerning this region. It would be a pleasant task to follow the scripture narrative, and trace, so far as we can, its general conformity to the geographical situation of the whole region. But we must forbear.

It is important, however, to say a word of the conditions under which this march was performed. Those conditions, considered merely from a human point of view, were the most favorable that could be devised. The leader—the man who could frame in that age such a code of laws, and could devise means so profoundly to impress his institutions for ages on that Hebrew people—must have been a wonderful man. For forty years (Acts vii. 23) he acquired all the wisdom of a residence in the heart of the most organized nation of the old world. Then he became, by long residence, thoroughly familiar with the region of the march. It was previously settled, while he was living in the vicinity of Sinai, that he was to lead the nation by that very route (Ex. iii. 12). He was even there instructed as to some of the details of the plan (Ex. iii. 16–20), including the provision of certain costly articles of small bulk (gold, silver, and apparel, vs. 22) with which purchases could be made, if needful, on the way. In Egypt a definite point of departure was fixed; warning given of the final result, many weeks, perhaps months, beforehand, and the mind of the whole nation kept in anxious expectation, by a protracted struggle with the Egyptian power. All Israel was put in readiness for departure on a given night, by a solemn religious festival, previously arranged for, and including preparation for, instant departure; then on that night they went forth in orderly procession by their "hosts" (Ex. xii. 41, 51). They pursued, after leaving Egypt, the route over which Moses must twice

<sup>1</sup> Erdkunde, Vol. XIV. p. 927.

have travelled — once with this very expedition in his mind. The people themselves had been trained, in Egypt, to labor and hardship. As they neared Sinai, where they were to spend about a year, they were approaching a region where their leader had spent perhaps near forty years of his life (compare Acts vii. 23; Ex. vii. 7), — a region with an indefinite extent of pasturage in its valleys and on its mountain sides. Here was not only the needful time for legislation, but leisure for future arrangements. And when we actually find the great leader securing a guide from that point onward, sending forward the ark and its attendants to fix the place of encampment (Num. x.), sending spies from the wilderness of Paran as far as Hebron (Num. xiii. 22), making arrangements to buy food and drink of two different nations (Deut. ii. 29) and proposing the same thing to others (vs. 28), — we have no more reason to doubt the far-reaching foresight of his plans than of those of Hannibal or Napoleon.<sup>1</sup> We are also not to conceive of the people as traversing the peninsula in one compact body. But while Moses went with the tabernacle surrounded by the elders and formed a central encampment or head-quarters, the cattle with their attendants may have widely dispersed in search of pasturage, like a modern Arab tribe.<sup>2</sup> This view is sustained by the statements that the ark preceded the people to find a resting-place for them (Num. x. 33), that Amalek fell on the rear of the people (Deut. xxv. 18), and perhaps by the statement (Num. xi. 31) that the quails fell about the camp a day's journey each way. That the journey after leaving Sinai must have been for a time oppressive and discouraging, would appear from the aspect of the the country, and is distinctly declared in the narrative. Twice the people complained bitterly — at Taberah and

<sup>1</sup> Benisch argues that the pits (בְּרִיּוֹת) of Jer. ii. 6. were water reservoirs such as the Nabatheans dug in the desert (see Kalisch on Gen. xxv. 13), such as are occasionally found now in rocks, and such as seem to be more than once alluded to even in Palestine. We can only refer to his discussion (Colenso's Objections examined), p. 51.

<sup>2</sup> This is the view of Robinson, Kurtz, J. L. Porter, Dr. Benisch. Mr. Drew.

Kibroth Hattaavah — and only the terrific judgments of God quelled their murmurings. But when they reached the north-eastern portion of the wilderness, it may be safely assumed that they would spread over the comparatively arable country, and would, with the supernatural aid still continued to them, find a tolerable subsistence.

Now it has been truly remarked by Mr. Drew, that “we find a correspondence absolutely perfect between the details of the narrative and the respective localities of the peninsula to which they are assigned. Those stages of the journey where the people are represented as suffering and exhausted in their enterprise, and consequently as desirous to abandon it, are even now recognized as just the distressing stages in a route which, through a considerable portion of it, would not entail upon them excessive fatigue, or involve them in unbearable privations. When the history alludes to supernatural help, it represents the people as being then in a position where such helps would evidently be required for such a multitude.”<sup>1</sup>

In view of this accuracy of the narrative, so far as it can be traced; of all the testimony to be gathered from the Bible concerning the occupancy of that region; of the known and established facts relating to its present and former condition, taken in connection with similar changes in other once fertile countries; and of the circumstances of the journey *as represented in the narrative*, — including the Divine superintendence, — we have no hesitation in declaring the objection to be unsustained.

We cannot better close this branch of the subject than with the words of Bunsen, who, while boldly rejecting all the supernatural from the narrative, is therefore the more likely to be heard when he, with equal boldness, declares the objection to be null and void. He grants that in the present condition of the peninsula the transaction would be an impossibility. “But wherefore? Because for thousands of years nature has pursued the work of destruction unhin-

<sup>1</sup> Drew's Examination, p. 47.

dered, washing away the productive soil by great torrents of rain, and filling up the rivulets with earth and sand; while a careful husbandry might, by easy methods, create a paradise almost everywhere in this land. Terraces protect cultivated places on the declivities; canals prevent the formation of bogs; artificial ponds, in high enclosed valleys, secure the means of artificial irrigation. In this manner was Fayoum a paradise; so South Arabia, in the old kingdom of Himjar. Both are now desolate. Is therefore the history of Lake Moeris and the description by Strabo and Herodotus of the inexpressible prosperity of that Egyptian tract a fable; or the account of the blooming kingdom of Lokman in Arabia a fiction? Certainly not for our time, in which the remains of both establishments have been brought to light. But the Sinaitic peninsula contained Egyptian colonies already, fifteen hundred years before Moses; he found there comfort and civilization. Nor must we forget the antiquity of commerce on the water and by caravans. Abu Selimeh on the Red Sea was an excellent harbor; Lepsius has set forth the importance of this place in connexion with the journey of the Israelites. Ezion-geber, also, was a half-way station for caravans and for the naval trade for the Arabian world. There was easy intercourse with the opposite coast of Arabia on the Aelanitic Gulf. The Israelites went out not poor, as is shown by many allusions to the jewels they carried. Moreover their herds were an inexhaustible treasure, both for sustenance and for traffic. Finally, we forget that a nation so vigorous, so accustomed to heat and toil, knew how to help themselves. They cannot create water where it is not, but they can make pure well-water out of a boggy pool. In short, we have only to free ourselves from the unthinking habits of the common belief in miracles, in order to grasp with our hands *the groundlessness of the objections of a shallow criticism.*"<sup>1</sup>

(iv.) It is asserted that the Pentateuch contains "notices

<sup>1</sup> Bunsen's Bibelwerk, II. Abtheilung, I. Theil, p. 163.

historical, geographical, archaeological, and explanatory, implying a post-Mosaic time and writer.”

On this portion of the subject three things are noteworthy: first, the exceedingly small number of passages that can be forced into the service; second, the singular and inconsistent pertinacity with which the objectors refuse to make any allowance for possible changes, in the course of centuries, by accidental corruption or intentional revision; and, third, the slight occasion which is found by the advocates of Moses to suppose a change of text,—the Rabbins admitting some eighteen interpolations; Jahn, ten or twelve; Witsius, four; Hengstenberg, apparently none.

In our judgment, the strenuousness with which Hengstenberg rejects the idea of solving any difficulty on the ground of a possible or probable change of text is uncalled for; and the resistance made to it by such writers as Davidson and Colenso is inconsistent alike with all the antecedent probabilities of the case and with well-known facts in the history of the New Testament text. In the case of the New Testament, the recovery of early manuscripts enables us to *prove* these things; while in the Old Testament, unfortunately, we cannot to any great extent go back of the Masoretic recension. Such minor additions and alterations in the lapse of time are intrinsically probable. They might take place by the error of transcribers, or by the incorporation of a marginal note into the text.<sup>1</sup> Even the critics are sometimes obliged to assume such changes in order to sustain their objections; as when Thenius would arbitrarily change רָצַח (2 Sam. xxiv. 6 רָצַח רָצַח) into לָרֵשׁ, and Gesenius and others, on the sole guidance of the Vulgate, into רָצַח. They might be intentionally introduced by authorized persons, as changes required for understanding the text, or for the completeness of the narrative. One such addition is the account of Mo-

<sup>1</sup> Thus Davidson supposes such a process in Isa. vii. 17 (Bib. Criticism, Vol. I. p. 68), while in the New Testament, e.g. John v. 4 and part of 3 are generally regarded, on manuscript grounds, as interpolations. See a discussion of the subject of changes of text in Davidson's work just cited.

ses's death. That such completions of the narrative should have been made is an entirely admissible supposition, in view of the facts: (1) that writings so ancient would require it; (2) that there continued to exist till the close of the canon, a class of men like Samuel and Ezra, claiming and admitted to stand on the same plane of inspired authority with the original writer. It is rendered a *probable* supposition, *first* by actual statements in the scriptures concerning Ezra and his work. He is pointedly described as not only "the scribe" (Neh. viii. 1, 4; xii. 26); he is "the scribe, even the scribe of the words of the commandments of the Lord and of his statutes to Israel" (Ez. vii. 11), "a scribe of the law of the God of heaven" (vs. 12, 21), "a ready scribe in the law of Moses" (vs. 6); he "had prepared his heart to seek the law of the Lord and to do it, and to teach in Israel statutes and judgments" (vs. 10); the royal decree recognized his function "to teach the laws of his God to them that know them not" (vs. 25); and he most diligently read *and explained* to the people "the book of the law of Moses," day after day (Neh. viii. 1-5, 8, 18). These are weighty as well as trustworthy statements.<sup>1</sup> Concurrent with these statements, *secondly*, is the Rabbinic tradition (invested, as usual, with marvellous circumstances), declaring his eminent services in furnishing a corrected edition of the scriptures.<sup>2</sup> While we cannot, with the great body of the Christian Fathers, accept all the embellishments, neither are we called upon to doubt the historic foundation, of the tradition. Even Dr. Davidson could say, in 1853, "nor is the historic basis of the view that Ezra bore a leading part in collecting and revising the sacred books shaken by the fabulous circumstances in the writings of the early Fathers, in passages of the Talmud, and in later Jewish authors."<sup>3</sup> Winer also declares it to be "entirely supposable that such a man performed many services for

<sup>1</sup> See Lord Hervey's Article on Ezra in Smith's Dictionary of the Bible.

<sup>2</sup> See references in Winer's Realwörterbuch.

<sup>3</sup> Davidson's Biblical Criticism, Vol. I. p. 103.

religious restoration and civil regulation, of which the written tradition gives no account."<sup>1</sup> And Stuart well says, in speaking of him and his associates: "All Rabbinic antiquity takes for granted that in the time of Ezra and Nehemiah there was a select body of men in Judea who were named the Great Synagogue, and who had much to do with arranging the Jewish scriptures, making provision for their circulation, and furnishing the best text to be had."<sup>2</sup>

While therefore we shall have but slight occasion to resort to the supposition of any changes of the text, we will not, in every instance, be debarred from availing ourselves of a supposed occurrence, which is not only probable in the nature of the case, but almost inevitable in fact, which is authorized by the general statements of scripture, and by the special deliverances of antiquity, and which finds reasonable support in the individual instances.

Here, however, let us insist upon a right apprehension of the issue and the argument. Our position is simply this: an *attested* fact of authorship being encountered by certain difficulties, we meet those difficulties with an explanation warranted both by general principles and by special grounds. This being the case, it is entirely unworthy in Dr. Davidson to say of such an explanation, "it is a mere hypothesis framed to evade the difficulty lying in the way of an assumed authorship."<sup>3</sup> The authorship is not "assumed," but sustained by testimony, all on one side; the mode of explanation is not "*mere* hypothesis," but is countenanced by general probabilities and justified in individual applications. The method of reasoning is strictly judicial.

We proceed to the passages alleged in proof of a later composition. Gen. xii. 6: "And the Canaanite was then in the land"; xiii. 7: "And the Canaanite and the Perizite then dwelled in the land." These words, says Davidson, obviously imply that when the writer lived they had

<sup>1</sup> Winer's Realwörterbuch, I. p. 349.

<sup>2</sup> Stuart on the Old Testament, p. 82.

<sup>3</sup> Davidson's Introduction, Vol. I. p. 6.

been expelled. But (1), as Kalisch shows, they never were entirely extirpated, and therefore no Hebrew writer could, at any period of the commonwealth, speak of their occupancy as a by-gone epoch (see 1 Kings ix. 20, 21; Ez. ix. 1). (2). Even if we lay a special emphasis on the word *then*, it does not necessitate supplying the ellipsis "though not now"; it may equally well imply "though not at some previous date," or "though it was not to continue," or, simply and absolutely, it may chronicle a fact which gave significance to the faith of Abraham. (3). We have before us three explanations, either of which removes all difficulty from Gen. xii. 6: (a) Knobel's,—that not the whole Canaanitish people, but the single tribe of that name, which in the time of Moses dwelt by the sea and on the Jordan, in the time of Abraham *still* dwelt in the land, in its very interior, at Sichem; (b) Kalisch's,—that the Canaanites *already* dwelt there, having migrated from the south; (c) Delitzsch's,—that the "then" contains no reference to the time of the narrator, but to a subsequent change involved in the promise (vs. 7) now made to Abraham. Substantially this last is Turner's view (so Gerlach, after Chrysostom), that the remark illustrates Abraham's faith, who believed that God would give that land to his posterity although the Canaanite was then (at that very time) in the land. This is, in our apprehension, the simple and correct explanation. In the other instance (Gen. xiii. 7), the remark is necessary to explain the full state of the case in the strife between the herdsmen of Lot and Abraham,—the insufficiency of pasturage, or (as some would say) the dangers of strife enhanced by the fact that then, at this same time, the Canaanite and Perizzite were still in the land. The simple, absolute emphasis is sufficient; though, if we must find a relative emphasis, we are as much at liberty to understand it *already* as *still*, which is virtually Davidson's interpretation. The passages must be given up.

"In Kirjath Arba; the same is Hebron" (Gen. xxiii. 2; xxxv, 27). The name Hebron is pronounced to be poste-



rior to Moses. "The place did not obtain it till Caleb, having got it into his possession after the division of the land, called it Hebron, after one of his sons."<sup>1</sup> The statement is wholly destitute of foundation. It nowhere appears that Caleb had a son Hebron<sup>2</sup> (see his children, 1 Chron. iv. 15). But we are referred to Josh. xiv. 15: "The name of Hebron before was Kirjath Arba; which Arba was a great man among the Anakims." We answer: Kirjath Arba was the name immediately, and perhaps for a long time, before, but not originally. Clearly it was not the name in Abraham's time, for the place was *not then occupied by the Anakim*, but by the Hittites, and is frequently designated by the name of its then occupant, — Mamre, the contemporary and ally of Abraham (Gen. xxiii. 19; xxxv. 27; comp. xiv. 13, 28). The name "Mamre," then, was older than Kirjath Arba, but itself not the original name, since we have no reason to understand that the place was first occupied by Abraham's contemporary, it being an old place, "built seven years before Zoan in Egypt" (Num. xiii. 12). The view of Hengstenberg is therefore highly probable and tenable. The ancient name of the city was Hebron. It was displaced partially or wholly by its Hittite lord, Mamre, and afterwards by the still more famous Arba, then deliberately and finally replaced at the conquest; hence, whenever the more recent names are given, the older and permanent one is added.<sup>3</sup> Corroborative of this view is the fact that when

<sup>1</sup> Davidson's Introduction, Vol. I. p. 2.

<sup>2</sup> Dr. Davidson probably confounded Caleb the son of Hezron and brother of Jerahmeel with Caleb the son of Jephunneh. But Caleb the brother of Jerahmeel was the great-grandfather of Bezaleel, the builder of the tabernacle at Sinai. See 1 Chron. ii. 19, 20 and Ex. xxxi. 2. This, of course, settles the point, notwithstanding each Caleb had a daughter Achsa. Dr. Davidson also perhaps confounds Caleb the name of a place (1 Chron. ii. 42, 43) with a personal name. See Bertheau on this passage, who shows that the names in these verses (42-49) are of places, as in verse 21, 24, Gilead and Tekoa. Hebron, as a man's name, was at least one generation older than Moses (Ex. vi. 18).

<sup>3</sup> Delitzsch remarks that since Caleb found the Anakim there, but in Abraham's time the Hittites, a branch of the Phenicians, were owners of the state, it must often have changed lords and names. Die Genesis, p. 424.

the place is first named (Gen. xiii. 18), and whenever in other places only one name is used (e. g. Num. xiii. 22), it is simply Hebron; but when either or both of the other names are employed, we have the explanatory addition, "the same is Hebron,"—the unsettled and fluctuating appellations being referred to the fixed and true one. But says Dr. Davidson, the older name is not usually appended to the later, but the reverse. The remark is wholly superficial. It will depend on the object of the writer. If he, in designating a place, finds it necessary to employ the name by which it is now and has long been popularly known, but chooses also to remind his readers of the older and more suitable name, nothing is more natural. This objection fails in every particular.

The name Hormah (Num. xiv. 45) is alleged to be an anachronism. The place is again mentioned, ch. xxi. 1–3, and afterwards, Josh. xii. 44 and Judg. i. 17. It is claimed that the last passage narrates the first conquest and naming of the city Hormah, "doomed." But no fair-minded reader can fail to see that the first conquest and giving of the name are related in Num. xxi. 1–3. It was natural enough for the same writer in narrating the earlier encounter and defeat of Israel at that place to mention it by the significant and permanent name which it soon after earned and received. But, it is objected, a conquest is described in Judg. i. 17 (Davidson admits that the conquest of the *king*, Josh. xii. 14 is not a difficulty). The case is simple. Hormah lies in a mountainous and difficult region. The Israelites first attack (ch. xiv.) and are defeated. But on reaching Kadesh they overthrow it and name it Hormah. They afterwards leave the region, and a land so difficult to hold reverts to the surrounding tribes. Still later, Joshua smote the king (Josh. xii. 14) in his sweeping march from Kadesh to Gaza (Josh. x. 40–43). But the final, permanent occupancy was achieved by the tribes of Judah and Simeon after Joshua's death (Judg. i. 17), and the name Hormah, which *practically* had not displaced the old name Zephath, now became its settled appellation.

Gen. xxxvi. 31. "And these are the kings that reigned in the land of Edom before there reigned any king over Israel." This, it is said, could not have been written till after there had been a king in Israel. Certainly not, if there had been neither kings nor the firm and prominent *expectation of a great line of kings*. But this was the repeated promise to Abraham (Gen. xvii. 5, 6, 16) and Israel (xxxv. 11); and the promise is reiterated in the narrative, only eighteen verses before this enumeration of Edomitish kings. Now since the blessing of Jacob included his ascendancy over Esau and his posterity (ch. xxvii. 29, 40), what is there impossible or unnatural in the writer's calling attention to this striking development of Edom while Israel was still in his pupilage. "Wherefore," says Delitzsch, "can the writer not speak from the point of view of the promise which he has previously repeated (xxxv. 11)? That Israel was to be a kingdom under kings of its own race, was a hope handed down to the time of Moses, which the Egyptian sojourn was well fitted to nourish. How striking that Edom had become a monarchy earlier than Israel, that the outcast shoot should have attained its maturity, independence, and consistency earlier than the promised seed . . . . If we will scrutinize the remark a little, such are the thoughts that rise in the heart of the narrator." So Michaelis and others. Kalisch admits that if this idea was in the plan and composition of the writer, the words would cause no embarrassment, nor point to a time later than Moses. His admission is the more important, since he pronounces such a statement in a simple, historical style, "not only preposterous but impossible." The reader meanwhile is at liberty to judge for himself, whether — since that is the only difficulty — Moses was such a man as to make it "impossible" that he should have or record such a sentiment. The difficulty is but superficial, and disappears on a profounder appreciation; it has force only in proportion as we insist on the necessary shallowness of the writer and his book.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> It is proper to add that LeClerc, Kennicott, Graves, regard the whole passage, from verse 31 to verse 40, as an interpolation from 1 Chro

Gen. xl. 15. "For indeed I was taken away out of the land of the Hebrews." Says Davidson: the phrase "land of the Hebrews" presupposes its occupation by the Israelites; the expression is not "land of Canaan," as elsewhere. The objection skims only the surface again. The question is not what names are properly used under wholly different circumstances; but what appellation belongs in Joseph's mouth when speaking to an Egyptian. And this term is perfectly in keeping. The Egyptians do not appear to have known specially of the Canaanitish tribes, or of a common name for their land. But they had seen the man who was known as "Abram the Hebrew" (Gen. xiv. 13), "a mighty prince" in that land (xxiii. 6), a man who had been entertained and dismissed with honor by the Egyptian monarch, and who, with his posterity, occupied a powerful position in that land. They knew this people as "Hebrews" (Gen. xxix. 14; xli. 12, etc.),—a term which indeed Gesenius specifies as the name under which they were commonly known to foreign nations. In Joseph's mouth it was perfectly natural, if not inevitable, to call that land the land of the Hebrews.

Deut. xviii. 28. "That the land spue not you out also when ye defile it, as it spued out the nations which were before you." This language, it is said, presupposes the expulsion of the Canaanites as past. But neither a plain English reader nor a moderate Hebraist will have the slightest difficulty with it. The common reader knows that in such expressions as, "I will write a letter when I have taken a nap," the past tense, "have taken" is but a relative past and refers to an actual future," i. e. "shall have taken." The Hebraist knows that the Hebrew *has no other mode* of expressing a future perfect than by a simple preterite, which is explained by its being in a dependent clause. Thus in Isa. iv. 4, "shall have washed," is, in Hebrew, "have washed," or rather, "washed." So in this passage. Four verses previous God speaks of the nations "which I cast out [am to cast out] before you;" and then warns Israel against such conduct that the land shall spue thee out "as it spued,"

or more exactly, "will have spued out the nations before you." Occurring, as the language does, in an utterance expressly concerning the future, the objection scarcely calls for a reply.

In Ex. vi. 26, 27, the expression, "these are that Moses and Aaron to whom the Lord said," etc., is alleged to be such as would be used by a writer only concerning men who lived long before his time. But Kalisch has well shown the inherent fitness of the language: "With these words the narrative returns easily to vs. 13, where it was interrupted for the insertion of the genealogy of the legislator and his brother, the first pontifical dignitary. This is naturally done with a certain emphasis — these are that Moses and Aaron, etc. It is strange to observe that this passage and especially the pronouns *אשר* and *הוא*, have been made to serve as proofs against the authenticity of the Pentateuch. But we need scarcely remind our readers that our text naturally points with some stress to Moses and Aaron, on whose account alone the genealogy had been inserted; and those words mean simply: this is the descent of Moses and Aaron who were now sent to Pharaoh; and *they correspond precisely* with vs. 13 and 14, thus returning to the commencement of the parenthetical list, and indicating its conclusion."<sup>1</sup>

Ex. xi. 3. "Moreover the man Moses was very great in the land of Egypt, in the eyes of Pharaoh's servants, and in the eyes of the people." This is said to be unsuitable in the mouth of Moses. How so? It is part of the actual historic reasons why the Egyptians freely imparted their jewels to the Israelites. The first reason was that "the Lord gave them favor in the eyes of the Egyptians," i. e. kindly disposed the latter; the second follows: "moreover, the man Moses was very great," etc., i. e. the Egyptians were impressed with a profound awe for the great leader. It was a reason that required to be given, because the grand *visible* reason. "With historical faithfulness and unaffected simplicity," says Kalisch, "Moses makes these remarks about his own

<sup>1</sup> Kalisch on Exodus, *in loco*.

person; they are historical facts; and he relates them with the same objective impartiality with which Xenophon speaks of himself in the *Anabasis*, or Caesar in his *Commentaries*."<sup>1</sup>

Num. xii. 3. "Now the man Moses was very meek, above all the men which were upon the face of the whole earth." Such commendation of himself is pronounced impossible to have come from Moses. Two methods of reply have been adopted.<sup>2</sup> The first (of Calvin, Hengstenberg, Gerlach), that the statement of fact was important in the connection, as showing how God was self-moved to vindicate this meekest of men; and that a truly good man who had grace to record frankly his own defects, might by the same grace be enabled, without either Phariseism or false modesty, to record also this trait of his character; as John calls himself the disciple whom Jesus loved, and as Paul holds up his own example to the Philippians (Phil. iii. 17), and calls the Thessalonians to witness to his blameless life (1 Thess. ii. 10). None but a Pharisee will deny the possibility. Other writers (Jahn, Rosenmüller, Kurtz), though admitting the possibility of the explanation, yet incline to view the statement as the comment of a later hand, because, (1) the connection is complete and even closer if the verse is omitted; (2) the declaration appears disproportionate to the occasion; (3) it has no close counterpart except Deut. xxxiv. 10, confessedly by a later hand; (4) the statement seems *more* natural and probable as the admiring comment of another person, especially in its sweeping extent: "meek above all the men which were upon the face of the earth." We have no serious objection to this latter view.

The frequent formula, "unto this day," is cited as indi-

<sup>1</sup> Dr. Davidson reasons in the following very peculiar mode. "It is the recording of the fact that Moses was a great man in Egypt which is unsuitable; not the fact itself. . . . So far from Moses's greatness being an *additional* reason, it detracts from and irreverently spoils the one just given. Surely the fact that God gave the Israelites favor in the sight of their enemies renders any other reason at once unnecessary and derogatory to God Almighty." [!]

<sup>2</sup> We set aside the translation "afflicted" for מַצְרִי. The word invariably carries with it the idea of meekness, though also commonly implying affliction.

cating a lapse of time too great for the life-time of Moses. But the phrase is entirely indefinite and is applied even to a very brief period, as (Gen. xlviii. 15) to a portion of Jacob's life-time, and (Josh. vi. 25) to a still more limited portion of Rahab's life-time. Dr. Davidson says that the test must be applied with discrimination, and ventures to cite but one instance (Deut. iii. 14), a verse to which on other grounds, as will appear, we incline to concede a later origin. In other words, he admits that the phrase does not carry in itself proof of a late composition.

By a singular process of reasoning Dr. Davidson quotes the passages of which the writing is expressly ascribed to Moses (Ex. xxiv. 4; xxxiv. 27; xvii. 14), and in general the allusions "to Moses as a writer," to prove that not Moses but some "later person who used documents," composed the Pentateuch. In like manner the express statement, so frequent in the last of Exodus, "as God commanded Moses," is declared to show a time posterior to Moses for at least *the form* of those laws. But as these passages, and nearly every portion of Leviticus, are given in minute detail and exact phraseology as the very utterances which "the Lord spake unto Moses," it is impossible to stop here. If the testimony of the witness is good for anything, it is good to show that the whole book of Leviticus, for example, is an *exact* record of what was uttered to Moses, and therefore must by him have been recorded.

The capricious extent to which these arbitrary objections are carried, is seen in the statement that designations of Joshua as the minister of Moses (Ex. xxiv. 13), and as "his servant Joshua, the son of Nun, a young man," are not such as would have been written by Moses himself.<sup>1</sup>

Two or three passages, however, offer objections of more weight. In Gen. xiv. 14 mention is made of a place named Dan. But the town Laish did not receive the name Dan till taken by the Danites (Josh. xix. 47; Judg. xviii. 29), after the death of Moses. Two replies are offered. Jahn, Hä-

<sup>1</sup> Davidson's Introduction, Vol. I. p. 12.

vernick, Keil, and Kalisch reply that there were two places of the name, and that this is the older place, bearing its name from a much earlier period. For this view it is urged: (1) That another Dan is expressly mentioned (Dan-Jaan) 2 Sam. xxiv. 7, a fact not to be set aside without changing the text. Hitzig here *cuts* the knot by arbitrarily changing דַּן to לַיִשׁ, and reading Dan Laish. Gesenius, Winer, and others would change דַּן to לַיִשׁ. The latter change has no support except the Vulgate rendering, "in Dana sylvestria;" and the designation is found nowhere else. Dr. Davidson conveniently takes no notice of the reading. (2) The other names of the chapter are very old names (some of them obsolete in the time of Moses), Bela, En-Mishpat, Siddim, Salem, Hazezon Tamar. (3) The chapter is remarkable for giving the older name and appending the modern, when there was a modern one,—Bela which is Zoar; Siddim which is the Salt Sea; En-Mishpat which is Kadesh; Shaveh which is the valley of the king; consequently his style would have been "Laish which is Dan," had he intended that place. Other considerations of less weight are adduced by Hävernick.<sup>1</sup> The other reply is, that, though there was but one city called Dan, its later and more famous name was substituted for the earlier and obscurer, either by the incorporation of a marginal reading, or by design. Various indications point to this conclusion: (1) The chapter itself, as a whole, with its ancient names and minute designation of persons and localities, bears marks of the highest antiquity — of having come down from a time when the facts were recent.<sup>2</sup> (2) The occurrence of this one modern name unexplained, in the midst of a narrative dealing so exclusively with ancient, and in part obsolete, names, while pointing somewhat clearly

<sup>1</sup> Hävernick's Introduction to the Pentateuch, p. 148 (Clark).

<sup>2</sup> Thus Ewald reckons it (Geschichte, i. 353) a relic of Patriarchal times. Tuch says, that but for this one word Dan "we might well-nigh believe we were dealing with a writer of the period previous to the Israelitish invasion" (Commentar *in loco*). Knobel (*in loco*) admits that the Jehovist must have drawn the account "from an older writing," and he assigns to it the first place in his so-called "war-book."



to the well-known Dan, is a phenomenon pointing also to another hand than that of the original writer; the more especially as *his* method was, in case of two names for the same place, to mention first the older and annex the later.<sup>1</sup> (3) Strong proof that some uncertainty or confusion must have existed as to this name in the manuscripts, is found in the fact that both the Samaritan Pentateuch and the Arabic version contain the reading "Banias" for Dan. (4) Add to this the facility with which a name that became so famous as the northern boundary ("from Dan to Beersheba") would supersede a name wholly obscure; and we reach a conclusion which apparently solves all the phenomena of the case, that the text originally contained an obscure and older name, perhaps Laish, and that after the name was superseded, the new and noted name took its place in the manuscripts. This is the view of Ewald.<sup>2</sup> We assent to it. We certainly cannot be reproached for assuming a change of text by the men who, on much slenderer foundation, in order to make good their own objection are obliged to assume a change of text in 2 Sam. xxiv. 7.

Ex. xvi. 35, 36. "And the children of Israel did eat manna forty years, until they came to a land inhabited; they did eat manna until they came into the borders of the land of Canaan. Now an omer is the tenth part of an ephah." As Moses was dead before the manna ceased, it is argued that he did not write the first of these verses; and that the explanation in the second corresponds to the idea of a later origin. Hengstenberg replies, that the evident intention is not to mark the time of the cessation, which fact is stated in Josh. v. 11, 12, but the length of its continuance. It was not a transient benefit to meet a sudden emergency, but was continued during the whole exile, from the first to the fortieth year, when they reached the borders of their future inherit-

<sup>1</sup> If with Tuch we take these explanatory additions as the glosses of a later hand, we are still forced to the position that the original writing which used the old names, Bela, etc., *only*, could not have contained the name Dan.

<sup>2</sup> Ewald's Geschichte, Vol. I. p. 73.

ance. The reply has force. And yet (1) the very definite specification of coming into the borders of Canaan, (2) the appended definition of an omer, and (3) the distinct parenthetical character of the verses, together with the anticipatory nature of the first, make us willing to view them as additional statements by a later hand, such as in the New Testament we find in John v. 4, and part of vs. 3.

Similar passages occur in Deut. ii. and iii. In ch. ii. 12, after relating how the Edomites expelled the Horims and occupied their land, the speaker adds, "as Israel did unto the land of his possession." Rosenmüller maintains truly that the passage may be translated "as Israel does," i. e. is in process of doing, and that we need not suppose a later hand than Moses. But we find (1) that this passage is omitted in one Hebrew manuscript and in the Samaritan version; (2) that vs. 10 - 12 interrupt a direct speech, by a circuitous and apparently unnecessary detail of *outside* history, and (3) that they change in style from the first to the third person. Therefore we incline, with Jahn and many others, to regard them as an explanatory addition by a later hand. For the same reasons (except the first), and in part for additional considerations, we regard certain similar explanations in the same discourse (viz. ii. 20 - 23; iii. 9 - 11 and perhaps 14) as later explanations, though Hengstenberg argues vigorously to the contrary. Dr. Davidson inadvertently helps us with the true remark that "they are parentheses, which break the continuity of the composition."

To the above objections may be added certain others brought forward by Dr. Colenso, not always of his origination.

The bishop of Natal demurs to the possibility of Moses's knowing and describing so well the location of mounts Ebal and Gerizim (Deut. xi. 29, 30). But, to take no higher view, the monuments of Egypt exhibit abundant warlike intercourse of Egypt with Syria and other countries of Asia;<sup>1</sup> the history of Abraham and of Jacob and his family shows that peaceful

<sup>1</sup> Wilkinson's Ancient Egyptians, Vol. I. p. 394 s

communication was easy; and the narrative (Gen. xxxvii. 25 seq.) reveals apparently a regular traffic from Gilead to Egypt, passing not far from Shechem (xxxvii. 14, 17, 28), consequently in the neighborhood of these very mountains.

Dr. Colenso objects that the name Gilgal, in the same passage (Deut. xi. 29, 30), was not given till the people had been circumcised after entering the land. An instance of unpardonable recklessness. Almost any recent authority would have informed him that besides the "Gilgal" near Jericho (named as he describes), there was one and probably two other places of that name in Palestine: one at the modern Jiljuleh near the ancient Antipatris,<sup>1</sup> and another at Jiljilia, some twelve miles south of these mountains, probably the one here intended.<sup>2</sup> The mistake is the more inexcusable, that the locality described in the passage contradicts it.

Colenso alleges as anachronisms the expression "shekel of the sanctuary" (שֶׁקֶל הַמִּקְדָּשׁ, Ex. xxx. 13; xxxviii. 24, 25, 26). "This," he says, "is before there was any sanctuary; the story, therefore, could not have been written by Moses, or by one of his age. This is clearly an oversight."<sup>3</sup> It was clearly an oversight in the bishop not to look into Gesenius's Thesaurus, and find the phrase there translated "sacred shekel," in accordance with the predominant use of the word שֶׁקֶל. The phrase, so understood, might be used either (1) to distinguish some special kind of currency (an undepreciated from a depreciated is Benisch's suggestion, sustained, as he conjectures, by Gen. xxiii. 16), at the same time defining the shekel as twenty gerahs; or (2) more probably, since the tabernacle service was now about to be established (ch. xl.), this is simply the institution and settlement of the sacred shekel for the tabernacle tax, defining it as twenty gerahs.

<sup>1</sup> Robinson's Researches, Vol. III. 47; Winer's Realwörterbuch, and Kitto's Cyclop., Article Gilgal; Knobel *in loco*; Gesenius's Thesaurus, Supplement, p. 79; Keil on Josh. ix. 6.

<sup>2</sup> Winer's Realwörterbuch, p. 430. Keil on 2 Kings, ii. 1. Knobel supposes it to be Jiljuleh.

<sup>3</sup> Colenso on the Pentateuch, Part II. pp. 86, 87.

The frequent occurrence of the word נָבִיא (prophet) in the Pentateuch, is alleged against the early origin of the book, on the strength of the statement 1 Sam. ix. 9. "Beforetime in Israel, when a man went to inquire of God, thus he spake, Come and let us go to the seer; for he that is now called a prophet (נָבִיא) was beforetime called a seer (חֹזֵן)." It is proper to remark in passing, that the passage in Samuel is itself viewed as evidently a marginal note or later addition. See Thenius on the passage. Accepting it, however, as a correct statement of fact, it is fully explained by Le Clerc's suggestion: The word was used in the time of Moses, went into disuse in the time of the judges, then was revived again. The word "beforetime" has ample range in the time of the judges preceding Samuel, and the state of the case is fully set forth in 1 Sam. iii. 1, "The word of the Lord was precious in those days, there was no open vision." Hence, as the fact of full prophecy, so the proper word prophet, had gone into disuse, being for the time displaced by the more limited term seer.

Num. xv. 32. "And while the children of Israel were in the wilderness, they found a man that gathered sticks on the Sabbath-day." This, says Colenso, would seem to have been written when they were no longer in the wilderness. Very likely. They reached the wilderness (of Paran, xii. 16; xiv. 16) only after leaving Hazeroth (xii. 16), and certainly had left it when they entered the borders of Edom (xxxiii. 37), if not before.

These passages comprise, we believe, all, or nearly all, the alleged anachronisms. The reader will probably be surprised to find so great pretences dwindling into so slight performances. Some of these allegations are gross oversights in the objectors; others, pertinacious refusals to admit a natural and familiar principle of interpretation, or to allow scope or depth to the writer; some half-a-dozen — it is surprising that they are so few in a volume of such antiquity<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Some amount of change in texts transmitted by copying must be considered as unavoidable. The changes that the most valued individual manuscripts may

— are best (though not necessarily) explained by supposing some slight variations of the text, which are indicated by the connected circumstances. We apprehend that no respectable judicial body, in full possession of the facts, would allow these allegations a moment's weight against the clear testimony.

(v.) There are said to be indications in the Pentateuch that the writer lived in Palestine. The instances cited are few and feeble. The term "westward" (מִמְּוֹמָה, literally, "seaward"), often occurring (Gen. xii. 8; xxviii. 14, etc.), could have been used, it is said, only by a writer in Palestine, where the Mediterranean Sea was west. But Gesenius lays it down as a settled fact that the *home* of the Hebrew was Canaan. "It was substantially the language spoken by the Canaanitish or Phenician races, who inhabited Palestine before the immigration of Abraham and his descendants, by whom it was transplanted into Egypt and again brought back with them to Canaan."<sup>1</sup> The word, therefore, was simply the old, settled term of the Hebrew language, retaining its conventional meaning wherever the speaker lived, just as a multitude of words in all languages retain their settled force when all the circumstances of their origin have passed away.

The same is true, very likely, of the word קָדִיִּים, east-wind, spoken of (Gen. xli. 6) as a blasting wind. This wind, it is said, though a parching wind in Palestine, is not so in Egypt. Kalisch, however, declares that a burning east wind, likely to blast the corn about Heliopolis, blows from the desert of Shur and the desert of Paran, and that it causes all vegetables to wither. Or the term may have a secondary meaning, designating a blasting wind from any quarter. Dr. Robinson says that the Arabs called the terrible wind which he encountered south of Beersheba an "east-wind" (shurkiyeh), though it blew from the south.<sup>2</sup>

undergo are seen in the manifold corrections and alterations of the Alexandrian and Vatican manuscripts. Let us remember the fate of Shakspeare.

<sup>1</sup> Hebrew Grammar, Introduction, § 2, 2.

<sup>2</sup> Researches, Vol. I. p. 305, compare 287. The Septuagint renders *νότος* in Gen. xli. 6.

The expression "within thy gates" (Ex. xx. 10; Deut. v. 14), is said by Davidson to be inapplicable in the desert. But in both instances the expression occurs in the decalogue, or permanent fundamental law of the people, and is a phrase of conventional meaning. The word is broad enough to apply to city, temple, palace, or *camp* (Ex. xxxii. 26, 27), though not employed of individual houses or tents.<sup>1</sup>

Deut. xix. 14. "Thou shalt not remove thy neighbor's landmark, which they of old time have set in thine inheritance which thou shalt inherit in the land which the Lord thy God giveth thee." It is asserted that the allusion to the old landmark presupposes a long abode in the promised land. But is anything more simple? The lawgiver is legislating for the long future. He takes his point of view by anticipation, as the last part of the verse shows ("in thine inheritance which thou shalt inherit"), in the land they were to enter, and prohibits the removal of the landmarks which the fathers of the nation would have set for the whole course of the nation's history. The criticism which would preclude him from speaking thus of the old landmarks which they of old time had set, because it was not yet done, should go further, and preclude him from speaking of any landmarks at all, for none had yet been placed for Israel.

Ex. xxii. 29. "Thou shalt not delay to offer the first of thy ripe fruits." Dr. Davidson, emphasizing the word "delay," says, that as this is the first recorded legislation on the subject, and is merely an injunction not to delay it, the command supposes the offering to be in existence, and hence was written after the settlement in the land. This is small criticism. The expression evidently means "promptly offer thy first ripe fruits," — i. e. at once on their ripening. It is possible that the form of the command is modified by the fact that the Israelites were already familiar with the idea of offering the *first* to God in case of the offspring of animals and men (xiii. 2); indeed, they may have been familiar with the idea of offering first-fruits; for, as Winer shows, the practice is

<sup>1</sup> Gesenius's Thesaurus, תַּבְּנִי.

well known among heathen nations, and existed in ancient Egypt.<sup>1</sup>

It is objected by the same writer that the command (Ex. xxiii. 19), "The first-fruits of thy land thou shalt bring into the house of the Lord thy God," presupposes the existence of the Tabernacle in Palestine. How can a writer make such a declaration, when he finds the command embedded in the summary directions for the permanent establishment of the three great festivals, when the way is prepared for it by the direction just before (vs. 17), that three times a year all males shall appear before the Lord, and when the immediate sequel (ch. xxv.) contains detailed directions for the structure of the very tabernacle here briefly alluded to?

The same author quotes Leviticus xxvi. 34, 35, 43, in which it is said concerning the sabbatical years and the captivity: "then shall the land rest and enjoy her sabbaths . . . . because it did not rest when ye dwelt upon it." This, it is said, must have been written after actual disregard of the sabbatical and jubilee years. But the most careless reader will observe that it is the sequel of a full and stringent legislation on the whole subject (ch. xxv.), establishing the institution; and is part of a long and solemn injunction to observe these ordinances and "keep my sabbaths" (xxvi. 2). The lawgiver first sets forth the blessed rewards of obedience, then draws out in detail the punishments which shall follow the consequence of *future* disobedience, or, as he phrases it, because the land did not rest [will not have rested] in your sabbaths, when ye dwelt [will have dwelt] upon it. This is the whole case, and it hardly calls for notice, except to show what straws men will throw into the scale. Every passage in the Hebrew Bible that contains an utterance concerning the future and the relative past of that future, can be treated in the same manner.

To these passages of Dr. Davidson the bishop of Natal adds the phrase "beyond Jordan," as used in Gen. i. 11;

<sup>1</sup> Diodorus Siculus, I. 14. See fuller references in Winer's *Realwörterbuch*, Article "Erstlinge."

Dent. i. 1, 5. He alleges that as Moses was approaching the Jordan from the west, the phrase in his mouth should designate the western side of the river, and not the eastern; hence Moses did not write it. The sufficient reply is found in his quotation from Bleek containing the objection,—“that the above formula was a *standing* designation for the country east of the Jordan, which might be used in this sense without regard to the position of the writer. So it is often employed in later times.” It is like Transalpine and Cisalpine Gaul. So Gesenius. Bleek, however, would abate the force of the admission by saying that most probably the phrase first formed itself among the Hebrews after the settlement in Canaan. But the land was occupied, its modes of speech settled, and this great landmark there before the time of Abraham. Something more than a conjecture or supposed probability, therefore, is necessary to give any weight to the objection.<sup>1</sup>

The attempts to find evidence that the Pentateuch was composed in Palestine, certainly make a very feeble show.

(vi.) It is further asserted that certain “legendary and traditional elements” of the narrative, “involving insuperable difficulties and inconsistencies,” show that Moses could not have been the author of it. Here we meet, mainly in the form of quotation from Professor Norton,<sup>2</sup> the statements, which Dr. Colenso has repeated at third hand, concerning the mustering and marching of two millions of people, “in a single night,” and the difficulties of life in the wilderness.

But Dr. Davidson’s closing remarks on this head are

<sup>1</sup> A fuller statement of the case would add that the phrase is sometimes used from a writer’s position and that the same writer (especially Joshua) fluctuates. In Joshua its prevailing usage is as a geographical term, east of the Jordan (i. 14, 15; ix. 10; xiv. 3; xvii. 5) in the first of which cases he appends “eastward,” as if to define the true meaning of the phrase. In three instances he uses it from his point of view to designate the western side (v. 1; xii. 7; xxii. 7), but avoids misapprehension in each case by adding מִמְּוֶלַת, westward; so that the settled geographical meaning, when used without explanation in Joshua, is, from the outset, east of Jordan.

<sup>2</sup> Davidson’s Introduction, Vol. I. p. 100.



deeply significant, as showing his fundamental objection to any record of the supernatural. "Indeed, it is only necessary to examine the history, as it lies before us, to find in it a mythological, traditional, and exaggerated element, forbidding the literal acceptance of the whole. The character of Pharaoh under the circumstances detailed; the ten miraculous plagues, which spared the Israelites while they fell upon the Egyptians; the dogmatic mode in which it is narrated how Moses and Aaron presented themselves before Pharaoh; and the crowd of extraordinary interpositions of Jehovah on behalf of the people as they journeyed through the wilderness, show the influence of the later traditions on the narrative in dressing it out with fabulous traits. The laws of nature are unchangeable. God does not directly and suddenly interfere with them on behalf of his creatures; neither does he so palpably or constantly intermeddle with men's little concerns. The entire history is cast in the mould of a post-Mosaic age, unconscious of critical consistency, and investing ancestral times with undue importance."

Here we have, perhaps, the gist of the whole difficulty. Evidence can weigh little with one who determines that "*the laws of nature are unchangeable,*" and that "God does not directly and suddenly interfere with them on behalf of his creatures." The remark cuts wide and deep; it sweeps alike the time of Moses and of Christ.

(*To be continued.*)