

Moses in the sixth chapter of Exodus. If the latter narrative had been written by Moses himself,

“it is impossible,” the Bishop remarks, “to believe that any other writers would have dared to obscure that fact, much less to contradict it by inserting narratives in which the name is put into the mouths of all the chief persons in the history, from Eve downwards, and by observing”

that men began to call on the name of Jehovah in the days of Seth.<sup>1</sup> It follows that, if the Elohist was not (as he cannot have been) Moses himself, he must have lived later than Moses. Still the style of the narrative shows the simplicity of the age in which he lived. He nowhere speaks of houses, or of a priesthood, of a tabernacle or temple, or of regular sacrifices. He mentions the precious metals only once, when Abraham weighs out the silver for the Hittite Ephron.<sup>2</sup> In his day Ephraim was the dominant tribe, and its power was steadily growing. We are brought thus very nearly within the limits of Samuel’s life-time ; and to him certainly tradition points as having concerned himself in writing history.<sup>3</sup> At the same time these very facts seem to show conclusively that it could not have been written in an age later than that of Samuel. In the writer’s time the Hebrews had no weapons, no blacksmiths, no art. In David’s reign we find ourselves in a state of comparative wealth and splendour. But the tribes are still all united. There is no enmity between Joseph and his brethren. If the history could not have been written in the days of David or Solomon, it must have been written in those of Saul—that is, in the age of Samuel.<sup>4</sup> For the fact that Samuel himself was the Elohist there is thus the strongest likelihood ; but the rejection of this surmise in no way affects the conclusions reached by the investigations of the Bishop.

<sup>1</sup> *Pentateuch*, Part V. p 70.

<sup>3</sup> *Ib.* p. 76.

<sup>2</sup> *Ib.* p. 73.

<sup>4</sup> *Ib.* p. 77.

The Elohist may have lived in Samuel's age, and yet have left no name behind him. It is possible, but it is by no means likely. Nor are these the only signs which point to this time. There is in his day no enmity between Esau and Jacob—that is, of course, between Edom and Israel. In Genesis xxxvi. the Elohist

“enters into a long account of the progeny of Esau, and the different clans which sprang from him ; and . . . exhibits an amount of interest in their affairs only second to that which he felt in respect of those of his own people. And it seems impossible to suppose that such labour would have been expended on the annals of these tribes . . . at any period after the time of David, when the feeling between the Edomites and Israelites must have been very bitter.”

But further, in Genesis xxxvi. 31, the Elohist speaks of kings who reigned in Israel. This implies that when he wrote a king *was* reigning in Israel, and also that he was reigning over *all* Israel, and we are thus again restricted to the days of Saul, David, or Solomon, and the reasons which debar us from assigning him to the reign of Solomon or the later days of David have been already noticed. There are other subsidiary arguments, most of them very strong. One, especially, not merely points to the same time, but absolutely demonstrates that the Book of Deuteronomy was unknown to him. His narrative speaks of the change to monarchical government as a great sin on the part of the people. The language of the Deuteronomist is entirely different, and it was part of the special blessing upon Abraham and Jacob that kings should be born to them.<sup>1</sup>

With equal power and exactness the Bishop brings together the evidence indicating the age of the Jehovist. He is later than the Elohist, for he speaks of houses, and he gives to the ark a window, roof, door, and three stories ;<sup>2</sup> and the style of

<sup>1</sup> *Pentateuch*, Part V. p. 90 ; see also above, p. 560.

<sup>2</sup> *Ib.* p. 96.

these details, as compared with the directions given for making the tabernacle, leaves little room for doubting that both sets of directions have been recorded by the same author. The great length at which he gives the story of Joseph, and the generosity which he evidently means to ascribe to him, seem to show that he must have been a man of the tribe of Ephraim; and in the latter part of David's, or the earlier part of Solomon's, reign, an Ephraimite might easily be strongly attached to the house of David.<sup>1</sup> Over the Bishop's analysis of Jacob's blessings, which are full of indications of time, all pointing in one direction, we must pass rapidly. The blessing on Judah seems to have been written with reference to David's time, and at a period when he was still exposed to danger from within and without.<sup>2</sup> That on Simeon and Levi looks much more like a curse than a blessing. Both are to be separated and scattered; and as a tribe the Simeonites gradually dwindled away, until in the time of David they can scarcely be said to have had any geographical existence.<sup>3</sup> The sentence on Levi from Jacob's lips is as different from the blessing by Moses as it can possibly be;<sup>4</sup> but the latter comes from the Deuteronomist, and was therefore written at a time when the house of Levi was really held in high esteem and honour, and was composed, perhaps, by one who was himself a Levite and a priest. It is true indeed that there is one passage in the First Book of Samuel, vi. 15,

“which seems at first sight to be a plain recognition of the official position of the Levites according to the Mosaic Law. . . . But it will be seen that the Levites appear here upon the scene very strangely and suddenly. Not a word is said to introduce them, nor are they named in the history for some centuries before, or for a century after this event. Only in this one single verse they appear at the critical

<sup>1</sup> *Pentateuch*, Part V. p. 112.

<sup>2</sup> *Ib.* p. 123.

<sup>3</sup> See above, pp. 224, 564.

<sup>4</sup> *Pentateuch*, Part V. p. 145.

moment to take down the ark, which it was unlawful (according to the law in Numbers i. 51) for any mere layman to do. But it was just as unlawful for common Levites to *touch* the ark."

If it be said that these Levites were also priests, how did they, if they knew the Law, dare to offer sacrifice in an unconsecrated place? If it be said that the presence of the ark made this exceptional act allowable, then how did they dare to offer *milch* kine as a burnt-offering, when the Law (Leviticus i. 3) declared that it must be a male without blemish? The whole account is thus seen to be full of difficulties. In looking down to the connexion of the verse with the context we shall find that

"it is a later interpolation into the original story."

In the preceding verse the men of Bethshemesh cleave the wood of the cart, and offer the kine a burnt-offering to Jehovah.

"And then after this, after the cart had been broken up and burnt, we are told that the Levites took down the ark from the cart, and placed it on the great stone on which apparently the kine had just been offered, and it is added, the men of Bethshemesh offered burnt-offerings and sacrificed sacrifices the same day unto Jehovah, when we have just been told that they had 'offered the kine.' In short, the verse about the Levites quite obstructs the flow of the narrative, and has plainly been inserted by a later hand, in order to avoid the appearance of a sacrilegious act in the original story."<sup>1</sup>

But what bearing has the name of Jehovah on the date of the several books of the Pentateuch? On the one side we have a writer in Genesis who uses for "God" only the name Elohim, and who on reaching the sixth chapter of Exodus

<sup>1</sup> *Pentateuch*, Part V. p. 155.

gives an account of the way in which a new name, Jehovah, was revealed *for the first time* to Moses. On the other hand, we have the Jehovist not merely using the name from the first, but using it as a name known to Canaanites and Philistines, as well as to the Hebrews. It follows that there are at least two writers concerned in the composition of the Book of Genesis, and, further, that the Jehovistic writer did not believe the incidents of the manifestation at the burning bush related by the Elohist. But what was the motive of the latter in framing this narration? Can it have been anything but his knowledge that the name *was* comparatively new to the Hebrews, and that they did not really know it before the Exodus; that, although known at the time when he wrote, it was still not in very general use; and that he wished to commend it to the people by means of this story? This much is admitted by those modern critics who have given most attention to this special subject. Among these the foremost are Hartmann, Von Bohlen, and Von der Aa. Ewald holds that in times anterior to the Exodus it was used only in the family of the ancestors of Moses on the mother's side. The qualification is ludicrously improbable, but it is an admission of the unhistorical character of the story of the incidents at the burning bush. He admits, further, that although Moses,

“according to a beautiful legend,”

changed the name of Hoshea into Joshua,

“in order to retain more firmly the remembrance of the new religion, it still remained for some centuries not very much used”

in the common speech of Israel. The fact, as the Bishop insists, is incredible if Moses had really urged solemnly upon his people the adoption of this name, if he had used it habitually in his legislation, and encouraged or required

its use by others.<sup>1</sup> If Ewald be right, it follows that the name was introduced in some age later than that of Moses ; and we have seen to what age all the evidence seems to point. As to the name itself, Ewald admits that "it has no clear radical signification in Hebrew," and there is something like a complete consensus of critics that the Israelites after their settlement in Canaan adopted the Phœnician name, just as they also spoke, however they may have acquired it, the language of the Canaanitish tribes. Whatever be its origin, it was the most sacred and mysterious name of the Phœnician sun-god ; and it is useless to shut our eyes to the fact that the Israelites actually worshipped the Phœnician Baal under this designation. Otherwise,

"what is the meaning of Jephthah's offering his daughter as a burnt sacrifice unto JHVH ? or how can we explain otherwise the fact that they worshipped JHVH with idolatrous rites and impure practices, not only in the high places of Judah and Israel, but even in the very Temple at Jerusalem ?"

The marvellous confusion in their religious history, as given in the Books of Judges, Samuel, and Kings, is really due, in the Bishop's judgement, to this cause :

"that while a few of higher mind among them had clear views of the service which the Living God required, and worshipped Jehovah in spirit and in truth, yet to the eye of the multitude the name JHVH represented only the chief deity of the tribes of Canaan, the 'god of the land,' and so they defiled their worship with all manner of impurities."<sup>2</sup>

It is indisputable that even during the first eighteen years of the reign of Josiah there were in the Temple itself at Jerusalem vessels made for the sun and moon (Baal and

<sup>1</sup> *Pentateuch*, Part V. p. 275.

<sup>2</sup> *Ib.* p. 284.

Ashera) and for the host of heaven. There was also here a grove (in other words a Phallos or Linga), for which the women wove hangings ; and in the worship of these symbols, the priests, as a body, took part—nay, rather, we must say that they maintained it. These abominations, on the discovery of the Book of the Law, Josiah manfully set himself to suppress. He hewed down the pole, or tree, or stauros, which served as the sign of the fructifying power in Nature ; broke to pieces the altar, or foundation of stone, answering to the Hindoo Yoni, on which the Ashera rested ; and at Samaria, and elsewhere (though not at Jerusalem), he slew the idolatrous priests, after a fashion which must have been a terrible recompense for the human sacrifices offered up by those priests themselves. Josiah's reform, short-lived though it was, was trenchant, and it was short-lived because it was a very shambles of butchery which he sought to cleanse. The worship of the Phœnician sun-god demanded hecatombs of human burnt-offerings, and the Israelites were not to be outdone in the zeal with which they fed his altars with human blood. That the *passing through* of children is, in every case where it is spoken of, to be interpreted of their slaughter, the words of the prophets leave not a shadow of doubt. With an earnestness amounting to agony, Jeremiah speaks of the children of Judah as building the high places of Tophet to *burn* their sons and daughters in the fire (vii. 30, 31) ; as filling the Temple courts with the blood of innocents ; as raising high places to Baal, "to burn their sons with fire, for burnt-offerings unto Baal, which I commanded not, nor spoke it, neither came it into my mind" (xix. 4, 5). This was in the days of Josiah. Unless we refuse all credit to the words of Ezekiel, things were not much improved during the Captivity.<sup>1</sup> The prophet charges them with sacrificing their sons and their daughters to be devoured (xvi. 20, 21) ; with slaying their children to

<sup>1</sup> *Pentateuch*, Part V. p. 289.

their idols, and then coming red-handed to the sanctuary of God (xxiii. 37, 39). We should know therefore what is meant when we read that Ahaz and Manasseh made their sons to pass through the fire, even if Josephus had not told us plainly that they made holocausts of them. We turn with loathing from the pictures given of the fiendish brutality of Mexican worship; but we have scanty grounds indeed for thinking that the religion of the Israelites as a nation, even in the time of Josiah, was much less cruel and bloodthirsty. What, moreover, are we to say when amongst the Levitical laws in the Pentateuch we find statutes which imperatively insist on the slaughter of human victims? On the traditional theories they are emphatically a scandal as great as any which Jeroboam the son of Nebat set up in Bethel or Dan; but that the statutes are there is certain. The devoted things, it is said, shall not be sold, and shall not be redeemed.

“Every Kherim, which shall be devoted out of *man*, shall not be redeemed; it shall surely be put to death” (Leviticus xxvii. 28, 29).

The Bishop's analysis has shown conclusively that the so-called Mosaic legislation consists of enactments framed in different ages and lands, many, if not most, of them having never had any existence except on paper. These particular enactments are perhaps among the oldest, and they were carried out with ruthless exactitude, although prophet after prophet pleaded that God had never issued any such commands, and that it had never entered into His heart to do so. But these very expressions prove incontestably that the people must have alleged some authority for the practice, emanating as they declared from Jehovah Himself; and in these Levitical statutes they had this authority. That the practice should have gone on with lavish ferocity even after the men of Judah found themselves captives on the flats of



Babylon is melancholy and conclusive proof indeed that the teaching of the Book of Deuteronomy had not been left as an inheritance for the people nigh a thousand years earlier. In short, we have really no adequate warrant for supposing that the subjects of Solomon or Josiah were much, if at all, better in this respect than those of Jeroboam or Ahab. The Bishop cautions us against forgetting that

“we have no account of the doings of the people of Israel from their own point of view, but only one written from the point of view which would be taken by a man of Judah, betraying often political as well as religious animosity.”<sup>1</sup>

The fact that Josiah himself, while he mercilessly slew the idolatrous priests of Samaria, merely inhibited those of Jerusalem from performing sacred offices, can be explained probably only on the supposition that he wished to be rid of the priesthood as well as of the high places in Israel, so as to concentrate the religious regards of the people more thoroughly upon the Temple at Jerusalem. But while the true state of religion amongst the children of Abraham is thus brought before us, how startling a light is thrown on the laws and discourses of the Book of Deuteronomy! The injunctions to throw down the altars, to burn the Ashera, to defile the high places, instead of being commands issued to an obedient people many centuries before, are seen to be passionate pleadings for a reformation most urgently needed still. The abominations denounced were not those of long past ages, but impurities and iniquities which made the hearts of all good and true men sink within them, even in the Babylonish exile. With the bloodthirsty worship and foul orgies of the people, the language of the prophets (*i.e.* of the insignificantly small minority which lifted up its voice against all these abominations) presents, in the Bishop's words,

<sup>1</sup> *Pentateuch*, Part V. p. 297.

"a most wonderful and amazing contrast, and by that very contrast, more forcibly than any blind dogma of Scriptural infallibility could, they spoke God's word to man, and taught Divine truth as they were 'moved by the Holy Ghost.'" <sup>1</sup>

The efforts of the Elohist to raise his countrymen by attaching higher thoughts of God to the name Jehovah was a distinct step onwards in the education of the world; and in the sincerity and purity of this effort there were very few who came up to him.

"The Jehovist in the next age appears to have had less grand and becoming views of the Divine Being, using frequently very strong anthropomorphisms, and ascribing continually to Jehovah human actions. Still later writers of the Pentateuch appear to have made the worship of Jehovah to consist chiefly in the punctilious performance of outward forms and ceremonies, lustrations, and sacrifices, and the due payment of tithes and firstlings. At last the Deuteronomist breathed a new life into the dead letter of the Law, and wrote the words of the second covenant, 'the covenant in the land of Moab,' which were to the records of the Pentateuch, as then existing, what the writings of the New Testament are to those of the Old."

The Pentateuch thus became the record of a nation's thought and life through many centuries. No portion of it, perhaps, was brought into its present shape before the time of Saul and Samuel, and its latest parts were not put together before the age of Manasseh or Josiah. To have proved these facts is, of itself, to have done a great work; and the Bishop might well have been contented with the thought that he had disentangled the twisted chain of narratives interlaced one within the other by the additions and insertions of successive writers. But he has done much more. He has brought together the

<sup>1</sup> *Pentateuch*, Part V. p. 300.

immense mass of evidence which points personally to Samuel as the author of the Elohist narrative. He has shown between the thoughts and words of the Deuteronomist and those of the prophet Jeremiah a closeness of agreement which could not be exceeded if the Deuteronomist and the prophet were one and the same person. The task taken in hand is thus practically achieved. The Pentateuch is in no part the work of Moses, and in no part is the narrative thoroughly historical. It becomes therefore rather a matter of curious inquiry than of necessary investigation to carry the analysis further with the view of ascertaining whether there may, or may not, have been more than two writers occupied with the reduction of the Pentateuch to its present form. The Bishop has carried on the analysis, with the result of finding, as we have in part seen already, that, besides the Elohist and the Deuteronomist, there was a Jehovistic writer distinct from both, who is probably the same person as the second Elohist, and a second Jehovist who made certain additions to the book of the first. The Bishop shows the result in the following tabular form :—

	B.C.		<i>Contemporary Prophet.</i>
Elohist . . . . .	1100—1060	. . .	Samuel.
Second Elohist } . . . . .	1060—1010	. . .	Nathan.
Jehovist . . . . .			
Second Jehovist . . . . .	1035	. . .	Gad.
Deuteronomist . . . . .	641—624	. . .	Jeremiah. <sup>1</sup>

A discussion has been raised as to the date of the second Jehovist, some critics contending that he belongs to a time long subsequent to the Captivity. With the perfect candour which characterises all his work, the Bishop, in the concluding chapter of his Fifth Part, gives the whole of the argument and evidence adduced for this conclusion. He returns to the question again in the twenty-sixth chapter of his Sixth Part,

<sup>1</sup> *Pentateuch*, Part V. p. 181.

premising only that, as regards the great main question of his work, viz. the non-Mosaic origin of the Pentateuch, and the unhistorical character of its narrative,

“it would be of no consequence whatever should a more searching criticism decisively demonstrate the later origin of some portion at least—if not of all—of the Jehovistic passages in Genesis, or show that their composition extended over two or three centuries.”<sup>1</sup>

A more searching and patient examination than that which the Bishop devotes to this theory could not well be imagined. His conclusion, resting on evidence which seems to leave no room for doubt, is, that

“the Jehovistic passages, which form the main substance of the original story of the Exodus,”

were written between 1060 and 1020 B.C.,<sup>2</sup> and that the Elohist passages are the oldest portion of the Pentateuch, and the foundation, in fact, of the whole story.<sup>3</sup>

But he in no way bound himself to the assertion that these contemporary prophets were actually the writers of the corresponding sections of Genesis, although it is certain that some such men must have written them.

If, however, the Pentateuch can no longer be regarded as a contemporary historical narrative, its historical value is greatly increased from other points of view. Bishop Browne had charged Dr. Colenso not merely with denying the sojourn in Misraim, the Exodus, and the conquest of Canaan, but also with hostility to the Pentateuch itself. To these assertions the Bishop gave “a direct and emphatic contradiction.”<sup>4</sup> He had not denied any one of the points specified by Bishop Browne. He had distinctly and repeatedly asserted them.

<sup>1</sup> *Pentateuch*, Part VI. p. 539

<sup>3</sup> *Ib.* p. 588.

<sup>2</sup> *Ib.* p. 574.

<sup>4</sup> Part V. p. 307.

The charge of hostility to the Pentateuch resolved itself into a charge of hostility to Bishop Browne's particular view of the Pentateuch.<sup>1</sup>

To this view he was indeed opposed utterly, as to a view which distorted everything, and did full justice to nothing, which made it impossible to avoid shiftiness of interpretation, if not downright evasion and falsehood. The amount of historical or other instruction to be derived from the Pentateuch by Bishop Browne's method is poor indeed, as compared with that which may be drawn from it by an application of the true critical method.

“The beggarly condition of the Levites in the early days of David as revealed in Genesis xlix. ; . . . their increased influence in Josiah's time, as implied in the Book of Deuteronomy ; the minute specifications for the building of the Tabernacle, which read almost as if they were taken from the working drawings of the Temple itself, by some one who was personally concerned in the execution ; the injunction which commands human sacrifices (Leviticus xxvii.), and the narrative in Genesis xxii., which, while not condemning—rather approving—yet seems intended to discourage them,—all these, and a multitude of other similar notices, require only to be freed from the restraints of conventional, traditionary interpretations, and they will at once become instinct with life and meaning. In short, the whole Pentateuch, to the critical eye, is pregnant with history ; and the driest details of the Levitical law may yield somewhat of interest and importance, or illustrate the course of religious development in Israel.

“Thus I reverence with all my heart the Pentateuch as containing some of the most ancient . . . writings in the world, . . . though it contains also some of much later date ; as conveying to us, directly, or by reasonable inference, a knowledge of some of the earliest facts in human history ; . . . above all, as recording, apparently, the first movements of

<sup>1</sup> *Pentateuch*, Part V. p. 308. See also above, pp. 415 *et seq.*

a higher Divine life in the hearts of men of the Israelitish race, from which our own religious life has been to a great extent derived ; the kindling of that spiritual flame, which in Israel's worst days was never suffered to be quite extinguished, but, fed from time to time with fresh supplies from the Eternal Source, blazed out at length upon the nations, bright and clear, in the full glory of the teaching of Christ."<sup>1</sup>

The Bishop had, in short, achieved a work which entitles him to the gratitude of his countrymen for all time. He had brought light where traditionalists could only spread mist and darkness. By them he was naturally opposed. The extreme zealots of the party insisted that

"we must either receive the Verbal Inspiration of the Old Testament, or deny the veracity, the honesty, the integrity of our Lord Jesus Christ as the Teacher of Divine Truth."<sup>2</sup>

The more moderate could urge, as Bishop Browne urged, that

"without overlooking the difficulties which modern science has raised, we still may say that far more formidable problems occur in life and in religion than the apparent inconsistency of the first chapter of Genesis with the now generally acknowledged antiquity of the universe."

The statement is not true, and it is unfortunate that most of the assertions of such critics have to be met by a flat denial. To these words the Bishop of Natal replies by saying

"that there is no analogy whatever between the things compared,—on the one hand, moral and religious difficulties which perplex us in life ; on the other hand, statements in the Bible, which are flatly contradicted by scientific facts,

<sup>1</sup> *Pentateuch*, Part V. p. 310.

<sup>2</sup> Canon M'Neile, cited in Part V. p. 314. See also *The Great Dilemma*, above, p. 303.

and which yet are believed to be Divinely and infallibly true.”<sup>1</sup>

Bishop Browne, however, had no scruple in arguing as follows :—

“You know that your religion is of God ; and, if so, most probably some of it may not be quite clear to man. . . . If the very subject makes it likely that there will be difficulties, the mode of delivery, the way in which it all comes down to us, make it also likely that there will occur parts and passages which may be puzzling, and in which the puzzles may be even inexplicable.”

The puzzles of which Bishop Browne is speaking refer to such difficulties as are met with in the stories of the Patriarchs ; in the process which in some four or five generations expands a troop of seventy persons into a nation of three or four millions ; in the mystery attaching to the maintenance of this nation, with its millions of cattle, for forty years in a waterless desert. But it must be repeated again and again, and too great stress cannot be laid on the fact, that these, and any other like, things have nothing whatever to do with “our religion,”<sup>2</sup> and do not in the remotest degree affect it. The remark is, therefore, altogether irrelevant ; but this is not all. The Bishop of Natal rightly adds :—

“The parts and passages of the Bible with which we have here to do are not ‘puzzling’ at all, except on the fallacious theory of their infallible accuracy. Once allow that in all matters of this kind the Bible must give account of itself—of its contents, its age, its origin—just like any other book, and the mind will no more be harassed . . . with these innumerable and inexplicable ‘puzzles.’ But what a fearful responsibility do those take upon themselves who, in an age like this of earnest inquiry and progress, not only do nothing

<sup>1</sup> *Pentateuch*, Part V. p. 314.

<sup>2</sup> See p. 310.

themselves to remove these dangerous fallacies, but by half-uttered insinuations encourage—if they do not actually by plain outspoken words lead on—the unreasoning multitude to deride the honest endeavours to reconcile religious truth with the certain results of science, as the work of ‘minute and clever criticism,’ near akin to the folly of atheism.”<sup>1</sup>

We shall have to notice more fully, later on, the critical method of Bishop Harold Browne, and more particularly the spirit in which he deals with the subject. For the present we need only cite the words quoted from him by Bishop Colenso.

“Who would think of reading Nature only through a microscope? The eye that was so cramped would be quick to find flaws in the emerald and dust on the wings of a butterfly; but it could not look out on all the fair proportions of the universe, nor see the harmony of God’s creatures round it. The lens of microscopic criticism is useful in its place of duty; but blinding, rather than enlightening, when it is the chief avenue by which light can find its way to the eye.”

So far as these words have any meaning (and some of the clauses look very much like nonsense), this statement also is utterly untrue. It is the naked eye only, surveying a multitude of objects at will, which discerns, or may be tempted to fancy that it discerns, blots and flaws. The microscope, directed to some single object,

“will detect no flaws in the perfect works of God, and may therefore be applied to them without fear. It does not find dust on the butterfly’s wings, but finds the apparent dust to be beautiful feathers; whereas in *man’s* workmanship it does detect roughness and defect, and other signs of human imperfection. Nor will it detect flaws or imperfections in the infallible, eternal Word of God. Rather, the ‘lens of

<sup>1</sup> *Pentateuch*, Part V. p. 315.



microscopic criticism' has never been applied to reach into the moral and spiritual truth contained in the Bible,—how absurd, or else how misleading, to reason as if it could be!—but merely to examine the human element, the earthly framework, of the Scriptures; and in being used to prove *its* imperfections, it may be the means of delivering us from an idolatrous worship of the mere letter of the Bible, others (and how many in this day!) from rejecting altogether the Divine teaching of God's Word in the Bible, on account of its supposed identity with what is manifestly false."<sup>1</sup>

But the upholders of traditionalism seem to be driven by an irresistible necessity to settle a controversy as to past facts, or to free themselves from the duty of foresight, by sheltering themselves under the authority of our Lord Himself. On this subject, as the Bishop of Natal notices, the Bishop of Ely made large admissions.

"If our Lord was perfect man, . . . His human mind could have possessed only a certain amount of knowledge: the absence of knowledge is ignorance, . . . and, therefore, our Lord as man must have been partially ignorant."

But the Bishop of Natal had said that our Lord "may have shared in the *mistakes* of the age in which He lived, as regards the authorship of the Pentateuch"; and this statement provoked a vehement protest from Bishop Browne.

"Ignorance," he urged, "does not of necessity involve error. . . . And there is not one word in the Bible which would lead us to suppose that our blessed Lord was liable to error, in any sense of the word, or in any department of knowledge."

Bishop Browne speaks as though the term "error" might have a hundred meanings. He was bound in such a case as this to give an accurate definition of the meaning which he attached to the word. That ignorance involves liability

<sup>1</sup> *Pentateuch*, Part V. p. 316.

to mistakes in any matters as to which a person is ignorant there is no sort of doubt; and if Bishop Browne means that our Lord's ignorance did not extend to any matters on which He might be suddenly called to give an opinion, or that He could reach full knowledge on any subject without paying to it the amount of attention which the subject needed, or without means of information or the power of getting it, then assuredly he is asserting that our Lord was not perfect man. If then He had been questioned as to the authorship of the Pentateuch, He could not have given an answer without studying the subject, and for this there was no opportunity. But He was not questioned on the subject; and if, on the hypothesis of this fact, He had spoken of the Pentateuch as non-Mosaic, or of the Book of Deuteronomy as the work of Jeremiah, His words would have been utterly unintelligible to His hearers, and He would have been frustrating hopelessly at the outset the very object of His mission.<sup>1</sup> But Bishop Browne insists that our Lord was subject to all human infirmities, "weakness, weariness, sorrow, fear, suffering, temptation, ignorance," while from this list he excludes error and mistake. But what are error and mistake but the merest human infirmities? Is there in them any deliberate choice of evil?

"Is there sin," the Bishop of Natal asks, "in a mistake? When a savage mistakes a string of beads for articles of value, or a civilised Englishman mistakes mere paste for diamond, is there any sin in this?"

To say that a man has "made a mistake" is to acquit him of all moral blame; but, although Bishop Browne does not say it in so many words, he evidently thinks that any mistake with regard to the authorship or date of the Pentateuch must be morally culpable.

<sup>1</sup> See, further, p. 307, *note*.

“Christ was . . . sent for so high a purpose that we cannot believe Him to have been in error as to that which concerned the truth and the ground-work of the religion which was before them.”

Neither the one nor the other was concerned in any questions relating to the composition of the Books of Deuteronomy or Joshua. In thinking that it is so concerned, Bishop Browne is, in the strictest sense of the term, in error. He is wandering away from a right path into regions of fog and mist, where he must become more and more liable to make mistakes as to the meaning and nature of religion. Rather, in the Bishop of Natal's words,

“that intense longing, which pervades so many earnest hearts in this our day, in all countries and in all classes, to find a way for ourselves and others out of the narrow dogmatic systems in which in our different Churches we have all been more or less trained, into that Christianity of which Dean Milman speaks, ‘comprehensive, all-embracing, catholic, which knows what is essential to religion, what is temporary and extraneous to it,’ . . . is to my own mind a certain proof that the Divine Educator Himself is here, and the Spirit of God moving even now upon the face of the waters.”<sup>1</sup>

Of his fifth volume, which has now been passed briefly in review, the Bishop might well speak in his preface as the most important part of his work. It dealt to the traditional theories a blow which will be found to be irretrievable ; but to these irresistible arguments he added a task of immense labour, in a complete analysis of the whole Book of Genesis, appended to this Part. The toil spent on this analysis would not, he felt, be spent in vain. The document was at least a record of facts which must be taken into account by all future

<sup>1</sup> *Pentateuch*, Part V. p. 320.

labourers in this field, and which could not fail to afford some help to others in the prosecution of their inquiries.<sup>1</sup>

The Bishop's letters to be cited hereafter explain the way in which his task in its later portions expanded before him ; so that two large volumes came to be needed when he had supposed that one would suffice. Those of his opponents for whom the use of all weapons was lawful or allowable were not slow to avail themselves of this circumstance in order to throw ridicule on his work. The commercial success which repaid his toil in the earlier parts had tempted him on, they said, further and further into ventures more and more rash, and to oppress a dwindling number of readers with bulky tomes which would not repay their cost. In some respects they were not very wide of the mark. If the later volumes repaid their expenses, they did not much more. The Bishop was perfectly aware that he could expect no other result financially ; but few things throughout a life full of honour are more to his credit than the devotion with which he did what he found necessary to the full accomplishment of his undertaking, without pausing to consider whether he himself should derive any personal advantage from it. The excitement of the war which followed the publication of his First Part had long passed away ; and he had no expectation that many outside the scanty company of genuine students and scholars would grapple with these later investigations. But, in spite of this seemingly forbidding prospect, he persevered ; and the thinkers—by whom, after all, the intellectual activity of the nation is directed—will be grateful to him for having done so.

His Sixth and Seventh Parts are indeed volumes of formidable size ; but those only who take the trouble to examine the conditions under which he worked, and the objects which he set before himself, are qualified to judge whether they

<sup>1</sup> *Pentateuch*, Part V. p. ix.

could without injury have been made much smaller. It was, he saw, far better not to do the work at all than to fail to do it thoroughly. He had undertaken at starting to show that the narratives in the Pentateuch and the Book of Joshua were not, as a whole, historical ; and the conclusion to which each step in the inquiry brought him compelled him to extend his examination to the whole body of the Hebrew Scriptures. The general result is, indeed, astonishing. While traditionalists of every school are cheating themselves with the notion that in these Scriptures they possess records absolutely trustworthy, and dare to propound their notions as decrees to be accepted by the world at large, the analysis of these documents reveals not merely that predominance of myth which marks the so-called early history of all nations, but a vast array of deliberately garbled facts, and, in more than one instance, the dissemination of stories whose fictitious character stands out as clearly as the noonday sun in a cloudless sky. Nor can it be too often or too strongly repeated, that these fictions are brought to light, not in reference to signs, wonders, prodigies, portents, miracles, or to any events or incidents of an unusual sort, but in the most ordinary matters of every-day life, which betray the working of very human and very interested, as well as very unworthy, motives ? It would be a mistake, therefore, to suppose that in these concluding volumes the Bishop reaches results which materially modify his previous judgements. His readiness, nay, his eagerness, to admit a mistake, so soon as the mistake has been clearly pointed out, leads him occasionally to withdraw or to qualify some statements already made ; but on the whole the amount of retractation or correction is insignificantly small, and the general result is simply that assurance is made doubly sure, by the rigid scrutiny to which, in these concluding volumes, the documents already examined in the earlier volumes are subjected.

In the eyes of traditionalists, the Pentateuch exhibits a most minute and elaborate legislation, political, religious, and social, which challenges acceptance on the authority of Moses, and of the Elohim in whose name he speaks; and which therefore is held to be older than the conquest of Canaan, older than the rule of the Judges, older than the establishment of the monarchy, older than the fall of the kingdom thus established. The Bishop's earlier volumes have shown that this impression is in complete antagonism with facts, that this legislation was unknown to the exiles who came out of Egypt, unknown in the time of the Judges, unknown under the early Kings, and known only in the slightest degree under the sovereigns who ruled in Judah after the downfall of the kingdom of Israel. His investigations proved that the Book of Deuteronomy was composed, possibly in the later years of Manasseh, but with immensely greater likelihood in the earlier part of the reign of Josiah, and that the author of it was a man whose tone of thought, whose language, and whose religious convictions, were, to say the least, astonishingly like those of the prophet Jeremiah. The path is still more cleared by the discovery that portions of the Levitical legislation may be traced home to the prophet Ezekiel;

“that the account of the construction of the ark, tabernacle, &c., in Exodus xxv. &c., cannot possibly have formed part of the original (Elohistic) story, but must have been written at a later age than Deuteronomy, and, therefore, during or after the Captivity;”<sup>1</sup>

that, further, this original story did not contain the Decalogue; that the latter is probably due to the Deuteronomist, who is the author of both the versions of the precepts of the Two Tables; and that the later Levitical legislation is later by many centuries than even the Babylonish captivity. This

<sup>1</sup> *Pentateuch*, Part VI. p. vii.

legislation therefore claims an authority which does not belong to it. It is not a code of laws imparted by God Himself to Moses, and therefore it can impart no sanction to the elaborate ritualism which it enjoins. But on this sanction depends confessedly the ritualism of the whole Christian Church; and thus with these investigations the whole ritualistic system, as a system of Divine institution, falls to the ground.<sup>1</sup>

It has been said that the Bishop's conclusions are merely negative; that the old records are pulled to pieces, and nothing is put in their place. It is not so. The notion that negative conclusions are not a positive addition to our knowledge is a thorough delusion.<sup>2</sup> They are so in every instance in which the negative conclusion is established on fairly adequate evidence. Every such conclusion is in all likelihood a death-blow to some groundless fancy and belief, or even to some mischievous and even deadly superstition. No garbled history has been more potent for harm than that of the Hebrew chronicler, and the exhibition of the process by which this history has been garbled is no work of mere wanton demolition. It is a most righteous effort for the suppression of error and the advancement of truth. To the reproaches freely uttered against his supposed destructive criticism, reproaches uttered as vehemently by men like Mr. Stopford Brooke as by narrower thinkers, the Bishop contented himself with replying that

“the central truths of Christianity—the Fatherhood of God, the brotherhood of man, and the revelation of God in man— . . . are confirmed by the witness which the Pentateuch, when stripped of its fictitious character, gives of the working of the one Divine Spirit in all ages.”<sup>3</sup>

But if some decried the Bishop's work as merely negative,

<sup>1</sup> *Pentateuch*, Part VI. p. x.

<sup>2</sup> See p. 441.

<sup>3</sup> *Pentateuch*, Part VI. p. xv.

there were others who would gladly dismiss it as effete, if not childish. It was convenient for some to do this. It was especially convenient for the Bishop of Capetown, who assured his clergy that the Bishop of Natal's books had been "refuted by one writer after another" in England, so that "we now hear no more of them." He found comfort in the reflexion that these books

"which, from their novelty and from the position of their author, made at first some stir, have in fact sunk into *oblivion*."

He here allows them at least the merit of novelty. He had denied it to them before. The main contention of the so-called Capetown trial had been that the Bishop's criticisms were a farrago of old and worthless objections which had been met and answered a thousand times. But to write such books as those which Bishop Colenso wrote was in Bishop Gray's opinion the easiest thing in the world.

"It costs little," he said, "to start an objection,—to make an assertion or a denial; but it might require a volume to refute objections and establish the truth of an asserted position; and who has the time for writing such books, or who would purchase them and devote days and weeks to lengthy discussions on the details of a thousand difficult questions?"<sup>1</sup>

"No one, surely," are the Bishop's dignified words of reply, "but he who believes that he is serving God faithfully, by using diligently the means which may have been at his disposal for ascertaining, as far as possible, the truth of 'those things in which he has been instructed'; no one but he who knows that he must 'buy the truth' at all costs of toil of body or mind, of worldly loss, it may be, and of anxiety and reproach; . . . no one but he who, in dependence on

<sup>1</sup> *Pentateuch*, Part VI. p. xvi.



Divine support, is prepared, if need be, to make the sacrifices which the highest law of his being demands."

The fact is that the sacerdotal crusaders, who were resolved on trampling him down, were ready to take up any cry which might answer their purpose. When the first Parts of the *Examination of the Pentateuch* came out, it pleased Bishop Wilberforce to treat their contents as merely "speculations," and to characterise them as both "rash and feeble." Later on he declared that

"the ever-changing play of life gives such new colour to old difficulties, that old answers will no more meet new objections than old firearms will suit modern battles."<sup>1</sup>

But the Bishop of Natal's orthodox antagonists felt and said that whatever difficulties might be involved in the arrangement or even in some of the statements of the *Pentateuch*, they could fall back on an impregnable fortress in the historical and prophetic books of the Old Testament. To these books accordingly, in the concluding Parts, the Bishop more especially applied himself; the result being that these books are shown to form a vast storehouse of evidence proving that when most of them were written the Levitical legislation was not yet in existence. The chronicler, indeed, stands self-refuted. Dr. Irons with sufficient self-assurance insisted that "the sacred author of the *Chronicles*" repudiated the notion that he was writing history, and declared that they who sought mere history must look for it elsewhere. No supposition could be more groundless. His work is, for the most part, a history of the driest kind; and if it be not a history, it is nothing. It is, however, history hatched in the writer's brain, and put forth to further a particular cause which could not be furthered otherwise,—in plain English, to deceive. There is no use in attempting to shut our eyes to this fact.

<sup>1</sup> *Pentateuch*, Part VI. p. xxii.

“With the Books of Samuel and Kings before him,” says the Bishop, “he cannot be freed from the great crime of deliberately falsifying parts of history, except by supposing that he did not believe them to be facts, while no reason can be assigned for this disbelief, except that he did not choose to believe them.”<sup>1</sup>

The chronicler belongs to a very late day indeed, to a time not very long preceding the Christian era; and the Levitical legislation, which it is his whole aim to enforce, was put together when the stream of living prophecy had well-nigh ceased to flow. The quenching of the prophetic spirit after the Captivity is “a patent peculiarity of Jewish history;” but the whole course of the post-exilic history renders this fact

“intelligible and highly instructive, instead of its being, as it used to appear, while it was supposed that the Levitical system had all along co-existed with the prophets, an unaccountable mystery.”<sup>2</sup>

A generation or two may yet pass before the traditionalists are compelled to admit this explanation; but it is more likely that the acknowledgement will come much sooner. The free utterance of the Divine Spirit was, the Bishop adds, stifled beneath the mass of minute ritualism imposed by the later legislators in the name of God.

In making this assault on the supposed authority of “the Church” the Bishop was indeed doing the most important part of his work. He was proving that the true history of the Jewish people might be most clearly and effectually traced, but that this could be done only by reversing the notions drawn from the traditional systems of interpretation. The greatness of this work it would not be easy to exaggerate, although, in the first exuberance of his animosity, Bishop

<sup>1</sup> *Pentateuch*, Part VI. p. xxviii.

<sup>2</sup> *Id.* p. xxiv.

Wilberforce had affected to dismiss it as "in all essential points but the repetition of old and often-answered cavils." Such, emphatically, was not the opinion of the most eminent among the Continental scholars and critics. Speaking of the views prevailing in Germany, Professor Kuenen said with justice that, when men like Ewald, Bunsen, Bleek, and Knobel had one by one been brought by the English Bishop to the necessity of revising their theories, there was "no reason truly for calling his method antiquated, or his reflexions obsolete." Kuenen's judgement is, indeed, in its gravity and its power, one which in mere fairness to the Bishop cannot be suppressed. Having admitted that the first effect of the Bishop's criticisms was to show the unhistorical character of the Pentateuch, by showing that its narratives contradicted the general laws of time and space to which every fact is subject, he further allowed that the questions thus raised were not to be settled by any suppositions that the accounts about the Mosaic time were only exaggerations of half-historical legends. His method, in fact,

"showed that just exactly those notices were the most unhistorical which professed to be authentic documents, and were distinguished, to all appearance, by the greatest accuracy. In other words, it is just the narrative of the 'Grundschrift,' or Book of Origins, which appeared least able to withstand such a criticism as his. This is the more remarkable, inasmuch as Colenso, in producing his difficulties, took no account whatever of the distinction of different documents. He was engaged exclusively with the answer to the question whether the representation which the Pentateuch gives us agreed with the demands of reality; and lo! it is just the 'Grundschrift' in which he finds them [*i.e.* the difficulties]. . . . The prevailing view as to the origin of the Pentateuch had not prepared us for this: in the oldest document we expected to find the truest copy of the reality. But, more than this, how is Colenso's result to

be reconciled with the form of the notices of the 'Grundschrift'? When I read that the Israelites numbered 600,000 warriors, and it appears afterwards that this number must be exaggerated, I set this datum to the account of the embellishing and hyperbolical legend. But when there are laid before me two lists of musterings, as in Numbers i. and xxvi., which define accurately the numbers of each separate tribe, and at the end give nearly the same sum-totals, then the state of the question is entirely changed. Then I must choose between one of two things. Either my difficulties must disappear before the prime-document which lies before me; or, if this cannot be, then I must deny that it *is* a prime-document, and must call it by its proper name, *a fiction*.

"There is no third course possible. Well, then, Colenso's criticism places us right in front of this dilemma. He himself does not feel what, as a legitimate consequence, follows from his demonstration: in the subsequent parts of his work he subjects himself, as far as regards the age and character of the 'Grundschrift,' to the prevailing view. But so much the greater impression does his criticism make upon the attentive reader who is able to judge the weight of his arguments. So, at all events, has it been with me. I had myself formerly noticed some of the difficulties presented by him. But, as they are here put together and set forth with imperturbable calmness, they gave me at once a presentiment, and brought me by degrees to the conviction, that our criticism of the 'Grundschrift' had stopped short half-way, and, in order to reach its end, must go through with its work."<sup>1</sup>

The attempt to analyse the enormous amount of materials sifted and tested by the Bishop in these concluding volumes would be a futile task. Nothing less than a careful and thorough scrutinising of the whole can possibly bring home to the reader the full force of the evidence on which his con-

<sup>1</sup> *Pentateuch*, Part VI. p. xxxii.

clusions are in every instance based. But, without going at length into details, we may follow him through the several stages of the inquiry, and convince ourselves that the traditional notions regarding almost every portion of the Hebrew Scriptures are at least as far removed from the facts as is the Ptolemaic astronomy from the actual movements and relations of the heavenly bodies in the Kosmos.

The very surprising likeness in style and language between the Book of Deuteronomy and the prophecies of Jeremiah threw a wonderful light on the alleged discovery of the Book of the Law in the Temple, and rendered it in a high degree likely that Jeremiah was the author of at least one of the books of the Pentateuch. But the same likeness may be seen between other books. Ezekiel lived in the same age and moved in the same circle with Jeremiah.<sup>1</sup> It was therefore to be expected that the styles of the two would exhibit certain points of resemblance; and this is, indeed, the case. But Ezekiel was by no means a servile imitator of the Deuteronomist; and

“a careful analysis of Leviticus xxvi. shows that almost every peculiar expression in this chapter finds either its counterpart, or even its exact parallel, in Ezekiel; while many of these occur *nowhere* else in the *whole Bible*, and others are found nowhere else in the Pentateuch.”<sup>2</sup>

The reader who will examine the list of those parallelisms given by the Bishop will see that they are of a most remarkable kind. What inference can be drawn except that the prophet Ezekiel is the writer of this chapter in Leviticus?

“It is surely,” he argues, “extravagant to suppose that a writer so profuse and so peculiar, as this prophet is acknowledged to be, should have studied so very closely this *particular* chapter of Leviticus, out of the Pentateuch, as to

<sup>1</sup> *Pentateuch*, Part VI. p. 3.

<sup>2</sup> *Ib.* p. 5.

have become thoroughly imbued with its style and familiarised with its expressions,—so thoroughly indeed as to have actually adopted nearly fifty of them as his own, of which eighteen, at least, occur nowhere else in the Bible.”<sup>1</sup>

A further examination shows that other portions of Leviticus are due to the same hand, or, at least, to writers of the same age and in close connexion with Ezekiel;<sup>2</sup> and of these passages, Graf (a writer whom the Bishop never names without an expression of high respect, and whose early death he deplored as a very serious loss to the world of modern thought) declared that the points of likeness so laid bare could not be accidental, but must lead “necessarily to the assumption that Ezekiel himself was the writer,” as otherwise we must infer

“that a writer, who is so peculiar throughout, has adopted the style of these sections, or rather of one single chapter only, to such an extent that he reflects this style in the whole of his long work, without being for a single moment untrue to himself.”<sup>3</sup>

But, if this inference be admitted, the further conclusion is found to follow,

“viz. : that the whole of the priestly legislation of Leviticus and Numbers, together with the description in Exodus of the construction of the ark and tabernacle, &c., has been written either in Ezekiel’s time or after it; that is, during or after the Captivity.”<sup>4</sup>

This conclusion is without any reservation maintained by Dr. Kalisch, a Jewish scholar and critic whose authority on all questions relating to the literature of his own people stands pre-eminent. The Book of Leviticus, Dr. Kalisch asserts, cannot *possibly* be the work of one author and of one

<sup>1</sup> *Pentateuch*, Part VI. p. 9.

<sup>2</sup> *Ib.* p. 11.

<sup>3</sup> *Ib.* p. 15.

<sup>4</sup> *Ib.* p. 16.

age, but is composed of various portions, written, enlarged, and modified by different authors, in harmony with the necessities and altered conditions of their respective times. Still more pertinently, Dr. Kalisch adds,—

“The question then arises—Did Moses lay down any distinct laws for public worship? And if so, are the precepts embodied in the three middle books of the Pentateuch traceable to his authority? It is difficult to reply categorically to the first point: history gives an *unequivocal denial* to the second. It proves that many centuries after Moses the Levitical ordinances were neither practised nor known.”

It is, indeed, abundantly clear that, so long as the traditional notions of the *early* origin of the Levitical law are retained,

“the whole history of Israel must be confused and contradictory; and clearly it will be impossible to reconstruct that history with any confidence until it is decided whether the Levitical legislation dates from the time of the Exodus or not,—whether, in short, it is to be ranked amongst the earliest, or amongst the latest, portions of the Bible. . . . In the one case we shall have, as in other nations, an orderly progress, the people making gradual advancement in religion and morals, . . . and their history will now become rational and intelligible, being stripped, not of all that is supernatural and Divine, but of all that is miraculous, perplexing, and contradictory. In the other case it will be full of marvels and prodigies, profusely lavished on a favoured people or individual, performed oftentimes . . . without any adequate object or any proportionate results, as when . . . the sun and moon stood still to allow of Joshua’s slaughtering more of the Amorites, when, after all, we are told, ‘there were more which *died with hailstones* than they whom the children of Israel slew with the sword.’ ”<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> *Pentateuch*, Part VI. p. 18.

Either, then, the institutions and practice of the Levitical law originated in the time of Moses, or they did not. If they did, how are we to explain the fact that we find not a trace of these laws being observed or existing either in the more authentic history or in the pre-Captivity prophets? We find, indeed, full-blown stories of their observance in the Books of Chronicles; but we may, even at starting, take the Bishop's word for it that the Chronicles

“are utterly untrustworthy in respect of matters of historical fact, when not supported by other evidence, and were written long after the Captivity, when we find Dr. Kalisch maintaining that they are certainly the work of one author because they disclose throughout the same systematic rearrangement of history, and that this author deserves no authority whatever, as a source of history, at least on points connected with public worship.”<sup>1</sup>

But this systematic rearrangement of old materials ought surely to teach us a conclusive lesson as to the power of the historical sense in the Jewish people as a whole. We need say this with no invidious meaning. Greeks and Romans may not have been, and probably were not, much better. But this much at least such facts must make clear to us, that nothing which earlier writers had set down was sacred in the eyes of those who came after them. Nothing that they said or could say was invested with such authority as to make others hesitate before they tampered with it. Thus the Deuteronomist was certainly acquainted with the main narrative of the Book of Exodus. In his own book, after describing his descent from the mount with the two tables of stone which he broke when he saw the people's idolatry, he goes on to say that Moses fell down as at the first forty days and nights, neither eating bread nor drinking water; that Jehovah desired

<sup>1</sup> *Pentateuch*, Part VI. p. 20.



to destroy Aaron, and that Moses prayed for Aaron at the same time ; and again after speaking of their rebellions at Taberah, &c., he apparently repeats the same account of the fasting and intercession of Moses.

“But not a word is said in Exodus xxxii. about this fasting *after* his descent for forty days and forty nights, or about Moses praying for Aaron at the same time. On the contrary, Moses in Exodus xxxii. merely reproaches Aaron, and he intercedes for the people *before* he comes down from the mount, and Jehovah was pacified. . . . But this very statement again is contradictory to the account which follows.”<sup>1</sup>

If, however, these contradictions show how little the Deuteronomist thought of, or cared for, the authority of the earlier record, it is clear that in this earlier record there are now statements and narratives of which the Deuteronomist was altogether ignorant ; and it follows that these passages

“cannot have existed at all in that older document which he had before him.”<sup>2</sup>

In fact, we have proof here that these passages cannot have been written before the Captivity ; and this proof is only a portion of that mass of cumulative evidence which shows that the Levitical laws form the latest portion of the Pentateuch. Thus to the splendid Tabernacle of Bezaleel the Deuteronomist makes not even the faintest allusion.<sup>3</sup> But according to Mr. Ferguson the measurements of the Tabernacle are exactly half of those laid down as the dimensions of the Temple of Solomon ; and from the previous fact the inference precisely contradicts Mr. Ferguson’s conclusion. He thinks that the Temple was copied from the Tabernacle : in reality the measurements of the latter were suggested by those of the

<sup>1</sup> *Pentateuch*, Part VI. p. 37.

<sup>2</sup> *Ib.* p. 41.

<sup>3</sup> *Ib.* p. 50.

former, and the description was framed deliberately, far away in the land of exile, along with the details of all the ecclesiastical system,<sup>1</sup> which there was no doubt a full intention of carrying out on their return from captivity.<sup>2</sup> It was indeed by no means impossible to carry them out within the narrow limits of the restored settlement, in which there seems to have been one priest to every ten laymen.<sup>3</sup> But without going further we see that the ecclesiastical or church history of the Jews runs in very different channels at different times, and that the Hebrew Scriptures, as presented to us, are on this subject, as on most others, self-contradictory, until we determine the order in which they were written, and then the true course of events becomes clear enough. The Levites and priests of the Book of Judges are despised and homeless outcasts and wanderers; in the pages of the Chronicles, they are exalted to a dignity loftier than that of the priesthood of Latin Christendom, their office being fenced round by terrible sanctions—"he that cometh near shall be put to death." The history of the Jewish kings shows that this separation from the rest of the people is of later growth.

"If such ideas," says the Bishop, "had prevailed in Israel in earlier times, we may be sure that David, and Solomon in his best days, would not have intruded on the priestly office, as the history represents them repeatedly as doing, without a word of reproof either from the historian himself, or from the prophets or priests around them. Least of all can it be imagined that Aaron, who was really the chief offender in the affair of the golden calf, should have been rewarded with such distinguishing pre-eminence as the later portion of the Pentateuch assigns to him. Nor, indeed, is there any sign that in the original story Aaron officiated as a priest at all. To the end he seems to have continued merely to act as an adviser, friend, and prophet, and, in his chief's absence, the principal substitute for Moses."<sup>4</sup>

<sup>1</sup> *Pentateuch*, Part VI. p. 51.    <sup>2</sup> *Ib.* p. 60.    <sup>3</sup> *Ib.* p. 61.    <sup>4</sup> *Ib.* p. 110.

But it is not merely with reference to the priests and Levites that the analysis of the Pentateuch reverses practically the notions of all traditional schools of interpreters. It strikes at the root of the commonly received ideas as to what is supposed to be the earliest moral legislation. The Decalogue in its present form, instead of having been delivered amid the thunders and lightnings of Sinai, was unknown to any age preceding that of Josiah. The passage in Exodus which contains the Ten Commandments is an insertion of the Deuteronomist.<sup>1</sup>

Assuming, as the traditionary view does, that this passage belongs to the original record,

“we should,” the Bishop insists, “have to suppose that Moses, having heard from the Divine mouth, in the third month of the Exodus, such phrases as ‘house of servants,’ ‘the stranger that is within thy gates,’ ‘in order that thy days may be prolonged on the ground,’ ‘the ground which thy Elohim is giving thee,’ with other like phrases, *never* employed any one of them again in his other writings, or in the words ascribed to Jehovah, until, in his last address, nearly forty years afterwards, he begins suddenly to use them all freely in Deuteronomy.”<sup>2</sup>

The supposition is incredible; but the consequences of rejecting it are far-reaching. Whatever may have been the historical sense or conscience of the Deuteronomist, the fact remains that the ten precepts in the Book of Exodus are his handiwork. That the writer of the Book of Deuteronomy is the writer also of this passage in Exodus there can be no question; but it is quite possible or likely, as the Bishop suggests, that he may have inserted this passage

“when he revised and enlarged the original story, and *before* he decided to write the address of Moses in Deuteronomy.”

<sup>1</sup> *Pentateuch*, Part VI. p. 147.

<sup>2</sup> *Ib.* p. 148.

Admitting these facts, we can have no difficulty in understanding

“how in that address he could venture to modify so remarkably as he has done the language of the Fourth Commandment, which is incomprehensible on the traditional view, or even on the supposition that he regarded this section as a venerable record of an older legislation.”

In fact, in modifying the precept he was doing nothing

“more than modifying his own work ; but if we turn to what is really the older narrative in Exodus, we find that not a word is said about the people at Sinai having heard the Ten Commandments, nor is there the slightest reference to their having heard them in the chapters that follow.”<sup>1</sup>

If, again, there be one point more than another on which stress is laid by what is generally supposed to be the Mosaic lawgiver, it is the duty of all the males of the Jewish people to go up yearly, for the three great feasts, to Jerusalem. The historical books furnish not the slightest warrant for the notion that such a command was known in the times of the earlier kings, or was then in existence.

“In the age of Solomon, for instance, the wide range of his territories made it simply *impossible* for the more distant tribes to present themselves at Jerusalem, for the purpose of keeping the feast of Mazzoth (Passover) in the very midst of the rainy season, and just before the beginning of barley harvest. . . . Thus just before the commencement of the season of harvest, all the males, if this law had been in operation in Solomon’s time, would be asked to travel up to Jerusalem at one extremity of the kingdom—chiefly, we must suppose, on foot—a distance of more than a hundred miles from the more distant places, whose inhabitants would therefore consume the greater part of a week on the journey each way.”<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup> *Pentateuch*, Part VI. p. 149.

<sup>2</sup> *Ib.* p. 174.

In other words, to attend these three festivals they must spend some six weeks yearly on the road. How, again, could the males of the trans-Jordanic tribes attend at this season at Jerusalem, since that river, we are told, overflows all its banks at the time of harvest? It is true that when David fled from Absalom a ferry-boat carried over his household.

“But how little,” the Bishop asks, “could this have availed for the 120,000 warriors, who, according to the chronicler, lived in those days in the country under his rule beyond the Jordan, or for a much more moderate estimate of its male inhabitants?”

In short, the Bishop adds, and he is most fully justified in adding it,

“it is *incredible* that a law could be laid down by any sane person,—not to speak of the Divine Wisdom,—which required the attendance at Jerusalem of all the males from all parts of the land east and west of the Jordan, on a certain precise day at the time of the Passover, on pain of death.”<sup>1</sup>

In subsequent chapters the Bishop gives the original story as it is found in the Book of Exodus, in Numbers and Deuteronomy, and in Joshua, so that nothing remains beyond the later legislation, which has thrust itself chiefly into the Books of Leviticus and Numbers. For the student who is anxious only to get at the truth, this restoration of the earliest narrative is an immense boon. Every part of it is full of instruction; but perhaps the most important remark relates to the period of forty years assigned to the wanderings in the wilderness. Of these wanderings the original story takes no notice. The first mention of them comes from the Deuteronomist, who speaks of their journeyings from the days of their leaving Kadesh-barnea to the passage of the brook Zered as extending over thirty-eight years. But where did he obtain this

<sup>1</sup> *Pentateuch*, Part VI. p. 177.

datum of forty years? Not from any passage in the original story, for while the Book of Numbers (xiv. 22, 23) declares that they who came out of Egypt should not see the land promised to their forefathers, it says nothing about a term of forty years, and though this story may have involved the idea of some additional wandering, it did not seemingly contemplate a very long interval spent in this way.<sup>1</sup> Upon the whole, the Bishop concludes that the Deuteronomist himself imported into the story the exact number of forty years, which he is so careful to define by means of the datum of thirty-eight years in ii. 14, and the first day of the eleventh month of the fortieth year in i. 3. It follows that the original story did not contain this datum of forty years,

“and intended no more than that the people should be punished by having to go down to the Red Sea once more, and make the circuit of Mount Seir so as to cross the Jordan, instead of making directly from Kadesh into the south of Canaan, as was at first proposed; and this would have been a severe punishment, since even the eleven days’ march from Sinai to Kadesh is spoken of as a ‘going through that great and terrible wilderness’; where they had seen how Jehovah their Elohim bore them as a man doth bear his son. . . . But for the circuit of Mount Seir only a comparatively short time would be required;”<sup>2</sup>

and during this time Moses might well be supposed to prepare Joshua for his future duties.

The extension of the wanderings for some short time led to the choice of the favourite number of forty years; but even when that number was chosen, there is no indication in Deuteronomy viii. that this period was a time of punishment, during which every man of a whole generation was to be cut off.

<sup>1</sup> *Pentateuch*, Part VI. p. 232.

<sup>2</sup> *Ib.* p. 370.

“The idea of such a doom seems not yet to have germinated in the writer’s mind when he composed this address.”<sup>1</sup>

If we take the doom to mean that those who left Egypt as fathers of families should not enter the promised land, this was only saying that they should live out the usual term of human life in the wilderness ; and the discomforts of this time were to be lightened by a series of marvellous incidents or dispensations which should prevent their shoes from wearing out or their feet from swelling. The suggestions thus made might be worked out to any extent, but on examination we find that we are dealing with mere amplifications or embellishments. According to the narrative in Numbers (xxxiii.) they made in the thirty-eight years only forty-two stations, which after all cannot have been far distant from each other ; and as

“they must have stayed on the average about a year at least at each of them, there would have been little occasion for their foot swelling.”<sup>2</sup>

If the more bulky volumes in which the Bishop brought his examination to a close had answered no other purpose than that of bringing to light the mighty mass of exaggeration with which the Jewish history is overloaded, the toil bestowed upon them would not have been wasted. We have seen already some of the difficulties involved in the story of the 600,000 Hebrew warriors at Sinai ; but what are these as compared with the gigantic hyperbole of the seven nations of Canaan, each “greater and mightier” than the Hebrews, who were to be conquered or driven out of the promised land ? The Jewish warriors represented a population of about three millions ; the seven mightier Canaanitish nations would therefore furnish a population of some thirty millions at least, all

<sup>1</sup> *Pentateuch*, Part VI. p. 383.

<sup>2</sup> *Ib.* p. 384.

included within the limits reached by the kingdom of David and Solomon. The extent of this empire Von Raumer reckons as 500 square miles. On this Kuenen remarks :—

“Adopting this last estimate, which is certainly excessive, and assuming further that Palestine belonged to the lands most thickly peopled, and therefore had 6,000 inhabitants for each square mile, we do not reach a higher population than 3,000,000 souls.”<sup>1</sup>

We may allow, further (what is, to say the least, unlikely), that the population of Canaan at the time of the Exodus was as great as it was in the time of David. Still, this aggregate of 3,000,000 was made up of seven nations, greater and mightier than Israel, and thus we are brought to the conclusion that the whole Hebrew people at the time of the conquest cannot possibly have been much above 400,000, and could not have furnished more than 80,000 warriors. In other words, the history is untrustworthy from beginning to end.

We are compelled, therefore, to test every portion of the narrative. We have seen that the account of the institution of the Passover is riddled with inconsistencies ; and we have been brought face to face with the crowning difficulty that the Levitical or Mosaic prescriptions with reference to it were never carried out before the time of Josiah, or rather before the time of the Captivity, and that they were not carried out for the simple reason that they were unknown. It is quite clear, therefore, that the origin of this festival, as given in the Book of Exodus, is not to be taken as historical fact ; and if it cannot be so taken, then how, actually, did it originate ? In one point at least the story is clear, that the feast was connected with the destruction of first-born children, as well as of the first-borns of flocks and herds ; and the track thus

<sup>1</sup> *Pentateuch*, Part VI. p. 383.



indicated must be followed, if we would reach any sound conclusions on the subject. To this inquiry the Bishop devotes himself in the twentieth chapter of his Sixth Part, laying special stress on the fact that *the pre-Captivity prophets never make mention of this festival*. Having first shown that the name Pesach (Pascha), or Passover, is connected with the feast of Mazzoth,<sup>1</sup> and denotes the special sacrifice belonging to that feast (the sacrifice of firstlings, not of brute animals only, but also of men), he remarks that Mazzoth, like the other two great festivals (Harvest = Weeks; Ingathering = Tabernacles), was essentially an agricultural feast; that these celebrations were not confined to the Hebrew people; and that of these three the spring festival of the Passover

“was incomparably the most important, though the most severe, solemnity, as the future blessings of the year depended upon it.”<sup>2</sup>

The conclusion forces itself upon us

“that the Pesach meant originally the ‘passing over’ of the first-borns of man and beast to the sun-god, and that the Canaanites, *i.e.* the Phœnicians and others, did actually at this spring festival, on the fourteenth day of the month, *i.e.* the eve of the full moon, sacrifice the first-borns to that deity, from whom the Israelites adopted the practice of sacrificing their first-borns to Jehovah,”<sup>3</sup>

which lasted through the reigns of all the Kings, and against which the prophets in vain raised their voice. These facts speak for themselves, even if we had not the express assertion that Ahaz offered up his son. It is unnecessary, therefore, to go back to the narrative of the sacrifice of Isaac, although this narrative proves that the practice was prevalent in the days of the early Kings. The purpose of this story is clearly to bring about the abolition of the practice by substituting offer-

<sup>1</sup> *Pentateuch*, Part VI. p. 417.

<sup>2</sup> *Ib.* p. 422.

<sup>3</sup> *Ib.* p. 424.

ings of animals ; but no blame is attached to the intention of Abraham, nor are there any severe comments on those who practised the rite, and assuredly the writer does not, like the prophets of a later day,

“condemn it utterly as impious, and abominable, accursed in the sight of God and man ; and it may be that his own views were not yet sufficiently clear and decided to enable him to do so.”<sup>1</sup>

But by the admission of the Jewish historians and prophets the besetting sin of their countrymen was to copy all that was idolatrous, superstitious, and vile in the worship of their subjects or their neighbours. There is, therefore, absolutely no room for doubt that the Pesach was celebrated with the slaughter of the first-borns, and that, just because it was thus commonly defiled with human blood, the pre-Captivity prophets never name it. What then are we to think ?

“If the service of the Pesach had really been instituted in so remarkable a manner and on such a memorable occasion, and enjoined with such solemnity, as would appear from Exodus xii., we might surely have expected one or more to indicate it, at least by some incidental reference ; whereas it is, in fact, only once named by any prophet, viz. in Ezekiel xlv. 21, written during the Captivity. The Pesach, however, though not named by the original story, and only hinted at by it as existing in the command for the dedication of the first-born in Israel of man and beast, . . . had come down, with a practice more or less corrupt, to the days of the Deuteronomist ; and he endeavours to quicken the observance into a holy sacrifice for all Israel, . . . but without the least allusion to the name having been derived from the fact of Yahve’s ‘passing over’ by the houses of the Israelites. Down to his days, however, . . . the Pesach, like other sacrifices, was offered whenever they pleased, in

<sup>1</sup> *Pentateuch*, Part VI. p. 425.

any of their gates, *i.e.* at any of the sanctuaries scattered throughout the land, . . . where, it can scarcely be doubted, first-born children were actually sacrificed, being first slain and then burnt, in the Deuteronomist's own time. To provide against the unchecked continuance of these abominations, he now lays down the law that the Pesach shall in future be offered by the whole people at Jerusalem, as it was offered by Josiah's order for the first time in the history of Israel."<sup>1</sup>

Throughout the history, indeed, we seem to have laws, and no observance; institutions and no acknowledgement of their working; structures, and no hint that any one had ever seen them.

"Not a trace of the existence of the magnificent *Mosaic* tabernacle can be found anywhere in the more authentic history."<sup>2</sup>

Elaborate injunctions are given for the keeping of the sabbatical year; but there is "no sign that this law, which is manifestly an extension of the law of the Sabbath, was ever carried out in practice before the Captivity."<sup>3</sup> To a certain extent it was acted upon after their return; but not so the law of the Jubilee, by which at the end of each half-century two sabbatical years, during which the land was not to be tilled, came together. A special Divine provision was to guard them from any hurtful consequences of this seeming neglect; but the result was not always happy. When Herod took Jerusalem by storm, it was afflicted, Josephus tells us,

"with a cruel famine within, for now happened to be the sabbatical year, for it was at this melancholy conjuncture and during the time of it our law prohibits us from sowing any manner of grain."

<sup>1</sup> *Pentateuch*, Part VI. p. 431.

<sup>2</sup> *Ib.* p. 471.

<sup>3</sup> *Ib.* Hupfeld, quoted in Part VI. p. 492.

As to the observance of the Jubilee, there is no indication whatever that it was ever really observed even after the Captivity ;

“and there is certainly not the slightest proof of its having been celebrated before that event.”<sup>1</sup>

It becomes, therefore, a superfluous task to examine the legal enactments for the remission of debts and the release of debtors in connexion with an ordinance which never had any existence except on paper.

Thus from the reputed history of the Exodus, and of the conquests which followed it, the whole of the elaborate religious, civil, and social legislation is summarily shorn away. No portion of the narrative, it is found, will hold water. Has it, then, any basis at all to rest upon? Adaptation is a very mild term to apply to the process which has shaped not a few of these stories, and given form to laws on which the history not only of the Jews but of Christendom also has turned. We have seen that the original story knows nothing of the priesthood of Aaron, or of any order of priests at all ; that the position of the priests (a mere handful in number) was in the days of the earlier kings by no means pre-eminent, while that of the Levites was altogether insignificant. Yet the Levitical Law assigns a Divine sanction for the august functions and the high privileges of both ; and on this subject the following is the judgement of Dr. Kalisch, himself a Jew.

“It was God who singled out the family of Aaron as His ministers, His representatives, and the teachers of His Law ; and it was He who confirmed this election by miraculous interference, the budding staff of Aaron, and the fearful destruction of Aaron’s opponents, Korah and his associates. What is the true scope and import of these

<sup>1</sup> *Pentateuch*, Part VI. p. 495.

statements? They imply the artful fiction of an author or authors, who attempted to promulgate their own devices as Divine or supernatural arrangements, and thus to awe an impressionable nation into their acceptance and reverential observance. If the laws of the priesthood had been represented as the work of human legislators, they would simply have been a human failure, because they degraded the people instead of elevating it. But as the pretended emanation of the Divine Will they are both a failure and a fraud; and to the weakness of human judgement is added the offence of human arrogance and deceit.”<sup>1</sup>

But these laws, instead of being amongst the oldest, are amongst the latest of the Hebrew Scriptures. When Jeremiah, in the name of God, says, “I spake not unto your fathers, nor commanded them in the day that I brought them out of the land of Egypt concerning burnt-offerings,” it is clear that he could not have so written if the sacrificial laws of Exodus, Leviticus, and Numbers had been actually laid down in the wilderness, or had existed in his time in the story of the Exodus.<sup>2</sup> It is not less clear that Ezekiel could not have

“composed his rules for the regulation of the priesthood, their office and income, if these subjects had been already fully treated of in the middle books of the Pentateuch, nor in any case could he have presumed to lay down laws at variance with laws which were regarded as Mosaic, as even Divine.”<sup>3</sup>

To any portion of the Levitical legislation there is not, indeed, a single reference in any pre-Captivity writer; nor have we any even to the Decalogue or the Book of Deuteronomy, until we come to Jeremiah. But the very fact that this prophet makes such very slight allusion to this book, with which, from the very striking circumstances attending its discovery and publication in Josiah’s time, he must have been

<sup>1</sup> *Pentateuch*, Part VI. p. 529.

<sup>2</sup> *Ib.* p. 593.

<sup>3</sup> *Ib.* p. 594.

very thoroughly acquainted, and which, indeed, reflects everywhere his own language and tone of thought, is itself, as we have already seen, a very strong confirmation of the conclusion that he was himself the writer of it.<sup>1</sup>

The real history of the Exodus may be so distorted and so buried under a mass of arbitrary additions and perversions as to be lost beyond recall. With this no critic has anything to do. If we are dealing with the so-called history of the early Roman kings, and if the scrutiny brings us to the conclusion that none of it is trustworthy and much of it is mere fiction, our task is really ended. If from the materials at our command we are able to reconstruct all or some of it, well and good. If we cannot do so, no one can blame us for not accomplishing or attempting an impossible work. But why should the writer of the Exodus story, whoever he may have been, have represented his countrymen as miserable slaves in Egypt, and as having emerged from it to find their way back to their old abode and dislodge those who were in possession of it? Now, Josephus quotes from the Egyptian Manethon a strange tale which describes an invasion of Egypt by men of ignoble birth from the Eastern parts,<sup>2</sup> resulting in the establishment of a dynasty of six kings, who reigned for about two centuries and a half. Manethon further goes into a mysterious story of shepherds and lepers, who are sent by King Amenophis to work in the quarries, and, obtaining help from the shepherds in Jerusalem, break from their prison and commit dreadful outrages, under the leadership of a priest of Osiris, named Osarsiph, who, on going over to this people, changed his name to Moses. At last, Amenophis came up with one army, and his son Rameses with another, and routing these shepherds, pursued them as far as the frontiers of Syria.<sup>3</sup> The story is dark enough; but in Kuenen's judgement

<sup>1</sup> *Pentateuch*, Part VI. p. 596.

<sup>2</sup> *Ib.* p. 597.

<sup>3</sup> *Ib.* p. 599.

“its agreement with the Israelitish tradition about the Exodus is unmistakeable. The Egyptians regarded all foreigners as unclean : it cannot surprise us, then, if they called the nomadic tribes, who had escaped from their dominion, a leprous people. Still less does it surprise us that they ascribed their own defeat to the displeasure of their gods. It is further remarkable that, according to this account also, the harsh measures of the Egyptians, and in particular the slavish service imposed by them, gave occasion to the rebellion of those oppressed, and moreover that the distinction between the laws of Osarsiph and the Egyptian laws, especially his aversion to the gods of Egypt, is also here recognised. The Book of Exodus says nothing about the help rendered by the Hyksos, as generally the deliverance of Israel is viewed therein exclusively from the religious point of view, and is represented as the work of Yahve, and of Him alone. Yet we find in it some small traces of an indication that the Israelites found support from the nomadic tribes of Arabia—that is, from the Hyksos. In short . . . we must hold that in Manethon’s narrative we have the Egyptian reading of the account of the Exodus of Israel.”<sup>1</sup>

“Such, then,” the Bishop adds, “was very probably the basis upon which the Scripture story of the Exodus has been founded.”

We ought not, indeed, to assume that the Egyptian version must necessarily be more true than the Hebrew. It is not unlikely that the latter may in some points be nearer to the truth of facts than the former ; but there can be no question that the motives for misrepresenting or distorting events were much stronger with the Jews than with their opponents.

“No doubt,” the Bishop remarks, “the Israelites on their march to Canaan experienced formidable difficulties, per-

<sup>1</sup> *Pentateuch*, Part VI. p. 600.

haps in crossing an arm of the Red Sea, and certainly in their passage through the wilderness. . . . It must be observed, however, that in the original story there is no sign of any very long period, such as forty years, having been assigned to the wanderings.”<sup>1</sup>

It gives, in fact, no data of time, except the forty days and nights twice spent by Moses on Sinai, and the three days in Numbers x. 33.

“The people are carried on at once from Sinai . . . . under the guidance of Hobab . . . . till they reach the southern boundary of Canaan, when Moses sends forth spies to search the land, . . . . upon whose return the murmuring takes place; and, as a punishment for their offence, instead of being allowed to march at once into Canaan and make the conquest of the land, they are ordered to turn and go back again into the wilderness by the way towards the Red Sea, and so are obliged to pass around the southern extremity of Mount Seir, and then turn again to the north, coasting the land of Edom, and making their entrance into Canaan from the eastern side. For all this a comparatively short time was required, except that they are spoken of as ‘dwelling’ at Kadesh. It is not said how long they stayed at Kadesh. Perhaps they were supposed in the original story to dwell there for a short time only, as they afterwards ‘dwelt’ at Shittim. At least, according to the data of the Deuteronomist and the later legislator, as the story now stands, the last sojourn can have lasted only for a very short period, since after Aaron’s death on the first day of the fifth month, and the mourning for him thirty days, they make the whole journey from Mount Hor to compass the land of Edom, and make the conquest of the territories of Sihon and Og—not to speak of the war against Midian—and yet are addressed by Moses in the land of Moab on the first day of the eleventh month. The extreme abruptness of the narrative at this point (if the story is supposed to

<sup>1</sup> *Pentateuch*, Part VI. p. 601.



make a sudden leap of nearly forty years between *v. 1* and *v. 14* of Numbers xx.) and the utter absence of all allusion to any events as having occurred in that interval, seem to make it certain that no idea of so long a wandering was entertained by the writer of the original story."

That a history so amazing in its incidents and so astounding in its character during the first and last months should have been interrupted by some eight or nine and thirty years about which there was nothing to tell is past all belief. The fancy rests on the solitary phrase of forty years, much as in the old Hindu cosmogony the tortoise rests on the serpent, and the serpent on nothing. But

"the fact that the Israelites abstained from disturbing Edom, Moab, and Ammon, while they did not spare the Amorite invaders of Moab, implies a special relation between Israel and these peoples, such as that which Manetho's story implies between the shepherd kings and the leprous people."<sup>1</sup>

From this point we can see our way more clearly. The historical works furnish abundant proof that the Canaanite tribes were not extirpated. The conquests ascribed to Moses and Joshua as the work of a few weeks were, therefore,

"effected in a much longer period, and by much more gradual and every-day processes."<sup>2</sup>

But our knowledge of this distant time is bounded, nevertheless, within narrow limits.

"How much of the original story may have been derived from traditionary or legendary matter still floating in the folk-lore of Israel, and how much is due to the writer's own imagination, it is impossible to say."<sup>3</sup>

<sup>1</sup> *Pentateuch*, Part VI. p. 603.

<sup>2</sup> *Ib.* p. 604.

<sup>3</sup> *Ib.* p. 614. That the deliverance from Egypt was effected under the

If we believe that story, only the seventy who went down into Egypt knew anything of the land of Canaan ; and under all the harassing and distressing conditions of a hard servitude it is well-nigh, if not altogether, incredible that, when these seventy had multiplied into a nation of three millions, any knowledge of that country could have been kept up among them. Yet they, or at least their leaders, are said to have in many points a minute acquaintance with the land to which they were journeying. But these pictures we have seen to be fabrications of a later age ; and we have seen also how scanty is the residuum of actual fact which by the largest concessions can be allowed to lie at the root of the narrative.

“When, further,” the Bishop adds, “we take account of the possibility that these forefathers were never in the land of Canaan at all ; that, in point of fact, they never existed as individuals, but correspond to the mythical founders of other nations, whose stories are for the most part composed of fabulous narratives, which, as far as they have any historical truth at their basis, shadow forth the doings of tribes and generations, instead of persons, we may fairly conclude that a very large portion, at least, of the stories in Genesis are merely fictions, intended to support the notion that the

guidance of Moses, the Bishop had little doubt ; but the narrative says (and on this point there is, probably, no reason for mistrusting it) that he died before they entered Canaan. As to Joshua, he found himself compelled to speak more trenchantly. “He appears,” he said, “to be entirely a mythical character, most of his great exploits having been recorded only by the Deuteronomist in Josiah’s time, and apparently from his own imagination—not even from legendary traditions about him, if any could be supposed to have been handed down vividly through the lapse of eight centuries. For, surely, if such legends were current in the days of Josiah, and retained so strongly in the recollections of the people that the Deuteronomist could undertake the task of collecting them and recording them permanently on parchment, we should find *some trace* of the renown of this great conqueror in the Psalms and prophets ; whereas his very name is never once mentioned.”—*Worship of Baalam*, p. 9.