

It is sad to notice how such men as Colenso make merry over these Divine teachings—"sporting themselves with their own deceivings."

CHAPTER XI.

THE NUMBER OF THE PEOPLE AT THE FIRST MUSTER, COMPARED WITH THE POLL-TAX RAISED SIX MONTHS PREVIOUSLY.

In Ex. xxx. : 11-13 we read that Moses was directed to "take the sum of the Children of Israel after their number;" and that they were to give a poll-tax of "half a shekel after the shekel of the sanctuary."

Colenso maintains that this phraseology "could hardly have been used in this way, until there was a sanctuary in existence, or rather, until the sanctuary had been *some time* in existence, and such a phrase had become *familiar* in the mouths of the people."

We remark *first*,—that he has excluded from his quotation an important part of the text. After introducing the phrase here for the first time, the sacred historian defines it: "A shekel is twenty gerahs." What could be more natural than this? Whether there were a sanctuary or no, the measure is introduced, and its capacity defined, that then, and ever after, it would be understood.

Secondly,—does Colenso mean to say that Israel had no manner of worship among them till the tabernacle was built? if they had, surely *shekel, ha-kodesh*, (literally holy shekel), would have as much meaning before, as after the construction of the sanctuary or tabernacle.

Thirdly,—the contributions for the tabernacle itself would call for the use of this measure, by which they would be guided in providing for its erection. It must therefore have been introduced before the tabernacle was built; nor could it become "familiar" till it was introduced.

But the chief difficulty, he says, is, that the number of the people (six hundred and three thousand five hundred and fifty), was identically the same [on the first occasion of numbering,—Num. xxx. : 11-12], as it was half a year afterwards.—Num. i. : 1-46. He "supposes" that on the first occasion, when the people were numbered they were taxed, and on the second when they were taxed they were numbered, though the Scriptures are silent on