Analyzing J. W. Colenso's Unpublished Comments on the Book of Revelation

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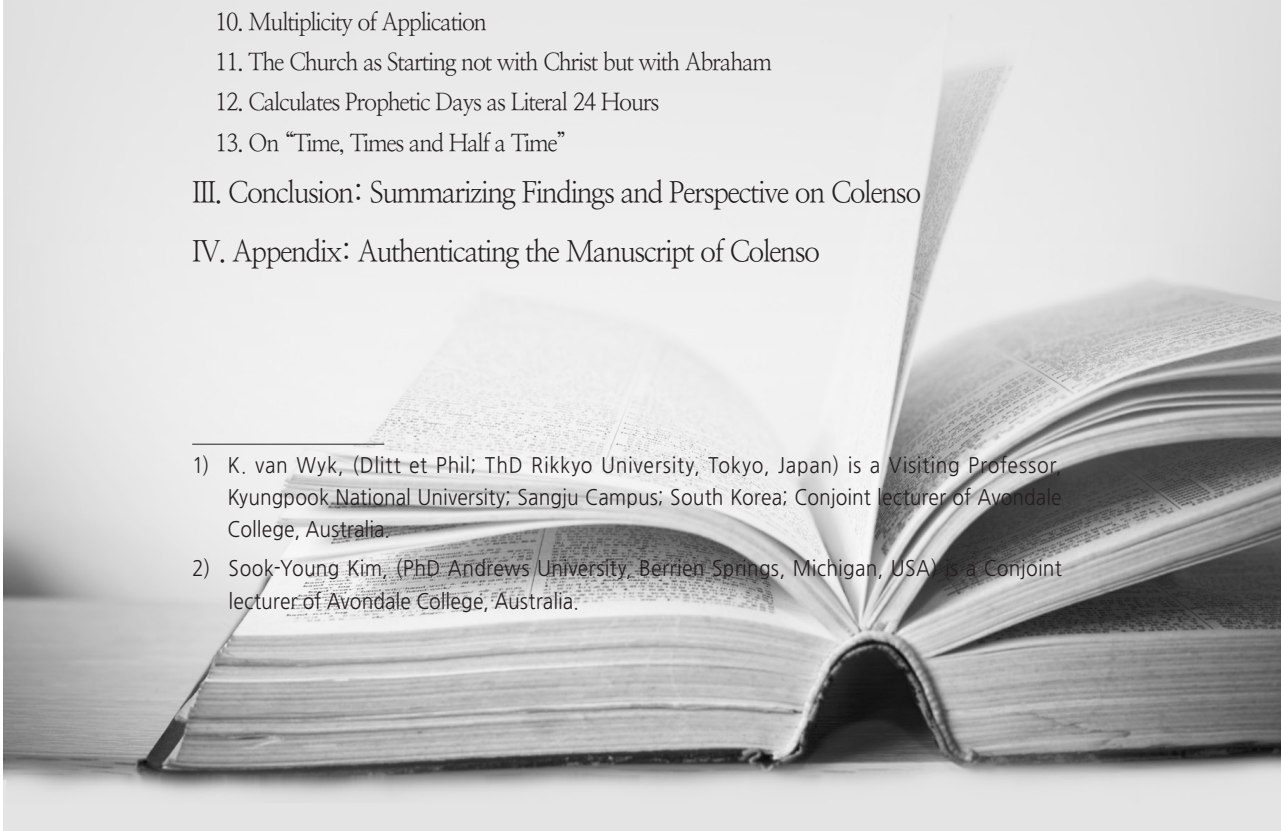

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I . Introduction

John William Colenso (24 January 1814 – 20 June 1883) was a British mathematician, theologian, Biblical scholar and social activist, who was the first Church of England Bishop of Natal. Between 1862–1879 Colenso, a Higher-critic[3] who loved the works of A. Kuenen,[4] wrote negatively (mixed sometimes with positively), about the Pentateuch and Joshua.[5] He had some

3) Colenso admired the works of Samuel Coleridge and Coleridge was a poet who came in 1804 from Malta with a high admiration of higher-critical ideas popular in Germany of that time. He became a great influence on the generation that followed and Colenso was one of those. "For England he [Coleridge] fathered that higher criticism which had already in Germany accomplished so much in the hands of Lessing and Goethe." Therefore, "in the latter part of his life, and for the generation which followed, Coleridge was ranked by many young English churchmen of liberal views as the greatest religious thinker of their time." Colenso was one of these young churchmen. "From about 1810 onwards, however, he [Coleridge] openly professed Christian orthodoxy, while privately indicating views which cannot be so described. And even his published speculations were such as to draw from John Henry Newman a protest that they took 'a liberty which no Christian can tolerate', and carried him to 'conclusions which were often heathen rather than Christian.' This would apply to some of his positions concerning the Logos and the Trinity. After giving up Unitarianism he claimed that from the first he had been a Trinitarian on Platonic lines; and some of his latest statements of the doctrine are certainly more pantheistic than Christian" (op. cit. *Notable Names Database* [NNDB]: Tracking the Entire World, s.v. "Samuel Taylor Coleridge," www.nndb.com, downloaded 15/07/22). Colenso said on the 10th of April 1843 that he came in contact with Coleridge and Maurice and that experience is for him "drawing water with them from the deep well of Truth" (George William Cox, *The Life of John W. Colenso, D.D. Bishop of Natal* 2 Volumes: (London: W. Ridgway, 1888, 21) http://repository.up.ac.za/bitstream/handle/2263/12832/001_FrontInfo.pdf?sequence=16&isAllowed=y.

4) Cox 1888, 221, when Colenso wrote on the 5th of October 1863 "I have just returned from a delightful visit to Leiden. I discussed with Professor Kuenen at full length every point of difficulty in the criticism of the Pentateuch."

5) Colenso was educated in a school which accepted the verbal inspiration and interpretations of Burgon "The Bible is none other than the Voice of Him that sitteth upon the Throne! Every book of it - every chapter of it - every verse of it - every word of it -every syllable of it - (where are we to stop?) every letter of it - is the direct utterance of the Most High". Colenso added "Such was the creed of the School in which I was educated" (George P. Landow, *The*

non-biblical views: dismantling of the authorship statements of the Scriptures;[6] tolerance with polygamy. There is an interesting presentation of evidence by V. Khumalo in an undated online manuscript, that it was actually the Zulu translator William Ngidi who planted the seeds of hermeneutics of suspicion in Colenso that would have grown into a tree of the rejection of the veracity of the Pentateuch.[7]

Aesthetic and Critical Theories of John Ruskin [Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1971] cited from http://www.victorian web.org/religion/colenso.html). Colenso went on to cast off this creed in his theories on the origin of the Pentateuch and Charles Darwin wrote the following of Colenso: "A book has appeared here which will, I suppose, make a noise, by Bishop Colenso, who judging from the extracts, smashes most of the Old Testament" — Charles Darwin in a letter to the American zoologist Asa Gray of November 6, 1862. What Lyell did for geology, and Darwin for biology and zoology, Colenso did for biblical science. Darwin cited Colenso and Colenso cited Lyell (Cox 1888, 257). Including Kuenen, they were "birds of the same feather". They are all linked in common denial of biblical veracity and with a preoccupation with uniformatism and pluralistic avenues to truth. Whether it is Moses, Plato, Jesus, Rig Veda, Cicero, Gregory the Great, Muhammed, they are all the same for Colenso as one can see in the letters presented by Cox in 1888.

6) Samuel Wilberforce said at the consecration of Colenso on St. Andrews Day in 1853: "You need boldness to risk all for God - to stand by the Truth and its supporters against men's threatenings and the devil's wrath . . . you need a patient meekness to bear the galling calumnies and false surmises with which, if you are faithful, that same Satanic working, which, if it could, would burn your body, will assuredly assail you daily through the pens and tongues of deceivers and deceived, who, under a semblance of a zeal for Christ, will evermore distort your words, misrepresent your motives, rejoice in your failings, exaggerate your errors, and seek by every poisoned breath of slander to destroy your powers of service" (Cox 1888, xiv). Colenso decided not to stand by the Truth and to follow men's threatening of the Truth about God's Word. At the age 17 he wrote: ""…let me pray that the doctrine of the Gospel may be mine, unclouded by party principles, unobscured by the impious intrusion of man's own ignorant wishes and baneful speculations." Unfortunately, before his arrival in Kwazulu Natal derailed his view of the Scriptures. Cynics said of Colenso: "The newly appointed Bishop went to convert and was converted himself" (Cox 1888, 212).

7) Ngidi asked Colenso: "Is all that true? Do you really believe that all this happened thus, - that all the beasts, and birds, and creeping things, upon the earth, large and small, from hot countries and cold, came thus in pairs, and entered into the ark with Noah? And did Noah gather food for them all for the beasts and birds of prey, as well as the rest?" Khumalo

He also accepted biblical doctrines contra the tradition of his church, namely that he rejected the doctrine of eternal punishment.[8] He also rejected the unbiblical stance that Holy Communion is a prerequisite for salvation. He wrote the first Zulu Dictionary in English[9] and Zulu and also translated the

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commented on this: "Colenso asked himself 'shall a man speak lies in the Name of the Lord. I dare not do so'. The questions that Ngidi posed led Colenso to enter contemporary debates in the field of Biblical Criticism. Soon after they completed translating the book of Genesis, Bishop Colenso published a book, which led to his excommunication from the Anglican Church. The book was entitled, The Pentateuch and the book of Joshua Critically Examined. Published in 1862, it became one of the most controversial literary works in the biblical field." V. Khumalo, "Ekukhanyeni letter-writers: Notes towards a social history of letterwriting in KwaZulu/Natal - South Africa, 1890-1900," (University of Michigan, Undated), 10. http://scnc.ukzn.ac.za/ doc/REL/Christ/ Black/KhumaloV_ Ekukhanyeni_letter_writers_ social_history_KZN_ 1890-1900.pdf (accessed April 26, 2018); see also Francis Colenso, Colenso Letters from Natal, edited by Wyn Rees. (Pietermaritzburg: Shuter and Shooter, 1958), 69. The problems with Khumalo's methodology lie more in the area of epistemology, namely, an openness for unbiblical stances. See the comment in the same paper at page 1 footnote 3 that 'communities are to be distinguished, not by their falsity/genuiness,' a somewhat limited view of the Voortrekker history (see page 3 footnote 7 where he could have used more actual data from Vryheid Museum in the Town which was president Lucas Meyer's house). His writing is an attempt to mix politics and religion, namely to use historical narratology of the religious environment as a vehicle to push the agenda of politics, a stance (mixing) that is also not biblical. Objectivity in historiography is a standard required from all but is admittedly hard to come by due to one's own "baggage." Colenso's mixing of religion and politics are uplifted as a standard also by H. Mokoena, "Kwaluke impi": War and rumours of war in the writings of Magema Magwaza. Page 2. http://www.kznhasshistory.net/files/seminars/ Mokoena2006.pdf. Colenso admitted his navigational twist already in that letter cited above in the footnote dating to 10th of April 1843. Ngidi may be a case of the chickens coming back to the hen (Colenso) who is facing up to the doubts he already practiced.

8) One can see his views in his 1861 *Commentary on Romans* but also in Cox 1888, 158-160 and especially 160 where Colenso said "The pictures of the Jesuits are horrible and blasphemous". In the Appendix the Notebook on Romans is used to authenticate this manuscript as truly from J. H. Colenso.

9) J. W. Colenso DD; LLD, *Zulu-English Dictionary* (Pietermaritzburg: P. Davis, 23 Church Street, 1861).

New Testament in Zulu. He published on Romans.[10)]

This research is to look at his unpublished comments on the book of Revelation. This researcher has the privilege of receiving a book from his thoughtful uncle, Jan van Wyk, who was asked to remodel the church and some buildings at Ekukhanyeni[11)] in Natal circa 1990's.[12)] We are from Vryheid Kwazulu-Natal and about 2000 my uncle gave me an old Greek New Testament that he picked-up thrown away on the floor of the church he had to renovate. This researcher carefully preserved it and it was a Greek New Testament bound into a bigger memo book with strong covers. It is a smaller text book within a larger empty book, but bound in. The original purpose was that the reader could write comments on each page.[13)] The only person that can qualify for these comments on Romans, Galatians, 1st and 2nd Timothy, 1st and 2nd Peter and also on the book of Revelation is Bishop John W. Colenso. Now in 2015, this researcher is convinced that the

10) J. W. Colenso, *St. Paul's Epistle to the Romans: Newly Translated, and explained from a missionary point of view* (Cambridge, London: Macmillan and Co., 1861).

11) This mission station and Bishopstowe were about 13 km outside the then capital Pietermaritzburg. It is said that Ekukhanyeni was established in 1855 to provide an education to "African boys, especially the sons of chiefs and headman." Edgar H. Brookes and Colin de B. Webb, *A History of Natal* (Pietermaritzburg: University of Natal Press, 1965), 106. The same source said that in 1859 there were forty two students at the institution. Khumalo gave the following detail: "'Ekukhanyeni means a 'place of light.' Bishopstowe was the Bishop's house and lands . . . ." (Khumalo, undated manuscript online, page 2 footnote 6). There was a fire that destroyed the Bishop's house apparently as described in a letter by Nelly to Frank from Durban, September 9, 1884 (see Rees, 1958, 24-25).

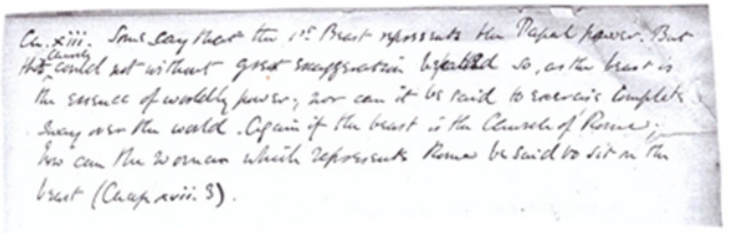
12) The Editor and Reviewer of the article supplied more information regarding the building project in South Africa and those comments were included in the Appendix.

13) Colenso brought with him a printing press with which he published a number of books: Zulu grammar, Zulu Dictionary, Zulu New Testament translation and other books.

book from his uncle that he brought back from Ekukhanyeni is indeed the original unpublished notes of Colenso on these biblical books.[14)]

Ⅱ. Texts and Transcriptions of Colenso's Notes on Revelation

1. On the First Beast of Revelation 13


Ch. xiii. Some say that the 1st Beast represents the Papal power. But that cannot
that could not without great exaggeration be stated so, as the beast is
the source of worldly power; nor can it be said to receive its deadly
wound from the world. Again if the beast is the Church of Rome;
how can the woman which represents Rome be said to sit on the
beast (Chap xvii. 3).

Text transcribed:

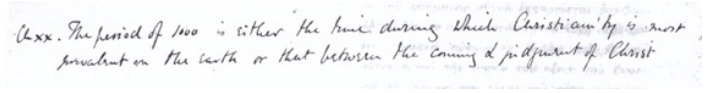
Ch.xiii. Some say that the 1st Beast represents the Papal power.[15)] But that

14) The writer of the notes for the Greek text is definitely skilled in Greek Classics and cited it regularly. He recognized various dialects at play in the Greek text. Colenso wrote on the 1st of November 1843 "Try to get the habit of reading the classics as the writers of brother-men, thinking and moved just as you and I are" (Cox 1888, 24). The online writing style sample of Colenso corresponds to the ones provided here. There is also at 2 Peter a note "10 October 1864 Donaster". From Cox 1888, 257 Colenso said he went from Claybrook to Bath and Harrow on the 3rd of October 1864 and he was at Kensington on the 18th of October 1864. Was he at Donaster in between these times?

15) Colenso was educated in a school which accepted the verbal inspiration and interpretations of Burgon "The Bible is none other than the Voice of Him that sitteth upon the Throne! Every book of it - every chapter of it - every verse of it - every word of it -every syllable of it - (where are we to stop?) every letter of it - is the direct utterance of the Most High". Colenso added "Such was the creed of the School in which I was educated" (George P. Landow, *The Aesthetic and Critical Theories of John Ruskin* [Princeton: Princeton University Press,

[insert church] could not without great exaggeration be called so, as the beast is the essence of worldly power; nor can it be said to extend complete sway over the world. Again if the beast is the Church of Rome; how can the woman which represents Rome be said to sit on the beast (Chap xviii. 8).

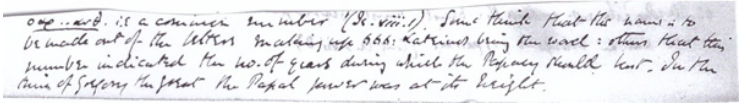
2. On the Millennium in Revelation 20



Text transcribed:

Chxx. The period of 1000 is either the time during which Christianity is most prevalent on the earth or that between the coming and judgment of Christ.[16]

3. On the 666[17]



Text transcribed:

1971] cited from . Colenso went on to cast off this creed in his theories on the origin of the Pentateuch.

16) In the absence of surety, Colenso leave the question of the millennium open as a period on earth before the Advent or as a period after the Second Coming of Christ. He is ambivalent as to pre-millennialism or post-millennialism.

17) The most comprehensive academic study on 666 ever in the history of mankind, is the work of a retired history professor in Texas, Edwin de Kock and a team of specialists in various fields assisting him in the retrieval of data for description (Edwin de Kock, *The Truth About 666 and the Story of the Great Apostasy, Three volumes in one* (Edinburg, TX 78541, USA: 12916 Los Terrazos, 2011, over 863 pages).

Chxiii.17,18 ὁ ἀρ[ιθμὸς αὐτοῦ ἑξακόσιοι ἑξήκοντα ἕξ] i.e. a common number (Is.viii.1). Some think that the name is to be made out of the letters in adding up 666: Lateinos[18] being the word: others that the number indicated the no. of years during which the Papacy should lead. In the time of Gregory the Great the Papal power was at its height.[19]

18) Lateinos is a third century suggestion (cf. De Kock 2011, 55). The history of interpretation is not without examples of what names were considered to be counted. Subsidiary issues were: should the counting of the letters be in Hebrew, Greek, Latin? A better candidate than what Colenso is mentioning and that which was first used by Andreas Helwig in 1600, repeated in his 2nd edition in 1612 and in his 3rd edition of 1630, is namely, VICARIVS FILII DEI (Andreas Helvigius, *Antichristus Romanus ex proprio suo nomine proditus: & in gloriam Domini nostri Jesu Christi summi & unici ecclesiae pontificis, cujus honorem & cathedram iste oppositus* VICARIVS FILII DEI *sibi vendicans toti orbi imponit, publicatus, & S. ecclesiae catholicae judicio subjectus, per M. Helvigium Rectorem Gymnasii Stralsundi* (Stralsund, Ger.: Litteris Ferberianis [Ferber], 1630). With a chronogram: "Vna sIt aVXILIVM, gLorIa nostra, DeI" (= 1630). VästerDs City Library, Sweden. Provenance: Carl Frederik Muhrbeck, 1772, cf. De Kock for all three editions of Helwig). This is one of the official titles of the Papacy and is the theological function through the Eucharist or even the essence of the Eucharist Theology, employed by many popes in the Middle Ages for political reasons and found on a Belgium Tiara of 1871 with the reading CHRISTI VICARIO. It means *substitute for the Son of God* or the synonymous form *substitute of Christ*. Since the letters above Christ's cross was in Hebrew, Greek and Latin, Latin is a legitimate counting system for the Latin letters. The advantage of this suggestion is that it is still active, was used for longer than a millennium, is part of the theology of the Catholic Church, is part of a Belgium tiara of 1871 in similar words, is a human number, operated in a language that was applicable during 97 AD when John wrote, namely Roman times, is a religious-political power and the Latin does add up to 666 exactly.

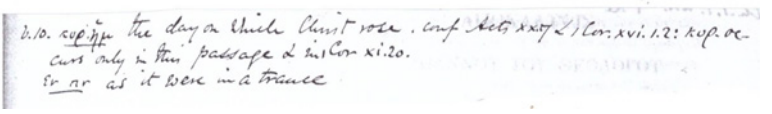
19) In the Crusader's call by Innocentius III in April of 1213 "der Papst den antichristlichen Machometus pseudopropheta, der nach Gregor dem Grossen erstanden war, mit der bestia und ihrer Zahl 666 verband. Da schon fast 600 Jahre vergangen seien, sei das Ende der bestia nahe" (Alexander Minorita, *Expositio* 286, 25 to 287, 7 op. cit. Sabine Schmolinsky, *Der Apokalypsenkommentar des Alexander Minorita* [Hannover: Hahnsche Buchhandlung, 1991], 53 and footnote 179 mentioning that Migne PL 216 (1855) Sp. 818 contains the call of Innocentius III. The observation of Colenso, that Gregory the Great represented the Papacy in the height of its power, is correct. The fall of the Caesars were in 476 A.D. but the fall of Roman official titles were in 538 A.D. (according to Isaac Newton in a statement on the fourth trumpet) and also verified by iconography of coins indicating that in 538

It seems preferable however to seek an interpretation from the Bible itself. The only one mention in which 666 counts with our view is in Ezra "the sons of Adonikan 666" Ad. = Lord of his sons. ⋯. or The Lord ⋯.were compounds with the blasphemous artification of the beast. The no. 6 is the broken 12 and just short of the perfect 7.[20)]

Justinian ordered that he will no longer be called a soldier or portrayed as one on his coins, but be a theologian holding the cross. A further piece of evidence is the iconography of Ravenna church in Europe in 540 A.D. that also proves this to be true. Justinian is portrayed as Christ and his disciples and Theodora as Mary and the virgins. 538 A.D. is the year of the switch from Pagan Roman power to Holy Roman power. The Papal power rapidly increased from this time on and Gregory the Great (590) do represent the power now in the hands of the church and not pagan Rome. Colenso is correct on this one. To place Pope Gregory in the discussion on 666 reminds one of the Revelation commentary of Alexander Minorita, *Expositio* 288, 18-289,5 "Cum ad primum annum post mortem beati Gregorii XXII anni, qui transierant a navitate Machometi, apponuntur, priusquam per miracula surgeret quantum ad suos, tunc anno Domini MCCXLIX sunt impleti DCLXVI anni a nativitate ipsius"(Schmolinsky, 1991, 63). The statement says that if one subtract from the death year of Gregory in 605, 22 years then one ends with the birthdate of Muhammed in 583 and from that time add 666 years and one ends in 1249.

20) Modern researchers have pointed out the fallacy of this axiom of not only Colenso but many modern preachers and theologians and even scholars. The biblical text is not talking about 6.6.6. but of six hundred and sixty six. 7 is a bit too far from this number. Kenneth Jørgensen pointed this out in a paper he read 9 August 2006 at a meeting in Michigan at Camp Au Sable, near Grayling (It was a paper called: "A Case for 'Vicarius Filii Dei'." Stephen D. Emse asked "Why can't they see the obvious, that is 600, 60, 6 - not 3 sixes?" cf. De Kock 2010: 646-647). Jørgensen showed that in Greek it is abbreviated in some manuscripts as χξς (chi xi sigma) or written out in full like in the New Testament. Both appeared in manuscripts. It is not ςςς. De Kock indicated that such an interpretation of 6 separated from 6 separated from 6 is a Hindu-Arabic method of numbers and does not belong to the ancient Levant systems (cf. De Kock 2010: 642 where Antolin Diestre Gil is using Idealism and Hindu-Arabic maths to explain 666. It is in his work Antolín Diestre Gil, *El sentido de la historia y la palabra profética: Un análisis de las claves históricas para comprender el pasado, presente y futuro político-religioso de la humanidad desde la civilización babilónica hasta el Nuevo Orden Mundial* [The Meaning of History and the Prophetic Word: An Analysis of the Historic Codes to Understanding the Past, Present and Future of Humanity from the Babylonian Civilization Until the New World Order], Vol. II, *Profecía* [Barcelona, Spain: Editorial CLIE, Calidad en Literatura Evangélica, 1995], 521-522). Goldstein in 1935

4. On the Day of the Lord (Revelation 1:10)


v.10. κυρ.ἡμ the day on which Christ rose. cmf Acts xx.7 & 1 Cor. xvi.1.2: κυρ. occurs only in this passage & in 1 Cor xi.20.
Er nr as it were in a trance

Text transcribed:

Ch.I.10.[ἐν τῇ κυρ][ιακῇ ἡμ[έρᾳ The day on which Christ rose. csrf Acts xx.7[21] and 1 Cor.xvi.1,2.[22] Κυριακός occurs only in this passage and in 1 Cor

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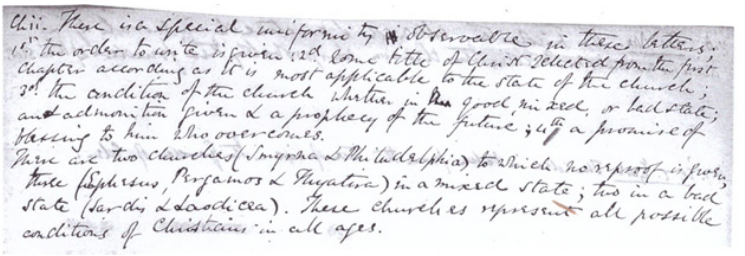
tried to argue that the I and V in *vicarius* is not additive 5 + 1 but substractive 5-1 thus IV (David Goldstein, *The Commonweal: A Weekly Review of Literature, The Arts and Public Affairs* [New York: Calvert, Publishing Corporation, 16 August 1935], 388). However, Eric W. Weisstein (1996) demonstrated that the Romans used the additive system and the subtractive system is only after the year 1450. "About Eric Weisstein, Creator of MathWorld," www.mathworld.wolfram.com, downloaded 11/20/08 by De Kock 2011, 55-56.

21) The original of Acts 20:7 says not that they were gathered *on the day of the Lord* ἐν τῇκυριακῇἡμέρᾳ but the Greek for Acts reads differently: ἐν δὲ τῇ μιᾷ τῶν σαββάτων. Exactly the same phrase in Acts is used by Luke to describe Sunday morning when Jesus was resurrected in Luke 24:1. What cancels Colenso's references is the fact that John, the same writer of Revelation, wrote in the gospel of John 20:1 using the same phrase for Sunday as Luke in Acts and the gospel but not equivalent to the expression in Revelation 1:10. The Old Testament day calculation starting with Genesis 1 is to count the day from the evening before. The eating of the bread was after mid-night. Although the first day from the Sabbath would be for the Jewish author Luke on modern Saturday evening (since the modern calculation is midnight to midnight as a day) that Paul preached, it was Luke's first day from the Sabbath. It means that they broke the bread on the night part of Sunday, which comes first and when the sun came up Sunday morning, Paul traveled. The only preaching and eating was during the night-part of Sunday. "

22) As the sanctity of the Sabbath is not the time for calculating one's income, since it will be considered doing one's own affairs on "My Holy day" as Isaiah 53:13 so strongly counseled against, therefore it is expected that Paul would admonish them to do those kind of business not on God's Holy day but on the first day after the Sabbath. The expression *on the day of the Lord*, ἐν τῇ κυριακῇ ἡμέρᾳ does not appear in 1 Corinthians 16:2 but it reads *according to the first from the Sabbath* κατὰ μίαν σαββάτου. It is a surprise how Colenso tries to see a correlation here with Revelation 1:10. The Syriac translation of Revelation 1:10 does not use the word "Lord" but "of one in seven," ܕܚܕ ܒܫܒܐ .

xi.20.[23]

5. On the Letters to the Churches of Revelation 2


Chii. There is a special uniformity observable in these letters:
1st. the order to write is given 2nd. some title of Christ selected from the first
chapter according as it is most applicable to the state of the church;
3rd. the condition of the church whether in good, mixed, or bad state;
and admonition given & a prophecy of the future; 4th a promise of
blessing to him who overcomes.
There are two churches (Smyrna & Philadelphia) to which no reproof is given,
three (Ephesus, Pergamos & Thyatira) in a mixed state; two in a bad
state (Sardis & Laodicea). These churches represent all possible
conditions of Christians in all ages.

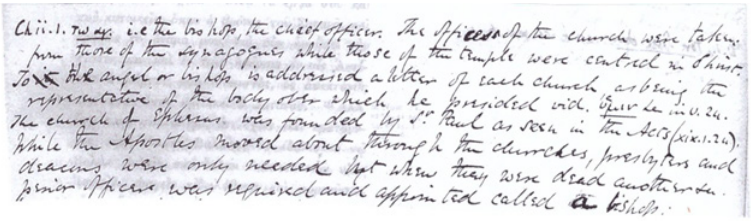
Text transcribed:

Chii. There is a special uniformity observable in these letters; 1st. the order to write is given; 2nd. Some title of Christ selected from the first chapter according as it is most applicable to the state of the church; 3rd. the condition of the church whether in good, mixed, or bad state; and admonition given and a prophecy of the future; 4th. a promise of blessing to him who overcomes. These are the churches (Smyrna and Philadelphia) to which no reproof is given, three (Ephesus, Pergamos and Thiatira) in a mixed state; two in a bad state (Sardis

23) The chronology of John 13 places the Lord's Supper on Thursday night (modern calculation) or actually Friday night since the night part in Jewish reckoning comes first and then the day part. The Lord's Supper is called by Paul κυριακὸν δεῖπνον "the meal pertaining to the Lord". That this is the context is clear from vv. 23-34 where Paul explains the Lord's Supper meaning and procedures. There is no connection between the words *Lord's Supper* and the *Day of the Lord*. There never was such a connection in any scriptural passage of both Old and New Testaments. Colenso admits that the word "Lord" did not appear in any of the passages he cited but only with the example of the Lord's Supper just mentioned: "Κυριακός occurs only in this passage [Revelation 1:10] and in 1 Cor xi.20." It might be safer to take the expression as referring to the Old Testament concept of the *Day of the Lord* as that or those days in the eschaton or as the periods leading in successive generations until the eschaton as the context of the book of Revelation dwelled with from the beginning to the end.

and Laodicea). These churches represent all possible conditions of Christians in all ages."

6. On the Offices in the Church (Revelation 2:1)

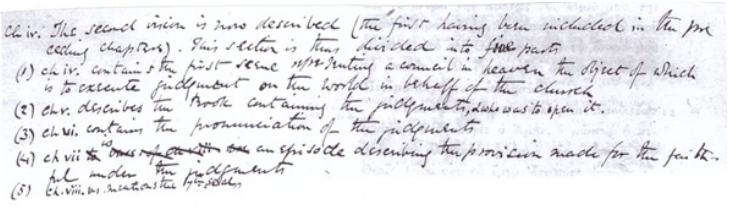

Ch ii.1. τῷ ἀγ i.e the bishop, the chief officer. The offices of the church were taken from those of the synagogues while those of the temple were centred in Christ. To the angel or bishop is addressed a letter of each church as being the representative of the body over which he presided vid. ὑμῖν δὲ λέγω in v. 24. The church of Ephesus was founded by St. Paul as seen in the Acts (xix.1.24). While the Apostles moved about through the churches, presbyters and deacons were only needed but when they were dead another senior officer was required and affirmed called a bishop.

Text transcribed:

Ch ii.1. Τῷ ἀγ[γέλῳ] i.e. the bishop, the chief officer. The offices of the church were taken from those of the synagogues while those of the temple were centered in Christ. To the angel or bishop is addressed a letter of each church as being the representative of the body over which he presided vid. ὑμῖν δὲ λέγω in v. 24. The church of Ephesus was founded by St. Paul as seen in the Acts (xix.1.24). While the Apostles moved about through the churches, presbyters and deacons were only needed but when they were dead another senior officer was required and affirmed called a bishop.[24]

24) The Arabic Commentator Ibn Kātib Qayṣar on Revelation in 1266 elaborated on the word angel as synonymous to bishop. If one investigates the translation of the original Greek "And he signified (them) having sent it through his angel to his servant John" διὰ τοῦ ἀα ' 'γγέλου αὐτοῦ τῷ δούλῳ αὐτοῦ it is noteworthy that the Bohairic Coptic text of Revelation 1:1 followed the same reading: ⲉϧⲟⲗ ⲉⲓⲧⲟⲩ ⲙⲡⲉϥⲁⲓⲧⲉⲗⲟⲥ ⲙⲡⲉϥϧⲱⲕ ⲓⲱⲁⲛⲛⲏⲥ which in translation do not differ with the Greek. However, in the Arabic translation of Ibn Kātib Qayṣar there is a different agenda: he identifies the angel with the bishop just like Colenso is doing here in his commentary. The translation of Ibn Kātib Qayṣar reads: "who gave a sign to them and send it by the way of his angel, his servant John min qibali malākihi

7. An Overview of the Second Vision of Revelation 4-8:1


Ch iv. The second vision is now described (the first having been included in the preceding chapters). This section is thus divided into five parts
(1) ch iv. contains the first scene representing a council in heaven the object of which is to execute judgment on the world in behalf of the church
(2) ch v. describes the Book containing the judgments, & who was to open it.
(3) ch vi. contains the pronunciation of the judgments
(4) ch vii is an episode describing the provision made for the faithful under the judgments
(5) ch. viii. ws. mentions the 7th seal

Text transcribed:

Ch.iv. The second vision is here described (the first having been included in the preceding chapters). This section is thus divided into five parts:

(1) Ch.iv. contains the first scene presenting a council in heaven the object of which is to execute judgment on the world in behalf of the church.

(2) Ch.v. describes the Book containing the judgments, and who was to open it.

(3) Ch.vi. contains the pronunciation of the judgments. Ch.vii. is an

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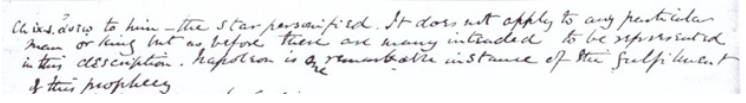
`abdihi Yuhanna" (Stephen Davis, "Introducing an Arabic Commentary on the Apocalypse: Ibn Kātib Qayṣar on Revelation" *HTR* 101:1 (2008): 77-96, especially page 91 discussing the conflating of offices by Ibn Kātib Qayṣar). The Arabic contemporary of Ibn Kātib Qayṣar with the name of Būlus al-Būshī also wrote an Arabic commentary on Revelation and in his translation he also gave the same conflation of the title of angel with John like Colenso is doing in his commentary in the Late Victorian period in South Africa, Kwazulu Natal: "He taught them and sent them by the hand of his angel John, his servant (`alā yad malākihi Yūhanna `abdihi)." Both men are conflating the roles of the angel with that of John. The *ratio dicidendi* is to glorify the role of bishop, the papacy, and also the roles of monks. The angel of Revelation 2:1 cannot be the presiding bishop of Ephesus because Revelation 1:11 reads that the seven angels were "sent" π μψον τα to (dative) the churches. The second aspect is that each church did not receive one letter but all the letters since Revelation 1:11 has it: "write it into a book and send to the seven churches" γρ ψον ε βιβλ ον κα π μψον τα πτ κκλησ αι . One letter is not a book.

episode describing the provision made for the faithful under the judgments.

(4) Ch.viii.v.1 mentions the 7th seal.

8. Bifocal Lapse (1) Mixing Preterism with Recapulated Historicism[25]


Ch.ix.1. αὐτῷ to him – the star personified. It does not apply to any particular man or king but as before there are many intended to be represented in this description. Napoleon is a remarkable instance of the fulfillment of this prophecy

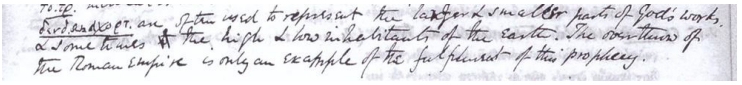
Text transcribed:

Ch.ix.1. αὐτῷ to him – the star personified. It does not apply to any particular man or king but as before there are many intended to be represented in this description. Napoleon is a remarkable instance of the fulfillment of this prophecy.[26]

25) The hermeneutical method of Joachim de Fiore based on historicism is explained that it does not make room for any recapitalization: "So sehr also die historische Erfüllung der Apokalypse ihn in der Nachfolge der Joachimschen Apokalypsenkommentierung erscheinen lässt, so sehr unterscheiden sich anderseits die Konzepte der *plentitudo* und des *ordo historiarum*: in der geschichtlichen Abfolge sind Rekapitulationen ausgeschlossen, und die Zukunft ist nicht anders als in Termini der Endzeit fassbar" (Schmolinsky, 1991, 99). Literary recapitalization is possible where past descriptions earlier in the book are summarized but historical recapitalization for multiple applications is not possible. Descriptions can be recapitalized but the historical event is only one single event or chain of events at one point in time. Colenso tend to definitely think with a preteristic agenda but then flashes into historicism and what he does is to insist on multiple applications and this is where recapitalization comes in.

26) Colenso applied in this verse a prophecy zone to be wider than just the immediate realm of the writer of the prophecy. In fact, he goes nearly 1798 years when Berthier, the general of

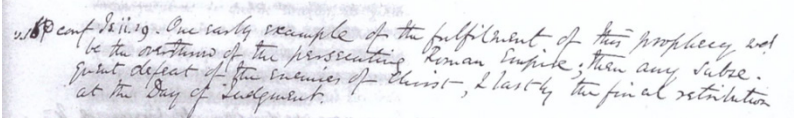
9. Bifocal Lapse (2) Mixing Preterism with Recapulated Historicism



Text transcribed:

Ch.viii.7 δ έ ν [δρων κατεκάη καὶ πᾶς] χὸρ[τος χλωρὸς κατεκάη] are often used to represent the larger and smaller parts of God's works and sometimes the high and low inhabitants of the earth. The overthrow of the Roman empire is only an example of the fulfillment of this prophecy.[27)]

10 . Multiplicity of Application



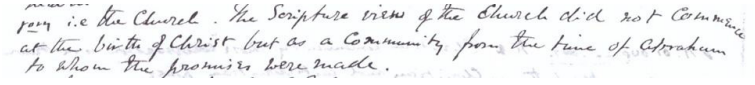
Text transcribed:

Napoleon arrested the pope and took him to France as a prisoner. This was the event that gave the Catholic Church their deadly wound and much of this wound is described by Pope Pius IV in his letters shortly after the event. For Napoleon's artist to draw a naked picture of the pope was unheard of before Napoleon and unheard of even to this day. The application of prophecy within the time zone of the author of the prophecy is called preterism and the application of the prophecy using history for its fulfillment millennia separate from the date of writing, is called, historicism. Colenso thus is foregrounding preterism but backgrounding historicism. While using the Old Testament parallels to lay out his commentary, he has in the back of his mind, on a secondary focus, a historicistic application which he only applied occasionally, like here. Historicism is a pop-up rather than a rule with Colenso.

27) Colenso moves past two events in the fall of the Roman Empire here: the overthrow of the Caesars in 476 A.D. and the fall of the official titles in 538 A.D. which is the culmination of the Fall of the Roman Empire. The Holy Roman empire was to flourish from this year for 1260 years until the arrest of the pope by the general of Napoleon in 1798. Again, Colenso is foregrounding preterism but now and then a background historicism jumps out as a side comment.

Ch.vi.16 conf. Is.ii.19. One early example of the fulfillment of this prophecy would be the overthrow of the persecuting Roman Empire; then any subsequent defeat of the enemies of Christ, and lastly the final retribution at the Day of Judgment.[28)]

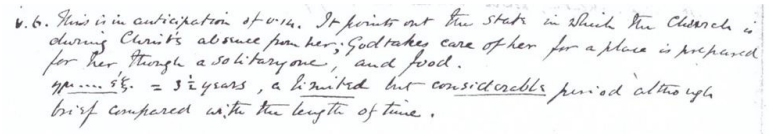
11. The Church as Starting not with Christ but with Abraham



Text transcribed:

Ch.xii.1. γυνὴ the Church. The Scripture view of the Church did not commence at the birth of Christ but as a community from the time of Abraham to whom the promises were made.

12. Calculating Prophetic Days as Literal 24 Hours



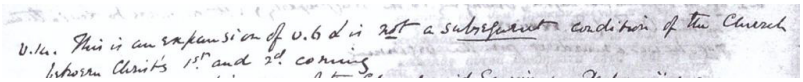
Text transcribed:

Ch.xii.6 This is in anticipation of v. 14. It points out the state in which the Church is during Christ 's absence from her; God takes care of her for a place

28) His inability to deal with the subject matter makes his focus "scatter" so that he "scoops up" left right and center anything that seems related. He used preterism (Isaiah 2:19), historicism (overthrow of the Roman Empire in 476 and 538 A.D.[which is the final implosion]) and he then generalize it to include "any subsequent defeat of the enemies of Christ" and arriving at the Eschaton he includes the Final Executive Judgment event or Hell.

is prepared for her through a solitary one, and food. ἡμέρας χιλίας διακοσίας ἑξήκοντα = 3½ years,[29] a limited but considerable period although brief compared with the length of time.

13. On "Time, Times and Half a Time"



Text transcribed:

Ch.xii.14 This is an expansion of v. 6 and is not a subsequent condition of the church between Christ's 1st and 2nd coming.

Ⅲ. Conclusion: Summarizing Findings and Perspective on Colenso

29) Although Colenso is said to be a mathematician, he was unfamiliar with the calculation of another mathematician, Isaac Newton who in his commentary on this passage calculated not with a literal 24 hour period for the day but with a *day for a year principle*. Newton's suggestion as alternative has more evidence to it, since the control check for accuracy is Daniel 9:24-27 that deals with 490 days of which 483 continued from 457 BCE until 27 A.D. when Christ was baptized by his distant cousin John in the Jordan and anointed by the Holy Spirit (cf. Campeghius Vitringa, *Hypotyposis* Franciscus Halman, 1708: 112 at LIII). It is then probably a better policy to also take the 1260 days in verse 6 as 1260 years and see it fulfilled between 538 AD, the transition of Justinian from soldier to theologian on his coins and building projects, a period extending until 1798 A.D. when Napoleon's general disgraced the Catholic Church. The long reign of the Catholic Church after the Fall of the Roman Empire is well known and eschatological interpretations in the Middle Ages of the Millennium like *Sibilla Tiburtina*, Alexander Minorita (1242) and the 9th century *Sibilla Erithrea* (Schmolinsky, 1991, 115) are evidence of this. The Papal reign was seen as *sacerdotes dei* of Revelation 20:6. The comment of Colenso that it is not a period between the 1st coming and the 2nd coming stands under review here.

Colenso was the product of his own making. He admitted to have drank from many wells in his letters presented by George Cox in 1888: Greek and Latin Classics, Rig Veda, Koran, Bible, Pantheism, Uniformatism, Rationalism, *hermeneutics of suspicion*, and even before he was pronounced heretic he was networking and setting up journals and commentary series in a cohortative effort to propagate his otherwiseness. The Revelation notes discussed here display evidence of his grip on the classics, on Greek, on employing preterism to look for Old Testament parallels as a foregrounding but also to bring up as a backgrounding style, historicism. He favored the multiple-application of symbols in Revelation. Similarly to the time of Alexander Minorita (1249), Colenso also applied Gregory the Great with some of the verses of Revelation.

Colenso distorted the Greek text of Revelation to read what it is not reading. This is the case with 6.6.6 instead of six-hundred and sixty six in Revelation 13:17-18. *Colenso ignored special nuances of the Greek text for example the dative and its force.* He overlooked the dative case in the text and conflated entities as a result of this mental deletion of the Greek text and the case is in Revelation 1:1 as modus operandi of God for Revelation 2:1 where he, similarly to what was done in the 13th century by two Arabic commentators on Revelation, Ibn Kātib Qayṣar (1266) and Būlus al-Būshī, conflated the angel to John as John himself reading into the text what is not there and in fact transforming the text to fit his own agenda of sanctioning the Bishop and monk clerical system. *Colenso mistaken the fine nuances of the Greek text by not considering the total process involved in the dispatching of the messages to the churches.* The case is where he confused the nuance of the text that the

bishop is presiding who gets the letter in Revelation 2:1 but in Revelation 1:11 the book with the letters to the seven churches is sent "to the churches."

Another aspect that one learns from his methodology of dealing with the biblical text, is that Colenso transform the Greek text by "carrying into" the text what is not there or anywhere else in the biblical text. This is the case in his dealing with the expression "on the Lord's day" in which he went to "first day from the Sabbath" [literally since the underlying thought pattern is Jewish and absent from Greek] expressions in the book of Acts and similar statements in Paul that do not have the word "Lord" in it and read into these books the word "Lord" from Revelation 1:10. *Vice versa*, he took the expression "first day from the Sabbath", which according to Luke was undoubtedly Sunday, and amalgamate it with "on the Lord's day" even though there is no evidence that the one should be seen for the other within the biblical text.

Isaiah 44:20 is a good application for the analysis of the products of Colenso: "He feeds on ashes, a deceived heart has turned him aside". Deception feeds on confusion and confusion deceives.

As far as the Anglican decision on him in colonial times is concerned regarding his theology, it appears that they were correct in their judgment. He is not a victim of colonialism since he carved his own theological skewness long before he even knew there was a Zulu. Theologically there is nothing positive to be extrapolated from his work. It is better to call him the humanist who with philanthropic aims was a legal advocate for the uncivilized facing a civilized legal system and a pioneer Zulu linguist who produced a grammar, dictionary and a bible translation for them, since they could not read, write or do

arithmetic. As far as his eternal status is concerned, this is a matter between him and God just as the failing and fleeing from God's prophet, Jonah, was actually very successful in the conversion of a whole ship full of heathens.[30] Does it not sound paradoxical that someone would "smash the Old Testament to pieces" and then translate the text for his Zulu converts to live by?

Ⅳ. Appendix: Authenticating the Manuscript of Colenso

The location where the Manuscript (*Notes on the Greek New Testament*) in Koot van Wyk's possession was found, was explained by his uncle Jan Christiaan van Wyk of Vryheid, a builder, to be the site of renovation of a church at Ekukhanyeni and may have been said to be Bishopstowe. More information on the building project, and what led up to it, was provided by a Reviewer of the Editor:[31] "The site was the focus of an attempted preservation and restoration of the old Colenso homestead beginning in the late 1990's. The chapel was a mere ruin so that with regard to this it 'involved the preservation of the chapel as a ruin, since that is what it had become. The building would be reduced down to its barest condition, the roof and floor would be removed. I [Reviewer to the Editor] attach a full paper on the restoration project from Natalia 39:9–27."

30) See Colenso's result of his work in Hlonipha Mokoena, "The Queen's Bishop: A Convert's Memoir of John W. Colenso," *Journal of Religion in Africa* 38/3 (2008): 312 - 342.

31) The Editor and Reviewer of *JAS* for 2015.

The Reviewer went on to ask a very legitimate question: "However, that does not solve the question as to whether it belonged to Bishop Colenso, since the chapel was still functioning after his death in 1883 until the fire of 1884 and Colenso was not the only person who may have possessed and written in a Gk NT—I would not be surprised for instance if his beloved daughter Harriett Colenso did not know Greek. Colenso did not work in the chapel but in his study in the main house facing Table Mountain (the Pietermaritzburg one!). It might or might not be his. So the only way to find out whose work the commentary on Revelation is, is through a handwriting expert. There are over 2000 papers in the Colenso collection at the Killey Campbell archives in Durban and more in the USPG archives in Oxford."

Although handwriting expert-advice is helpful, it is not the only way to establish the origin of the *Notes on the Greek New Testament*. Colenso published in 1861 a commentary on the book of Romans and this is a valuable avenue to ascertain whether the notes to Romans are identical to the comments in his commentary. There is also the matter of writing-style idiosyncrasies, samples of which will be listed below. There is the issue of two dates mentioned in the *Notes on the Greek New Testament*. One needs to ascertain where he was when he wrote these notes. His travel schedule for that year is thus also an important piece of evidence.

Regarding the matter of handwriting authentication, the reviewer felt not convinced totally that it is Colenso who wrote the Notes. It was suggested that Colenso slants to the right and that he does not break words in the middle. On the other hand the reviewer does think that the picture would change if it

was juvenile script [for the *Notes on the Greek New Testament*] as opposed to mature script [for his correspondence and private letters].[32)]

Evidence for the Authentication of the Notes as belonging to J. H. Colenso ca. 1864.

There are two dates in the *Notes on the Greek New Testament* that is worth looking at: At 1 Peter there is the entry: "Aug. 26/64 Doncaster Vicarage." (left side, page 619). At 2 Peter there is the entry: "Oct.10. 1864. Doncaster." (left side, page 628). The author of the *Notes* was in Doncaster two times in 1864. Colenso left to South Africa in 1865. He travelled a lot during 1864 and the biography on his life by George Cox 1888 supplies the missing links to his schedules as well as one Newspaper article on his preaching at Claybrook in September of 1964. Summarize one can present the course of events of Colenso that year as follows and more can be said by other researchers but the skeleton does provide some sensibility:

Kensington	Doncaster	Sussex	Sussex (left for Bath)	Claybrook	Bath	Doncaster	Kensington
6/6	26/8	2/9	13/9	17/9	3/10	10/10	18/10
Cox 253	1 Pet	Cox 256	Cox 256	The Tablet	Cox 257	2 Pet	Cox 257
	(Notes)			(Newspaper)		(Notes)	

32) "However, the handwriting in the paper you sent me does not seem to be from Colenso. Set them side by side and Colenso's script slants decidedly to the right, while the samples from the article seem to be more upright and unsteady. In addition, Colenso rarely makes breaks in the middle of a word (e.g. with a "snake" s or between "n" and "l" in "Christian/ Christianity"). Some features are similar, possibly because of the use of writing samplers when both were taught their letters, I don't know. However, if this were a juvenile script (in the Greek testament) as opposed to a mature script (in the letter) this may influence things. I would be very cautious about attributing the two texts to the same writer." Communication from the Editor, 4th September 2015.

1. Abbreviation habit in his writing-style

An example of abbreviation is the letter to "Th. Shepstone" and notice the last word "inst." (Cox 1888, 256). The *Notes on the Greek New Testament* are constantly abbreviated. He is seemingly in a hurry and one can understand that since in 1864 he had to run to many places to set up his economic marketing system for support in Natal should anything collapse after the trial starting in 1865. The general character of the *Notes on the Greek New Testament* is that the author, if it was a musical instrument, is "pizzicato" (plucking) instead of "playing", "staccato" (cut short instead of elaborating). This maybe evidence of a scholar traveling much.

2. Evidence from comparing Colenso's 1861 Commentary on Romans with the *Notes on the Greek of Romans*: There are more than 16 references found that correlate almost verbatim in both texts. Some samples may suffice:

1) **Published** Commentary on Romans:

Colenso 1861, 12

"There is no doubt that this Epistle was written at Corinth, during St. Paul's second visit to that city, included in the expression (Acts XX.2,3) 'he came into Greece, and there abode three months."

First sentence of Notes on Romans:

"This Epistle was written during St. Paul's 2d. visit of 3 months to Greece vidi Acts XX.2,3."

2) **Published** Commentary on Romans:

Colenso 1861, 65

"He want, in fact, as has been said before, to introduce, as it were, 'small end of the wedge,' and then afterwards he will strike it home, in the case of both Jew and Gentile. . ." Colenso asked that the Greek word should not be translated "wherein" as English translations but according to the Greek as "whilst" (compare below)

Original Ms of Romans 2:1

"dio – the foregoing statement is true of all, Jews & Gentiles alike : wherefore"

3) Published Commentary on Romans:

Colenso 1861, 75

"For the Greek words, rendered 'faith' and 'unbelief' in the E.V., should here be translated 'faithfulness' and 'unfaithfulness,' in which sense both these words occur in Soph. (Ed. Col. 611. See also Xen. Exp. Cyr. Ii.5, 21."

Original MS of Romans 3:2-3

"Shall any unfaithfulness of the Jews annul the faithfulness of God."

4)Published Commentary on Romans:

Colenso 1861, 116

"(4) We were buried, then, together with Him through the Baptism into death, so that ,as Christ was raised from the dead by the glory of the Father, likewise we also should walk in newness of life. "

Original MS of Romans 3:2-3

"4. We were buried with Him by means of our baptism into his death, that like as Christ was raised from the dead by God's power, so we also walk in

newness of life."

5) Published Commentary on Romans:

Colenso 1861, 125

"'The completion of the promise is future; but there is an approximation to it now . . . .The process being gradual, beginning as soon as he (the Christian) receives any portion of Christ's Spirit, advancing as he receives more, and perfected at death, the language used to describe his state is applicable, more or less fully, to different stages of his progress' (Vaughan)"

Original MS of Romans 6:5

"The completeness of this state is future, though it is partially & gradually growing on now. The union with Christ in his death is shown in a deadness to the influence of sin, just as a dead man shows it""

6) Published Commentary on Romans:

Colenso 1861, 133

"(16) Know you not that, to whom ye are surrendering yourselves slaves unto obedience, slaves ye are to him whom ye obey, whether of Sin unto death, or of obedience unto righteousness?" [Translation]

"Do you not perceive that whoever gives himself up to do the work of any master, as an obedient slave, is practically the slave of that Master, whatever he may call himself, whatever he may have a right to call himself?"

Original MS of Romans 6:7

"Do you not know that to whom you surrender yourselves as servants, his servants you are whom you obey?""

7) Typographical Ideosyncracies

Colenso uses [&] many times in his *Notes on the Greek of Romans*. It is his style. In his *Commentary on Romans* 1861, 110 one finds it also there.

3. Three conclusions on the *Notes on the Greek of Romans* as compared to the *Commentary on Romans* are:

1) The *Notes on the Greek of Romans* was not the preamble for the *Commentary on Romans* but it was sometimes used for the Commentary as some notes indicate.

2) He elaborated the *Commentary on Romans* after he listened to Lyell and adopted his evolution theories and incorporated his *error of prophet's theology* in Romans 5:12 to decry Paul's erroneous assertion that death came by man. He listened to Lyell before 1861 and the *Notes on the Greek of Romans* are still virgin-free from evolution or higher criticism. The *Notes on the Greek of Romans* are also free from any form of pietistic citations from other sources as we find on the atonement concepts, which were in contrast to the *Notes on Romans* since these citations were incorporated in his *Commentary on Romans* (beautiful citations from Jewitt, Wesley, Vaughan and other scholars).

3) It is unfortunate but one must mention it, namely, that anyone who is trying to combine pietistic faith with Evolution together with Higher Critical suspicion and rejection of the source of faith, is epistemologically encouraging a psychopathic lifestyle. One cannot accept and reject at the same time? One finds Colenso on his knees at Claybrook (1864) when the document was thrown on the floor by someone impatient with him, also deeply touched with the love and salvation method of God in the citations from other scholars for

his commentary but in the same time he tries to throw away the very source he is cherishing and finding errors in it (see *Commentary on Romans* at Romans 5:12). He is a troubled man that struggles to combine negative with positive.

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• Abstract

Analyzing the Unpublished Comments on the Book of Revelation by John William Colenso (1814-1883)

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John W. Colenso was an Anglican missionary in South Africa in late 19th century who took a role as a philanthropic legal advocate for the uncivilized. He also contributed in pioneering linguistics of Zulu, one of the official languages used by many in South Africa. However, he is known for his destructive views on interpretation of the biblical texts, to be evaluated as one "smashing the Old Testament text," (Charles Darwin) and it caused him to be disgraced by his own church. His unpublished comments on the Book of Revelation, personally acquired by this researcher, are selectively presented and analyzed in this study, and his methodology of interpretation on the biblical texts examined. It was found that he invented words that are not in the text, transformed those which are in the text, and conflated some nouns as

identical that are syntactically separated. He foregrounded interpretation with a preteristic model but backgrounded it now and then with a historicistic model. These findings confirm the existing evaluations on his theology. His calculated attempt to break down the inspiration of the Scripture is one of the biggest ironies regarding his philanthropic services as a missionary.

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