

brought out of Egypt and preserved amid the nations, or Christianity itself was ultimately established.*

There is, however, a class of learned and thoroughly respectable theologians who seem disposed to accept rather of any amount of unrecorded miracle, than to admit of a merely partial deluge, co-extensive with but the human family. "Were the difficulty attending this subject tenfold greater, and seemingly beyond all satisfactory explanation," says Dr William Hamilton, "if I yet find it recorded in the Book of Revelation, that in the Deluge '*every living thing in which is the breath of life perished, and Noah only remained alive, and they which were with him in the ark,*' I could still believe it implicitly, satisfied that the difficulty of explanation springs solely from the imperfection of human knowledge, and not from any limitation in the power or the wisdom of God, nor yet from any lack of trustworthiness in the document given us in a revelation from God,—a document given to men by the hands of Moses, the learned, accomplished, and eminently devout Jewish legislator." Here again, however, Dr Hamilton seems to have mistaken the question actually at issue. The true question is, not whether or no Moses is to be believed in the matter, but whether or no we in reality understand Moses. The question is, whether we are to regard the passages in which he describes the Flood as universal as belonging to the very numerous metonymic texts of Scripture in which a part—sometimes a not very large part—is described as the whole, or to regard them as

* If I do not introduce here the argument founded on the great age of certain gigantic trees, such as the Baobab of intertropical Africa, or the Taxodium of South America, it is not because I have any reason to challenge the estimates of Adanson or Candolle. The one tree may have lived its five thousand, the other its six thousand, years; but as the grounds have been disputed on which the calculations respecting their vast age have been founded, and as they cannot be re-examined anew by the reader, I wholly omit the evidence in the general question which they have been supposed to furnish.