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I.

THE CHRONOLOGY OF THE KINGS OF ISRAEL AND JUDAH.

SMITH'S Dictionary of the Bible, in the article on the First and Second Books of Kings, by Lord Arthur C. Hervey, publishes a good many statements like the following :

“It must, however, be admitted that the chronological details expressly given in the books of Kings form a remarkable contrast with their striking historical accuracy.”

“When, therefore, we find that the very first date introduced is erroneous, and that numerous other dates are also certainly wrong, because contradictory, it seems a not unfair conclusion that such dates are the work of an interpolator trying to bring the history within his own chronological system ; a conclusion somewhat confirmed by the alterations and omissions of these dates in the LXX. As regards these chronological difficulties, it must be observed they are of two essentially different kinds. One kind is merely the want of the data necessary for chronological exactness. Such is the absence, apparently, of any uniform rule for dealing with the fragments of years at the beginning and end of the reigns.” “And this class of difficulties may probably have belonged to these books in their original state, in which exact scientific chronology was not aimed at. But the other kind of difficulty is of a totally different character, and embraces dates which are *very exact* in their mode of expression, but are erroneous and contradictory. Some of these are pointed out below, and it is such which it seems reasonable to ascribe to the interpolation of later professed chronologists.”

“Now, when to all this we add that the pages of Josephus are full in like manner of a multitude of inconsistent chronological schemes, which prevent his being of any use, in spite of Hales' praises, in clearing up chronological difficulties, the proper inference seems to be that no authoritative, correct, systematic chronology was originally contained in the books of Kings, and that the attempts to supply such afterwards led to the introduction of many erroneous dates, and probably to the corruption of some true ones which were originally there. Certainly the present text contains what are either conflicting calculations of antagonistic chronologists, or errors of careless copyists, which no learning or ingenuity has ever been able to reduce to the consistency of truth.”

Abundant similar statements, in regard to either the chronology of the Israelite and Judaite kings as a whole, or to particular dates in this chronology, may be found in other ar-

V.

THE THEORY OF PROFESSOR KUENEN.

DURING the last quarter of a century Holland has been a soil, even more fertile than Germany in the fruits of theological learning and speculation. The "free handling" of sacred themes, of which so much was made twenty years ago, when the famous Essays and Reviews appeared in England, has been carried by the Dutch divines to what seems to be the last extreme. There is a school spoken of by their countrymen as "De Modernen," bent on establishing what they call a religion without metaphysics, based upon facts and experiences and aiming only at the fulfilment of its own moral ideals. It has no dependence upon authority, but considers all external props as delusive and dangerous, and takes great pains to set them aside. These views are put forth with much ability and learning, whether in the way of constructive argument or destructive criticism. Hoekstra, Oort, Hooykaas, Van Hamel, and others have all contributed to the shaping of what is represented with much confidence as the last or most modern expression of Christianity. But the corypheus of the party, its best known and ablest leader, is Dr. A. Kuenen, Professor of Theology at Leyden, whose contributions to the literature of the subject have been very numerous, both in such periodicals as the *Theol. Tijdschrift* and the *Nieuw en Oud*, and in elaborate volumes. His first appearance in a separate work was in 1861, when he issued his *Historisch-Kritisch Onderzoek naar het Ontstaan en de Verzameling van de Boeken des Ouden Verbonds* (Historical and Critical Inquiry into the Origin and the Collection of the Books of the Old Testament), in three volumes, 8vo, of which almost the whole is devoted to the first part of the subject, less than a fourth of the last volume being given to the question of the canon, and with great reason, for if his opinion of the rise of the successive portions of the He-

brew Scriptures be maintained, the troublesome problem of canonical authority is already solved. He considers the canon a gradual growth, begun by Ezra and completed by the scribes or learned men of the Jews, who were influenced in the adoption or the rejection of any religious work by the degree in which it favored or opposed their own views. Thus, for example, the book of Jesus the Son of Sirach was discarded because it rejects the doctrine of immortality and gives a very small place to Messianic expectations (iii., 441), and yet, we may add, they did not receive the Wisdom of Solomon, although it was not liable to these objections.

Those of his writings by which he is best known to English readers are *De Godsdienst van Israel* (The Religion of Israel), first published in 1869-70, translated by A. H. May, and issued in three volumes in 1874-5; and *De Profeten en de Profetie in Israel* (The Prophets and Prophecy in Israel), 1875, translated by the Rev. Adam Milroy, with an introduction by J. Muir, Esq., in one large octavo volume, 1877. The latter work is a natural complement to the former. Its object is to overthrow any objections which might be made to the views taken in the earlier work, on the ground of the nature and character of the prophetic writings of the Old Testament. A very conclusive answer to the leading statements in this work was given by Prof. W. H. Green, in the *Princeton Review* for July, 1878. The two works together cover a very wide field and furnish abundant evidences of learning, acuteness, and dialectic skill. Dr. Kuenen does not possess the piercing genius of Ewald nor his marvellous capacity of reproducing the remote in time and space. Still less has he the logical grasp and constructive power of Baur, the founder of the Tübingen school. Yet he is by no means undeserving the reputation he has achieved. He has carefully mastered the vast field over which his investigations extend, and displays no mean skill in co-ordinating multifarious details into a connected and symmetrical system. The writings of his predecessors are familiar to him, and he treats them without disparagement. He writes with calmness and at least apparent candor; and his tone is as reverent as it is possible for any one to be who holds his views. We cannot recall a single gibe or any harshness of expression. Yet the tenor of his opinions makes the reading of his pages a

sad trial to the patience of a devout Christian, or, indeed, of any one who regards the Scriptures as God's most holy Word. The same remark is true of another work with which his name is connected—the "Bible for Learners"—issued in English in three volumes, 1878-9. This was prepared by Dr. Oort, Professor at Amsterdam, and Dr. Hooykaas, pastor at Rotterdam; but the whole was "submitted before publication to the careful supervision of Dr. Kuenen," so that one has the double advantage of seeing these opinions stated in a scientific form for scholars and in a popular form for youth. The only difference between the two is, that the latter takes up the whole Bible in regular order and brings out more fully the application of the principles involved.

What, now, is the theory which underlies all the productions of Dr. Kuenen's pen? It is, as he frankly states, that the religion of Israel is simply one of the principal religions of the world, "nothing less, but also nothing more." It, indeed, claims a divine origin, but the same thing was claimed for Buddhism, Brahmanism, and Islam, and it is no more to be conceded to the former than to the latter. Once it was supposed that God had revealed Himself to one people, and suffered the rest of men to walk in their own ways; but "now this idea seems a childish fancy." Scientific research has shown that the Israelitish religion is only a natural development from beginning to end. This position is the starting-point of modern theology. The canon of the Old Testament was not settled until the first century of our era, but no one of the books it enumerates can be proved to have been written before B.C. 800. The contents of the earlier portions, therefore, are simply oral traditions, which, of course, must have been greatly altered in the course of transmission from mouth to mouth. Moreover, they relate phenomena which we cannot recognize as historical, such as the forty years' error in the wilderness, where we know that Israel could scarcely have held out forty days.* And when these oral legends were committed to writing, this was done according to the aim and spirit of the writer, who moulded the

* Yet nothing is more certain than that the careful surveys of the last thirty years have shown that the Sinaitic Peninsula must have been capable at one time of supporting a dense population. Competent authorities sustain this view, and every visitor to Sinai and Petra has seen it for himself.

narrative by the wants of the present or the future. The only point where one can stand on firm ground is the eighth century before our era, where we can add to the historical books of the Kings the writings of several prophets, such as Amos, Hosea, Isaiah, Micah. Here Dr. Kuenen begins to review the past. The whole story of the patriarchs he dismisses as mythical, and the first place in which he finds the Israelites is Goshen, in Egypt, where they were polytheists. This, however, they had not always been, but according to the common, if not universal rule, had developed out of fetichists, having originally worshipped trees and especially stones. And when they rose out of this nature-worship, they preferred among the deities they acknowledged one called El Shaddai, as their tribal god. This god Moses taught them to recognize as Jahveh,* and gave to them, as his law, the Ten Words, not indeed, as they now stand, but in a form which afterward became the present Decalogue. And thus the religious development of the nation took a step forward, but it was only one step. During the period of the Judges the worship of Jahveh continued and spread itself more and more, although united with that of trees, of stones, of the sun, etc. The tribes in their disjointed condition of course varied greatly according to their varied circumstances, but at last unity was born out of confusion and the Mosaic element obtained the upper-hand. This was due mainly to the agency of the prophetic order which exerted such a vast influence upon Israel's subsequent history. Its members gave the cohesive force of monarchy to the tribes. David and Solomon did much for Jahveh, but they still had sensuous conceptions of his nature, and the fact that the latter built high places for Chemosh, etc., shows that he did not regard Jahveh as the only true God, or even as greatly different from other gods. The commercial intercourse with surrounding nations set on foot by Solomon did much to improve religion by elevating the civilization of the people. An exami-

* We desire to enter a protest against this piece of literary affectation. For centuries *Jehovah* has been the established English reproduction of the incommunicable divine name, and nothing whatever is gained by the proposed substitute, for that ill-sounding substitute has to be explained to the English reader, and this explanation can be just as well attached to the ordinary term. With all due respect to the memory of Ewald, who first introduced the habit, we insist that in a popular work it is mere pedantry.

nation of the first century after the revolt of Ephraim shows that still Jahveh was adored with other gods not as the only one, but as the principal deity. In the next century Jahvism grew gradually purer, until at its close ethical monotheism attained its full development.

Now commences the formation of the older portion of the canon. In the reign of Hezekiah the prophetic party wrote the book of Deuteronomy, and on purpose put it where it could be found. It was found in the days of Josiah and led him to the effective measures by which he secured a victory for Jahvism over the heathenizing party. During the exile Ezekiel drew up a plan of worship (xl.-xlviii.) which served as a preliminary draft for the full and definite law afterward written by Ezra, who incorporated with his work the Ten Words and the Book of the 'Covenant, giving to the whole the shape that it now has; and thus the priestly ordinances were for the first time made known and imposed upon the people. The Psalms are nearly all of late date, and were ascribed to David simply because he had the reputation of a great singer and player on the harp. So Proverbs was named from Solomon on account of his repute for wisdom, although the oldest portion of it was not brought together until the eighth century. The scribes who followed Ezra and Nehemiah not only copied the law, but occasionally inserted a precept wherever it was needed. They, too, added the historical books to the canon, and toward the end of the fifth century laid the foundation for what was afterward called the Hagiographa. The youngest historical portion was what appears as I. and II. Chronicles, Ezra and Nehemiah, all of which proceeded from one author, who lived about 250 B.C., soon after which time, the books of Esther and Ecclesiastes appeared, and a century later the book of Daniel.

Precisely the same treatment is given to the New Testament. Not one of the Gospels was written by the person whose name it bears. Nearly one-half of the Epistles ascribed to Paul are spurious. Nor can the genuineness of the Catholic Epistles and the Apocalypse be maintained. All these, indeed, contain early traditions, but have been so modified by imagination, by preconceived opinions, by party spirit, by the natural fondness of men for embellishment, that they can no longer be received as exact in matter or form. All that the critic can

do, therefore, is to subject the narrative to a severe scrutiny, and carefully eliminate the small modicum of truth from the mass of fable in which it is imbedded. This is what Dr. Kuenen and his friends profess to have done, and the result is, that we have a Gospel without an Incarnation, without miracles, without atonement, without a resurrection, without a Holy Ghost, without justification, and without the hope of eternal life. Instead of all these, there is offered to us a somewhat elevated ethical system fortified by the thought that God is love. This is the entire outcome of the New Testament of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ !

The details of these various works can be examined only in volumes devoted to the subject. What is here proposed is the consideration of the theory as a whole, especially as it is applied to the Old Testament. The first remark to be made is, that Dr. Kuenen begs the entire question in advance. He starts with the assumption that a supernatural revelation of truth is unhistorical and impossible. But the Bible professes all the way, from the first page to the last, to be a communication from God. This conception runs through the warp and the woof of the whole web. Where is the need, then, of this laborious sifting of each particular portion, this weighing of evidence, this balancing of probabilities, in order to ascertain the precise worth of the various narratives the book contains? The learned professor has already decided what is the main point in relation to any so-called sacred book, viz: whether it has or has not divine authority. His whole argument, therefore, is intended to sustain a foregone conclusion, and for that reason must needs be regarded with distrust and apprehension. He would doubtless reply that the same objection applies to the defenders of the church doctrine, inasmuch as they start with an equally strong predisposition in the opposite direction, assuming that there must be a divine revelation. But this is not the fact. The usual course of the Christian apologist is to inquire, first, whether a communication from God to man is conceivable or possible, then if it is probable, and finally, whether there are sufficient reasons for believing that it has actually been made. Of course, it is not denied that such a reasoner may by his own experience have become fully convinced that the Bible is from God, but he does not postulate

this conviction as the basis of his argument. He professes, and if candid actually attempts, to treat the whole subject as one to be decided by the ascertained facts in the case, and certainly therefore does not prejudge the question in advance, as Prof. Kuenen does.

Further, the burden of proof rests wholly upon the authors of this hypothesis, and that not merely because at present Christianity has possession of the ground ; but because in the first place the theory opposes the general consent of the race. Religion is found everywhere in all the past, and it has always presupposed a communication in some form with superior invisible power. The forms have been sometimes grotesque and even repulsive, their development being governed by the circumstances of the time and place of their appearance ; but they all involve the conviction that man has to do with something above the ordinary course of nature. It is vain to say that the progress of modern physical science has altered this state of things, and that if the ancient world had known what we do now, the views of its thinkers would have been different, for modern physics leaves the question just where it was. Natural science deals only with phenomena. As to the origin of natural sequences it has nothing to say ; still less can it affirm that the author of those sequences cannot interfere with them. The testimony of the race then is, and always has been, in favor of the tenet that there are supernal powers which exercise control over man. The universality of this belief and its continuance through the ages make a very violent presumption against Prof. Kuenen's theory, and require him to support it by affirmative arguments of the strongest kind. Then, in the second place, his dealing with the books of Scripture puts him in a similar position. For eighteen centuries those books have been in the hands of men of different ages and countries, all of whom have regarded them as professing to give a history of revealed religion, and many who doubted or rejected portions of the volume, yet acquiesced in this view. Nay, even avowed opposers of religion have so regarded the matter. And now comes the Leyden professor maintaining that the volume, so far from being the record of the successive stages of a divine revelation, is an account of the way in which a barbarous tribe gradually rose from fetichism to polytheism, and from polytheism to

monotheism, the entire development being simply upon the plane of nature. Of course it is possible that he is correct; but in the face of all the martyrs, confessors, fathers, doctors, scholars, not to speak of the millions of ordinary believers, who with one consent uphold the traditional view, it is most unlikely. At any rate nothing but the most cogent argumentation can be expected to establish a theory so novel and startling.

And this needs the more to be insisted upon as sometimes the *onus probandi* is skilfully shifted where it does not belong, as, for example, in the assertion ("Hist. of Israel," I. 273), "It cannot be proved that a single one of the Proverbs of Solomon proceeds from the king in whose name they all stand." We submit that this is not the business of the biblical apologete. The affirmative does not belong to him. The traditional opinion on this subject is so old, so general, so self-consistent, so wide-spread in all the East, and repeated in so many different languages, that it may be assumed; and it is for the opponents of Scripture to prove the contrary—that is, to show that Solomon did not write the Proverbs, or at least so many as are attributed to him in the book itself. They make the attempt, which, however, proceeds only on subjective grounds ("Bible for Learners," II. 78, 79), that is, the assertion that many of these utterances are inconsistent with Solomon's character and circumstances. Take one or two examples. The declaration, "The horse is prepared against the day of battle: but safety is of the Lord" (xxi. 31), would, it is said, sound very strangely from a king who had made enormous preparations for war, and among other things had yoked and equipped hundreds of war chariots. So, again, warnings against licentiousness, filial disobedience, trusting in wealth, etc., seem inappropriate to him. Besides, these sayings recognize Jehovah as omniscient, as the knower of hearts, as one who loves goodness more than sacrifice, as the ruler of the world, conceptions which were foreign, we are told, to the whole age of Solomon, and, of course, to the king himself. This is the proof which is to overthrow the tradition of two thousand years. First it is assumed that Solomon was an habitual polytheist, that he recognized Jehovah only as Israel's God, that his wisdom had no distinctively religious character, but was broadly human, and that his chief char-

acteristics were luxury and splendor. Then it is inferred from these traits that he could not have uttered what is attributed to him. The premises are invalid, yet even if they were impregnable, the conclusion would not follow, for Solomon might have been lifted above his age and anticipated the views of later generations. But the critics take one-half of the account given of the wise man, viz: his errors, and push it to an extreme, and then reject the other half, his youthful piety and divine guidance, which rests upon precisely the same authority. Having thus mutilated the record, they dwell upon the inconsistencies it presents, and hold up the results as conclusive evidence of the untrustworthiness of the narrative.

It is further to be observed that the theory neither has nor professes to have any new facts to sustain it. It is simply the application of what is called the scientific method to the interpretation of the existing Scriptures, which means, as we have seen, to explain the whole book on the ground that everything in it which implies the interposition of divine power is to be indiscriminately rejected. Thus, for example, in the book of Deuteronomy (chap. xvii.) there is a direction given as to the choice and conduct of a king if ever the people should choose to set up a monarch over them as the other nations. This has always been understood to be a precept based upon a certain foresight of the future, and as such amply justified by the experience of the people. But here the scientific method insists that there is no such thing as foresight of the future, and that this passage must have been written long after the establishment of the monarchy and have taken its form from the errors committed by Solomon in multiplying wives and horses and silver and gold. But this is mere assertion. The only shadow of argument lies in the assumed premise that absolute prediction is impossible. Such a premise is simply absurd to one who believes in a God of knowledge who sees the end from the beginning. A similar case is that of Balaam. The narrative as it stands in Numbers is every way appropriate. A heathen opposer of Israel bribes a prophet of repute in those days to come and curse his foes. The prophet makes the attempt, but in the act is arrested by the power of God and constrained to utter a blessing instead of a curse. Nothing can be conceived more in accordance with the beliefs of all the

ancient nations, or better adapted to encourage the Israelites in the work that lay before them. The numerous interpositions of Jehovah mentioned throughout the narrative were exactly in the line of his previous dealings, and the exquisite force and beauty of Balaam's oracles would greatly deepen their impression upon the minds of those to whom he unfolded such brilliant prospects. What now becomes of this narrative in the hands of "The Moderns"? It is a pure fiction from beginning to end, with the exception of a few proper names borrowed from ancient traditions. Its author lived in the days of Jeroboam II. (823-782 B.C.), the ablest and most prosperous of Israel's kings, who ruled from Syria to the borders of Egypt. There were, however, several outlying districts to the south which were by no means well disposed to Israel. So he conceived and wrote this fine story with a view to encourage his countrymen with the assurance that Jehovah's invincible arm would be stretched out for their deliverance in case of need. And thus is explained the allusion to Moab, Edom, the Kenites, Asshur, and the ships of Chittim. We get rid of the supernatural in every form, and yet obtain "a real religious thought, an animating and consoling truth," viz: God's unconditional defence of Israel, and His power in the hearts that feel His presence! What a wonderful vigor of thought and expression this unknown forger must have had, and what a marvellous literary tact to incorporate his tale with the annals of the nation so skilfully that it required twenty-five centuries to pass before the fraud was detected! But in audacity of invention he has been surpassed by his discoverer, for in the record in 2 Kings (xiv. 23-29) there is nothing whatever to suggest that the story of Balaam was invented then, and we are abundantly justified in saying that Kuenen's account is "a pure fiction."

The same thing may be asserted of his explanation of the story of Samson. This is, that he "was originally a mythical being, *the sun-hero*, the personal representative of the operations and fortunes of the sun." See the evidence: Many of the features of the Grecian Hercules are derived from the Semitic sun-myths, and it is natural to derive those of Samson from the Canaanitish sun-worship. This is confirmed by the derivation of his name (Shimshôn) from the Hebrew word for

sun (shemesh), and by the fact that his long hair was a symbol of the rays of the sun. Further, the only satisfactory solution of his well-known riddle (since bees are not wont to deposit honey in the carcass of a lion), is found in the idea that the sun produces sweet honey when he is in the constellation of Leo. The position thus gained is used to establish the claim that the Israelites participated in the sun-worship which it is said they found prevailing among the Canaanites. Now, how tenuous and shadowy is all this reasoning, if such it may be called! It is not at all certain that Samson's name came from the sun. It may have come from the secondary sense of the verbal form (to be distinguished, powerful), or from the root of similar radicals found in Arabic, Chaldee, and Syriac, signifying to *serve* or *minister*. But even if the usual derivation be allowed, it is a *salto mortale* to proceed from the name solar or sun-like to the conclusion that the sun was worshipped by the giver of the name. And if Samson's long hair has a symbolical meaning, why not Absalom's also? As to the astronomical explanation of the riddle, it is so far-fetched and inept as to need no remark, except to say that there is no evidence whatever that bees produced, or were believed to produce, more or sweeter honey when the sun was in Leo than when he was in Cancer or in Virgo. (A very close parallel to the riddle as usually understood may be found in Lange on Judges [p. 200], drawn from Mullenhoff's *Sagen* of North Germany). We insist, therefore, that this method of interpretation is a mere play of fancy, and has no claim whatever to the name of "scientific." Allow a writer to choose his own etymologies and shape his own symbolisms, and he can make anything out of anything. The feat by which the history of Samson is made to prove the existence of nature-worship among the Israelites of his day needs only to be repeated from time to time in order to turn all ancient history, sacred and profane, into a mass of crude fables.*

* It is a little remarkable that in Kuenen's earlier work, the *Historisch-Kritisch Onderzoek* (I. 218), he does not reject the entire narrative of Samson after the fashion of his later publications, but fully admitting his historical existence, insists only upon the exaggeration of his strength and the artistic grouping of the incidents as unhistorical, whether they be part of the original legend or the work of the subsequent editor. In both works, however, he adopts the rendering of Judges xv. 19, "in the jaw," given in the English Bible (but not in the Dutch), after the old versions, but now rejected by nearly all critics in favor of the more natural rendering "in Lehi." This is hardly fair in the learned Professor.

But let us compare the modern theory in its general outlines with that which it is intended to supplant. The common Church view is, that the Bible is the record of a revelation which God was pleased to make in successive portions, stretching through a long series of ages. It was given to one people, but intended through them ultimately to reach all the nations of the earth. The early disclosures of the divine will and purposes were first put into a connected written form by Moses, who was specially called and qualified for the work. He took the accounts, whether oral or written, which had come down from the patriarchs, and, under divine guidance, wove them into a consecutive narrative, which began with the creation, and ended with his own time. He then added the further revelations made to himself, embracing the whole civil and ecclesiastical constitution of the children of Israel. In the following ages men were raised up from time to time, who put in writing songs, proverbs, and prophecies, like the Pentateuch in origin and aim, until the time of Ezra, who with his successors completed the Canon of the Old Testament. Occasionally the earlier portions of this record show the hand of an editor inserting short, explanatory notes, and all of them have been subject to the commission of errors by transcribers. Yet, there seems no reason to doubt that we have them substantially as they were first given. Various as the different parts are in many respects, yet all make up one consistent whole as an orderly development of revelation, a gradual disclosure of God's purpose of redemption. Everything, even to a dry list of genealogies, bears upon this one ultimate end. Now, the record as thus viewed is simple and artless, yet sustained by innumerable evidences both from without and from within. The present century has witnessed the exhuming of several ancient literatures from the grave in which they had been buried for a score of centuries, yet hieroglyph and cuneiform monuments have alike borne witness to the integrity of the Hebrew records. And these records are the only ancient religious writings which exhibit a regular course of development, beginning with few and simple statements, and gradually adding to these more and more, but always in the same line of thought, so that each new age or period shows an advance upon all that went

before. The entire Canon is the unfolding of the germ given in an early chapter of its first book. And herein the collection stands alone. Nothing corresponding in the faintest degree is to be found in Hindu, Persian, Egyptian, or any other sacred books. Such books as, for example, the Vedas, do indeed vary in tone at different periods, but not in the way of marked progress. There are no chronological hints given by which one can test this question, and indeed, for the most part, the determining of dates, either absolutely or relatively, is an insoluble problem. Not so the Hebrew records. The post-exilian books of course imply the captivity. The prophets and the histories of the monarchy imply each other, and both together imply the settlement of the dynasty in the house of David. This settlement implies the previous tribal arrangement under the Judges, and this again the Mosaic law, and that law the foregoing proceedings stated in Genesis. Particular points may be obscure, and numbers may at times admit of various interpretations, but about the general course of events there is not the least doubt. It is always an advance in definiteness, fulness, and certainty, especially in reference to the purpose for which Israel was chosen, and the great means of accomplishing that purpose.

But the theory of Dr. Kuenen reverses this whole statement in the most positive and striking manner. It exactly transposes the chief factors, changing the revelation of God into a discovery by man. And to this end it plays fast and loose with the entire book, accepting one portion and rejecting another, resolving many of its most striking features into fables, exaggerations, conjectures, and even absolute forgeries. False pretences abound throughout the volume. There is no true history in Genesis. Moses wrote but a fraction of the Pentateuch. The conquest of Canaan was the effort of half-civilized barbarians to gain a new home. The books of Judges and Samuel show how a number of related tribes became a nation, and Jahveh got the upper-hand of Baal. Nor do we reach the ground of contemporaneous history until we come to the reign of Hezekiah, and then commences the manufacture of sacred books. Old legends, fragments of legislation, curious facts of antiquity, are all worked up into new and complete forms, and thus, gradually, there comes into

being the book called the Old Testament. Strict accuracy is nowhere made paramount. It is enough if what is written expresses what ought to be true, or is put forth with an upright motive. In those early days, even good men did not have the strictness of modern notions. But if this be the actual explanation of the Old Testament as we have it, the question arises, why the work was not better done? On this theory the complete monotheism of the Hebrews was the slow result of centuries of progress, but the priests and leaders of the people desired to conceal this fact, and represent the entire system as a revelation from heaven. For this end, the "priest-codex" was framed after the captivity, and inserted in the heart of the Pentateuch, and all the rest of the canon was modified accordingly. Whatever myths were floating around were industriously gathered and inserted in the appropriate places, and thus a strong *prima facie* case made out, that the entire scheme had a superhuman source, and was sanctioned by divine authority. But we ask, why was not this bold attempt more successful? The heads of the nation, after the return from exile, had the whole matter in their own hands. They could manipulate the sacred books without any fear of being called to account. Why, then, did they do their work so imperfectly? Why did they leave so many gaps in the narrative; so many points which could be misconstrued; so many details which a critical eye could detect as inconsistent with its assumed character? Why did they not assimilate Kings and Chronicles? Why did they not rectify the use of Elohim and Jehovah in Genesis, so as to forestall the endeavors made to find two, four, or six different authors at work upon that singular and invaluable record? The Scripture, as it stands, has many features which invite criticism. The writers, like men conscious of telling the truth, are not particular to dove-tail one narrative into another, but with a noble simplicity, perform their work as if assured that results would take care of themselves. But this is not the method of men who invent an elaborate scheme and work over a variety of old matter, subtracting and adding in such a way as to change the whole tone and color of the narrative. Such men always cover their tracks. They certainly do not leave apparent anachronisms and other discrepancies which would be sure to

attract attention and awaken doubt. We have a right, therefore, to insist that the entire literary structure of the Old Testament is directly opposed to this singular theory. Every page bears the stamp of simplicity and directness, utterly at war with the conception that the collection has been re-written and modified so as to turn it completely aside from its original character.

But, further, the theory is most improbable in the light of all experience. Professor Kuenen is by no means the first to advocate the genesis of monotheism by a slow process which began at the lowest point of the worship of nature, and at last reached the conception of one supreme and all-perfect Being. His only novelty lies in claiming that this is the real sense of the Old Testament, stripped of the false coverings put upon it by an ambitious hierarchy. But the conception, however natural and reasonable in itself, is one that has no basis in the records of the race. No parallel instance to what is claimed for the Jews can be shown anywhere else. Polytheism in China and India, and Dualism in Persia never led to Monotheism, nor did the latter even obtain a name and a place among them except by importation, and that from those who held it as a revealed truth. The Greeks made greater advances in civilization than any other people of the ancient world. Yet, notwithstanding all that they accomplished in science, art, literature, and philosophy, their Pantheon was as well peopled at the close of their career as it was at the beginning. A certain supremacy was assigned to Zeus, king of gods and men, but this lordship was in no sense akin to the one God of revelation. Multitudes became disbelievers in the inhabitants of Olympus, and laughed at the stories of the mythology, but they were content to remain sceptics, and instead of exchanging the wrong faith for the right one, exchanged it for no faith at all. The same may be said of the Romans at the beginning of our era. The old heathen cults had lost their power, but the upper classes were Pantheists, and the lower addicted themselves to the worship of the emperor. A pure monotheism never prevailed except by the diffusion of Christianity. Yet, if there is a law of natural and normal progress in these things, by which the low and sensual ripen slowly into the lofty and

refined, and gods many at last give place to One Sole Ruler and Judge, surely it is in the classic lands that we might expect most clearly to see it. But the fact is, that neither soil nor race nor culture exerts any visible effect in this direction. Always and everywhere man, left to himself, goes downward instead of upward in his objects of worship. The account of human degeneracy given by the apostle Paul, in the first chapter of the Epistle to the Romans, still remains without a successful or even plausible contradiction. It is, alas, a melancholy truth that when men know God they do not like to retain God in their knowledge. Of this truth the recorded history of the Jews, taken in its natural meaning, is one continuous illustration. The true God revealed himself to them, but they had a passion for going astray, and their annals show a constant series of relapses into polytheistic idolatry, from which they never recovered except by aid from without. And yet we are asked, in the face of all human experience, to believe that this same people pursued just the opposite course,—that beginning as a horde of sensual, barbarous, and fierce savages, they developed a *nisus* toward better things, and at last, as the crown of their efforts, reached the loftiest monotheism known to man. We insist that this is improbable in the last degree. It is easy to say, "Polytheism everywhere disappears before the march of civilization," but when we ask for the proof from history, there is no answer. The evidence is all the other way. Even when Aristophanes made sport of the Olympian deities on the stage, that fact hardly affected the habits of the people. "The fickle Greek, at evening, in the comedy, laughed at the same gods to whom the next morning, in their temples, he offered sacrifice."* But Julius Cæsar and Augustus, neither of whom made any concealment of his unbelief in the popular mythology, so far from adopting an intelligent monotheism, became slaves of superstition, and believed in omens and talismans and magical formulæ.

Nor is there any reason to doubt that if the views of Prof. Kuenen should ever secure general adoption in any community, results precisely similar would follow. Men will have

* Uhlhorn's "Conflict of Christianity."

some connection with the invisible world and the powers that control it, and if this irresistible impulse is not gratified in a legitimate way, and by reasonable objects of faith, it will find satisfaction even in abject and puerile superstitions. It is melancholy to anticipate such effects from all the toil and learning which the Professor has bestowed through so many years upon the sacred volume, but truth leaves no alternative. And that we have not misjudged the tenor and issue of his labors is shown by the fact that the *Westminster Review* (Oct., 1879), while applauding the recent work done under his supervision by Drs. Oort and Hooykaas, expressly calls it the "Bibleless Bible," which is indeed the best possible designation of it. It is not simply the play of Hamlet with Hamlet omitted; it is that play with everything left out but the ghost. And therefore, any success which this theory may attain, must, in the nature of things, be temporary. Not only for the reasons already mentioned is it untenable, but for its utter emptiness and vanity. It is opposed alike to the undying instincts of humanity in respect to God and immortality, and to the deepest convictions of the human soul in reference to sin and the need of redemption. It is not merely the heart and the flesh of the believer that cry out for the Living God, but man—every man—and in every age. The very limitations of our nature, its weakness, its sorrows, its fluctuations, call aloud for something higher, better, stronger than itself; some Rock of the ages upon which it can rest; some voice to speak across the gulf between the seen and the unseen. Still more under the sense of guilt and the utter hopelessness of self-extrication does the soul yearn for a ray of hope from the skies, for something that comes down from a higher plane than man, and therefore is able to speak with authority and instil the sense of forgiveness. This longing the old Bible meets and satisfies, but the "Bible for Learners" does not. And therefore men will have none of it, notwithstanding its learning, its acuteness, its fine phrases, and its professed concern for truth and religion.

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