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CRITICAL NOTICES.

Kuenen's Introduction to the Old Testament : Vol. III.

Historisch-critisch onderzoek naar het ontstaan en de verzameling van de boeken des ouden verbonds, door A. Kuenen, in leven hoogleeraar te Leiden, uitgegeven door J. C. Matthes, hoogleeraar te Amsterdam. Tweede, geheel omgewerkte uitgave. Derde deel:—De poëtische boeken des ouden verbonds. Eerste stuk: De poëzie en de gnomische geschriften.

THE last portion of the great *Introduction*, which Kuenen lived to revise and rewrite, has now been given to the world. It is edited by Prof. Matthes of Amsterdam, who has been entrusted with the independent compilation of the final sections of the book. Kuenen had finished the general essay on Hebrew poetry, and the chapters on Proverbs, Job, and Ecclesiastes. He was engaged on the Psalms when the illness which quickly issued in death overtook him, and had only written out the first four paragraphs of what was to have been (p. 209) a long and most important chapter. Of the remaining seven paragraphs only a few disconnected, though doubtless valuable, jottings and notes now exist, while the sections on Canticles, Lamentations and the Canon will have to be entirely Professor Matthes' own.

The present instalment has all the well-known excellence of Kuenen's mature work. If I were given four adjectives with which to describe it, I think I should choose these—clear, modest, thorough, and cautious. Perhaps the last is the attribute with which people, even after all that Professor Cheyne has said about Kuenen, are least willing to credit him. And yet no one was less an extremist than Kuenen, and in his *Onderzoek*—the greatest work of his life in spite of the *Religion of Israel*—he was an extremist least of all. He never, for example, abandoned an earlier for a later date of any Biblical book or part of a book without the most telling reasons and the most scrupulous and repeated examinations of the arguments *pro* and *con*; he never admitted an interpolation to support a theory or to get over a difficulty; he was always willing to reconsider and fairly estimate any new arguments for a more conservative opinion. Thus, as compared with the conclusions reached by many a younger member of the more advanced German school, Kuenen's position was itself comparatively conservative; and his frame of mind and temper of belief made him

an admirable critic of every novel hypothesis. It was theologically of no importance to him whether the Book of Isaiah was written, let us say, half in the eighth century, and half in the fifth, or whether it was all written in the third. He was perfectly ready to consider any new suggestion avowedly based on evidence of some sort, and ready to acknowledge that he had been hitherto in the wrong; at the same time no merely attractive theory would make him abandon his opinion. The consequence was that he rarely, I should imagine, changed his mind except for the better, and from the bulk of his maturest conclusions criticism is little likely to recede. If a man were to adopt all Kuenen's views in the *Onderzoek*, he would adopt none which could rightly be called rash, ungrounded or immature, and not a large number, I venture to hold, which any future wave of conservatism will be enabled finally to overthrow. The first of Old Testament critics at his death, he remains for all time an exemplar or type of that which a Biblical critic should always strive to be.¹

The initial chapter on Hebrew poetry and its forms presents the student with a convenient survey of what has been, and is being said upon this difficult though fascinating subject. All the various efforts (including those of Bickel) to discover *metrical* systems in Hebrew poetry Kuenen regards unhesitatingly as failures: "*metrisch is de Israëlitische poëzie niet.*" In this result he is at one with Professor Driver, with whose remarks on pp. 337-345 of his *Literature of the Old Testament* Kuenen's chapter may profitably be compared. But if not metrical, Hebrew poetry *is* rhythmical (page 14); in what sense is carefully explained on pp. 26-28, and especially p. 29 with its notes. We learn about the usual length of the lines of each "verse" of the "Elegiac Stanza" (longs and shorts" as it might be called), and then we get an elaborate account of the various distichs, tristichs, tetrastichs, etc., found in the poetical portions of the Hebrew Bible. Note the author's caution when he comes to deal with the question of strophes (cp. Driver, p. 344). He discusses it on pp. 48-58, and will only allow a very limited application of the theory. (See especially pp. 50, 52, 56, § 94 notes 38, 41, 46.) Duhm's edition of Isaiah has again brought metre prominently forward in another connection, as an instrument in verbal emendation and in the discovery of interpolations and disruptions of the text. In reading Duhm, Kuenen's remarks on p. 40 are not without their value. He says:—

Olshausen in his edition of the Psalms, pp. 13-16, has some interesting

¹ How unprejudiced too he was? Note the remarks on the popular worship at the Temple, p. 9, and on post-exilic Judaism, pp. 92 and 165.

remarks about rhythm in connection with supposed corruptions of the text. And the commentaries show how the rhythm here and there indicates a fault of the text, and puts us on the track of its correction. It cannot indeed be denied that the "parallelism" has often been misused both in order to support mistaken explanations, and to cast suspicion upon the soundness of the text. But this misuse does not prevent a proper use existing. The cautious critic will not only remember the great variety which the rhythm of Hebrew poetry admits, but also consider the age of the poem which is under explanation. It is clear that the younger poets made use of irregularities which were unknown in the older poetry. Thus for instance when Olshausen regards Psalm xix. 5, as corrupt, we must agree with him, if only because Psalm xix. 2-7 shows so many marks of antiquity; in songs such as Psalms cxv. and cxvi., an irregularity like xix. 5 could be allowed.

In the prophets, moreover, Kuenen would have been disposed to press rhythmical considerations less closely than in the so-called "Poetical books." For "the poet is a singer; the prophet is an orator. Hence the latter uses much more freedom than the former. The prophetic rhythm is, or at least may be, much less regular than the rhythm of the psalmist, and the strophes, too, so far as they occur, allow greater change and inequality" (p. 57). It is interesting to contrast with this cautious statement the results of Professor Duhm in a single chapter, or part of a chapter, of Isaiah. To illustrate the freedom of the prophet towards questions of rhythm, Kuenen uses Isaiah chapter li. He says:—

The verses of prophetic oratory are usually longer than those of poetry: whereas, in the latter, the distich is predominant, in the former the collocation of four, five, or six lines to a "verse" [tetrastichs, pentastichs, hexastichs] is by no means rare. See, for example, Isaiah li., where verses 12, 14, 15, 20 are tristichs, verses 18, 21 distichs, while the remaining verses are longer, especially 3, 6, 13. Thus we see from this chapter that the verses of a single prophetic oration are often very unlike each other; and also that the separate *στίχοι* not infrequently contain more words or syllables than the *στίχοι* of regular poems (p. 58).

It is quite possible that we may ultimately have to recognise here an excess of caution. Whether Duhm's daring has hit the truth may, however, still be doubted. How does he deal with chapter li.? In the first place, he does not allow it to be a single speech. He splits it up into several parts: 1—8 is an independent poem of five strophes, each strophe containing five (*elegiac*) "verses." "The second strophe (verse 3) is one 'verse' too short, and in other places the anxiety of the copyist to reduce the two parts of the 'verse' to equal lengths is discernible; but, nevertheless, the measure and the poetic intention

are unmistakable." But verse 3, which Kuenen calls attention to as specially long, is practically regarded by Duhm as composed of three metrical "verses," while one metrical "verse" has fallen out and been lost. Verses 1 and 2 form each two metrical elegiac "verses," which can also be regarded as a single tetrastich (so Kuenen). [For the elegiac rhythm, cf. Driver, p. 429.] In 4, לְאוֹמִי and אֶרְנִיעַ must be expunged. Verse 6 Kuenen notes as being especially long. In Duhm it constitutes by itself the third strophe. Its first metrical "verse" ends at אֶל־הָאָרֶץ מִתַּחַת. This was added by the copyist to make the two portions of the "verse" equal in length (the "cæsura" is at עֵינֶיכֶם) and must be expunged; the second "verse" ends at כִּבְנֶה, the cæsura being at נִמְלֶחֶוּ; the third "verse" is at present incomplete, therefore it is assumed to have originally begun with תְּבַלֶּה, to which the word תְּבַל is ingeniously added, and it ends at מִוֹתוֹן, while the fourth "verse" concludes the strophe. In 8 the second אֶחָלָם must be expunged. It would take too long to follow Duhm's metrical or rhythmical interpretation of the chapter further: it may, however, just be added that li. 17 to lii. 10 is regarded as another separate "poem" in five strophes of seven elegiac "verses" each. lii. 3-6 is excised, and the same fate befalls li. 18, where Cheyne had specially bidden us notice "the elegiac rhythm in the Hebrew." Of course the metrical grounds for interpolation or omission are almost invariably backed up by other reasons; still, Kuenen's caution should not, I think, often be out of our minds in weighing Professor Duhm's conclusions.¹

Passing now to the three chapters on the Gnostic or Wisdom literature, the first prominent thing which strikes the reader is that not only Ecclesiastes, but Job and Proverbs too are now relegated to the post-Exilic era. When three years ago I ventured to defend a post-Exilic date for the Proverbs, I was ranging myself with a respectable but yet small minority. Now the balance is slowly turning. And, seeing that Kuenen became a convert to the post-Exilic hypothesis, and has exhaustively defended it in this new edition of the *Onderzoek*, the "cause" may in all probability be considered as won. Its importance, both negatively for the pre-Exilic and positively for the post-Exilic history of Israel's religion need not be elucidated here. Nor will it be necessary to follow Kuenen's proofs in detail.

How thorough the man is and how patient! Even in 1892 he does

¹ It should be noted that the word "verse" in Kuenen means almost invariably the Masoretic verse, while in Duhm it means the line or στίχος (Dutch, *verslid*), two or more of which make up the Masoretic verse. Duhm's *Langvers* is Kuenen's "lange versregel."

not scorn to devote a few pages to a careful consideration of the Solomonic authorship, showing not only how impossible the old traditional view is, but also how easily its growth can be accounted for (pp. 80-83). Kuenen's own view is laid down in pp. 84, 85, with the subsequent notes. In two italicised sentences he sums up two of the main arguments for the post-Exilic date. (1.) The prophetic literature is itself a powerful proof against the existence of Proverbs in the pre-Exilic and Exilic periods (p. 91). (2.) The religious and moral point of view of the wise men of Proverbs is in the prophetic era an anachronism.

The written records of their teaching are entirely explicable [and then only explicable] when regarded as the product of the prophetic movement, but not as contemporaneous with it. "It is scarcely any longer necessary" (is Kuenen, perhaps, too sanguine here?) "to protest against the one-sided opinion that Judaism can be fully characterised by the single word 'legalism'" (p. 92).

More precisely, Kuenen places the Proverbs, as also Job, in the later Persian period, *i.e.*, between Nehemiah and Alexander the Great, or, in other words, in the hundred years lying between 430 and 330 B.C. He denies that traces of Greek influence are to be found in any portion of the book, not even in i.-ix., either in the personification of wisdom, or in the figures of the "strange woman" (pp. 97-99). The "strange woman" is not a foreigner (against Oort), and the repeated warnings not to succumb to her temptations are no reason for abandoning the Persian or adopting the Grecian era. I am still inclined to think that Kuenen's cautious disinclination to make any part of the Old Testament later than is absolutely necessary is in this case somewhat overdone. In 1884 Professor Cheyne (who has since changed his mind), while defending the pre-Exilic date of i.-ix., wrote:—"Before the time of Sirach, I cannot find a period in the post-Exilic history in which the life of Jerusalem can have much resembled the picture given of it in Prov. i.-ix." (*Job and Solomon*, p. 168). Perhaps, however, an earlier date in the Grecian period is sufficient to account for it. If so, the personification of wisdom might indicate the first beginnings of the influence of Hellenic thought. At the same time I must not conceal the fact that Kuenen regards such an assumption as both improbable and wholly unnecessary. Here are his exact words:—

Even if we put the author of i. 7-ix. very near to 200 B.C.—a date to which, in fact, Holtzmann is inclined—even then scarcely a century had elapsed since the conquest of Palestine by the Greeks. Is it probable that the influence of Greek philosophy had already made itself so powerfully felt? Surely not! The improbability becomes greater if we

¹ Kuenen is referring to Holtzmann in *Stade, Geschichte*, II., p. 296 f.

place the writer, say, about 250 B.C.—a date, indeed, beyond which the difference between him and Ecclesiastes, his silence respecting the Scribes as compared with the express encomium of them by Sirach, and the absence of Greek expressions in his language almost forbid us to go. The supposition of Greek influence seems to me in the second place wholly unnecessary towards the explanation of the author's thought. His mode of thought is indeed peculiar, but not *so* peculiar that it needs must be deduced from abroad. It is very firmly rooted in purely Israelite or Jewish ideas. Cp. H. Schultz, *Alttestamentliche Theologie*, p. 477 *f*, 548 *f*. (ed. 4). Yahveh's wisdom is apparent in the process and result of creation (Is. xl. 12-14, 28; Jer. x. 12-14; li. 15-17); he gives of his wisdom to man (Is. xi. 2; xxviii. 23-29; cp. Exodus xxx. 3, etc.). The writer of Job—whom Stade also assigns to the pre-Hellenic era (*Geschichte*, II., p. 244, and elsewhere)—although he differs from the author of Proverbs i.-ix. as to the attainability of wisdom by man, yet moves with him in the same circle of thoughts (cp. not only xxxviii. *f*, but also xxviii. 20 *f*, and also ix. 4, xii. 17). In the personification of wisdom our author goes further than his predecessors or contemporaries, but he does this as a *poet*, and not upon the basis of any other conception of wisdom's nature which was conveyed to him by Hellenism. The explanation which lies ready to hand need surely not be looked for in the distance (p. 99).¹

Job is assigned by Kuenen to about the year 400 B.C. It may be questioned whether this is late enough. Kuenen notices the remarkable parallelism between Job v. 17 and Proverbs iii. 11, and also between Job xv. 7 and Proverbs viii. 25, upon which second passage Cornill has laid special stress. In both cases he argues that the priority lies clearly with Proverbs. If, however, Proverbs grew up *after* Ezra, and i.-ix. is its latest portion, then i.-ix., on Kuenen's own showing and admission, could hardly have been earlier than 350, and we shall therefore be compelled to place Job in the half-century between 350 and 300. Cornill even ventures to say "about 250," and to add, "Dazu stimmt auch der sprachgeschichtliche, eigenthümlich 'aramaeo-arabische' Character des Buches." Is this really so? Both the language of Job and Proverbs urgently need a fresh detailed examination. Kuenen says that an adequate investigation of Proverbs from this point of view is still a desideratum, and I am inclined to think that, in spite of the authorities quoted on p. 162, this is also the case as regards Job. When will a sufficiently equipped scholar address himself to the task? Is there no Englishman capable and willing, or must it be left to the inevitable German?

Some of Kuenen's most peculiar merits come out strongly in his

¹ Yet Kuenen allows a considerable indirect influence of Greek philosophy on the author of Koheleth, whose date he fixes at 200 (p. 197, and below).

chapter on Job ; a few may perhaps be inclined to add, his limitations also. There is no part of the Bible for which sobriety is more needful ; none where the temptation towards *hineinlesen* is more powerful, or has more frequently been succumbed to.

In dealing with its tendency and purpose Kuenen points out how the divergent views of the critics have largely arisen according as attention has been mainly paid to the prologue or to the body of the book, or as it has been attempted to combine the supposed objects of either. The prologue, as he says, would seem to suggest the following " theme " : The just man tried by trouble and suffering, and given the opportunity to prove the sincerity and disinterestedness of his piety. The conversations between Job and his friends, on the other hand, are concerned with another subject, though related to the former : the sufferings of the righteous in connection with the justice of God. And this second subject Kuenen, like Driver, Davidson, and many other scholars, rightly holds to be the real purpose of the book. He shows that the conversations are quite out of line with the view that the exhibition of piety strengthened and purified by suffering, is the main object of the whole poem. Some commentators and critics have seen—

In the coming of the friends, and in their conversations with Job, a continuation of the trials of his piety, to which also he does not yield. But is this correct? The bearing of the friends, their want of true sympathy, their exhortations, and, finally, their open accusations, are, indeed, an aggravation of Job's sufferings. He might, in consequence of their attitude, have abandoned the belief in his own innocence ; but this belief is quite a different thing to that integrity and disinterestedness which Satan had called in question. The friends, far from wanting, like his wife, to lead him to unfaithfulness towards God, urge him to contrition and repentance. Can that be called a trial, and be put on a line with the testing which is spoken of in i. 11 ? . . . The appearance of Yahveh serves not to put Job to trial, but to put him to shame (p. 122).

Nor is any improvement really discernible between the Job of chapter iii. and the Job of chapter xxxi. Indeed in xxxi. 35—37, Job is as presumptuous as before in offering to appear before God, and to plead his innocence. " With the supposition that any light concerning his suffering had come to him, this conclusion of the monologue in xxix.—xxxi. is wholly inconsistent " (p. 127). When Job at last confesses his ignorance in the presence of God, he has after all merely returned to the position he took up at first in the famous apophthegm i. 22. Indeed the sharp contrast between that noble expression of unconditioned and unquestioning resignation to the will of God and the great curse in chapter iii. (and with Job's subsequent attitude throughout the dialogue), is one of the reasons

which has led certain critics to doubt the unity of the book and the authenticity of the prologue. Kuenen strongly defends both. If, as he says, the prologue contained a real *explanation* of Job's sufferings, which was never again alluded to in all the rest of the book, then its authenticity could scarcely be defended. But this is erroneous. The object of the prologue is to give a pictorial and dramatic setting to the fact of Job's integrity and undeserved calamities, it does not *explain* them. You have only, says Kuenen :—

To read these verses (i. 6—12 ; ii. 1—7) in their simplicity, without thinking of our very developed notions about suffering and its meaning, and you will readily recognise that the writer never thought of giving there an actual *explanation* of Job's calamity. His main object is no other than to show Job's innocence and uprightness in the clearest possible light (p. 139). [The rest of the note should be very carefully studied too ; it seems to me to be almost unanswerably strong.]

The only question is whether the contrast between i. 21 and iii. 3 *seq.*, is not, as was mooted above, too sharp for a single author. Kuenen's view of the dramatic purpose of the prologue—to start the problem that a very righteous man may undergo suffering—does a good deal to relieve or explain it, but is perhaps not entirely sufficient. Kuenen adds two other incidental notes : first, that the long silence of the friends is intended to show that they already recognised in Job's sufferings the retribution of God, and that this silent accusation stimulated Job's opening outburst (p. 109) ; and, secondly, that the author was bound to emphasise Job's innocence and piety, in order to form a suitable motive for the arguments of his friends (p. 136, *fin.*).

The lesson of Job is that Yahveh's will is inscrutable ; man's business is to rest in the wisdom of his rule, unaccountable though it may sometimes be. Palliations of suffering are indeed admitted. Though less markedly than the writer of the speeches of Elihu, the author of Job does also recognise that suffering may be a discipline (*e.g.*, v. 18 *seq.*) ; but even if he were the author of Elihu's speeches, he could not mean to urge that this conception of suffering and calamity was the *explanation* of the miseries of Job. For even in Elihu the disciplinary chastisement is not merely a means to improve a man, to bring out his highest qualities, but it is a real purification of preceding iniquity, a healing of actual sinfulness ; whereas the whole point of Job's suffering is that it has been inflicted upon an innocent man of supreme and exceptional virtue (p. 146, 150).

What exactly, it may also be asked, is the author's own attitude towards the doctrine of divine retribution ? Did he deny that suffer-

ing is the consequence of sin, and yet end his story by bringing in the old "punishment and reward" theory over again? Kuenen maintains the authenticity of the epilogue as well as of the prologue. He first of all points out that the author is really in earnest in his rejection of the old theory as a universally applicable rule. In this respect he stands above the writer of the 49th, or even of the 73rd Psalm, about whom Kuenen makes the acute remark, that "in spite of the difficulties which it raises—difficulties which do not escape them, but which they even fully emphasised—the writers of these psalms still fully accept the theory of retribution. Their manifest struggle is not to modify the doctrine, but to maintain it" (p. 129). Nevertheless the author of Job does not desire to combat the doctrine as a whole, but only "to protest against its applicability to every actual and possible case. He attacked those who thought that it always afforded a decisive and valid explanation of human fortune" (p. 127). Thus he probably believed that, though the rule was not invariable, "God often—perhaps one might even say usually—regulates the lot of man in accordance with man's moral condition. There are, indeed, cases where this accordance is wanting; it is on that account not fitting that we should presumptuously sit in judgment upon every sufferer, or estimate the meaning of every instance of prosperity, but rather it becomes us humbly to confess our ignorance and to rest in God's inexplicable wisdom. But these instances are not the rule, but exceptions. Was then our author bound in the case of the righteous Job to press and maintain the exception to the end? It was much more natural that at the close he should allow the rule to come again into force. Remember how much and how heavily Job had suffered already; was that suffering not quite enough to serve as proof of the reality of the actual problem? If the author had at the end brought no change into Job's circumstances and condition, he would not only have painfully affected his readers, but have represented his own convictions in an exaggerated and unjust manner" (p. 137). This seems to me a very successful defence of the consistency of the epilogue.

Thus, as against such a critic as Cheyne, Kuenen is strongly conservative, maintaining the unity of Job. Elihu's speeches, indeed, with most modern commentators, he rejects. Will Cornill be convinced by his careful arguments (pp. 145-154)? He is doubtful about the corrupt chapter xxiv., and also about xxvi. 2-14, and is only confident in the rejection of xxvii. 7-23 and xxviii., which sections can only with the utmost difficulty be retained.

In the final chapter, on Ecclesiastes, Kuenen has scarcely modified the position which he took up in the first edition of the *Onderzoek* (1865), and in an article in the *Theologisch Tijdschrift* of 1883. The

date is fixed at about 200 B.C., and an *indirect* influence of Hellenism is fully acknowledged. Koheleth follows no particular system of Greek philosophy, but "for the complete explanation of his book we must certainly assume that he had heard of, and been deeply impressed by, the Greek philosophers and their theories" (pp. 197, fin.). As in 1865 and 1883, so also in 1892, Kuenen is a warm defender of the integrity of the whole book, and especially of the authenticity of the Epilogue. Whether his cautious and conservative arguments on this head are really convincing may well be doubted (cp. for the Epilogue, Driver, Introduction, fourth edition, p. 449, n. 1). It will, however, be more fruitful to return to and examine them when Paul Haupt's translation and commentary of Koheleth are before us.

It is unnecessary to say anything more of Kuenen's book as a whole. Eulogy is impertinent and superfluous. It may, however, be added that the first two volumes (1, the Law and the Historical books; 2, the Prophets) have already been translated into German, so that there is no excuse for their not being studied by anyone who would desire to know or write about the Old Testament. This opening portion of the third volume will, I believe, also be shortly available in a German rendering. It is grievous to think that the great critic was not spared to finish his greatest work. Especially must we lament the loss of the chapter on the Psalms. For the Psalter, in more than one respect, has now become a "burning question," and we would fain know how Kuenen would have dealt with it. No one will regret this incompleteness of Kuenen's third volume more than Professor Cheyne, who has himself so largely contributed to the prominent position now occupied by the Psalter in Biblical inquiry. An occasional remark such as the acceptance of the theory that some Psalms, before they were included in the Psalter, underwent modifications (p. 47), gives us an idea how interesting Kuenen's treatment of the subject would probably have been. May his friend, Professor Matthes, complete the work in the author's spirit. Only the untranslatable German word *Wehmuth* expresses the feeling with which one says good-bye to Abraham Kuenen.

C. G. MONTEFIORE.

January 17th, 1893.