

and in the midst of them One who is also, and supremely, Man; visible, palpable, no illusion; the risen, the ever-living Jesus.

Let us turn away thankful, if we have again indeed seen HIM; Him living then, and therefore "alive for evermore"; alive now, loving, watching, present, now. I well remember, though long years have passed, how at a time of great mental and spiritual trial I found by God's great mercy peculiar help in just this way from this very scene, as it invited me to realize afresh this mysterious but actual personal life and presence of Jesus Christ.

There, in the sight of Him, is peace. To see and know Him living, living after He had for us "poured out His soul unto death," is the solution of doubts, the banishment of fears, the conquest of passions, the strength of the soul. From amidst that group of disciples He still says, to us to-day, "Fear not; you indeed are mortal, sinful, feeble, helpless; but I am the First and the Last; I am the Living One. I was dead, but behold I am alive for ever, alive for you, with you, in you, to the endless ages."

Jesus, such His love and power,  
Such His presence dear,  
Everywhere and every hour  
With His own is near;  
With the glorified at rest  
Far in Paradise,  
With the pilgrim saints distress  
'Neath these cloudier skies;  
With the ransom'd soul that flew  
From the cross to heaven,  
With the Emmaus travellers two,  
With the lake-borne seven.  
Lord, Thy promise Thou wilt keep,  
Thine shall dwell with Thee,  
And, awaking or asleep,  
Thus together be.

H. C. G. MOULE.

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#### ART. IV.—THREE RECENT HISTORIES OF ISRAEL.<sup>1</sup>

THE movement of Christian thought in the last few years has resulted in placing Old Testament questions very much in the forefront. Either in deference to argument or yielding to the drift of the time, men of all shades of Christian opinion have been repeating the demand that old views require

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<sup>1</sup>This article is adapted from a paper read before the Cambridge University Clerical Society in 1890.

to be modified or restated, that science and reason alike claim a relaxation of the restrictions which ecclesiastical tradition put upon the conception of Israelite history, and the treatment of Old Testament literature. Unfortunately it is less often stated in what way modification is to find expression. Unfortunately, too, the cry to "move with the time" is rarely accompanied by any definite step in a new direction. Talking without action produces on Christian thought the same deadening effect that it produces upon the mind. "Going over the theory of virtue in one's thoughts, talking well, and drawing fine pictures of it; this is so far from necessarily or certainly conducing to form a habit of it in him who thus employs himself, that it may harden the mind in a contrary course, and render it gradually more insensible." Bishop Butler's *dictum* respecting "passive impressions" applies only too truly to the attitude of many towards the Biblical problems which perplex us. Satisfied with echoing the cry for progress, they have no intention of acting upon it. The "passive impression" grows weaker by repetition. They are hardly conscious that their attitude is neither that of candour nor of courage. Anxious and thoughtful laymen, who feel weighing upon them the same pressure of intellectual movement, who look eagerly to see its influence upon their appointed teachers in religion, cannot fail to entertain the meanest opinion of those who ostensibly approve of a modification of traditional views, but will not so much as lift a finger in order to give practical proof of their sincerity.

There are, of course, those who deny that any modification of traditional opinion, in respect of the books of the Old Testament, is at all necessary. To them the spirit of the age is as the spirit of Antichrist; and to move in religious thought is almost tantamount to the negation of religion itself. There were many such also in the sixteenth century, tenacious of prejudice, distrustful of "the New Learning," suspicious of scholarship and criticism, and confident in the authority of ecclesiastical tradition in matters of science and history, no less than of Scriptural interpretation.

But the great mass of believers are in their hearts convinced that the forces of Christian intellect must either march with the movement of the age or renounce their claim to control the conscience of the world. They are prepared to face all facts, strong in their faith that the Lord will provide. They only wish to be honest; they only wish not to place stumbling-blocks in the way of the weak or the inexperienced; they only insist that man-made tradition upon the history of the letter of Holy Writ is not to be placed on the same level of doctrinal importance with the essentials of the Christian revelation.

They are, however, very liable, in an exaggeration of open-mindedness, to be dragged to an opposite extreme of promiscuous concession.

At a time when men's minds are thus peculiarly impressionable on questions of the Old Testament, it may not be inopportune to approach them from a somewhat less pugnacious quarter than is usual. A reference to three important histories of Israel which have recently been published on the Continent may not be without instruction and interest. They will at least serve to indicate the opposition towards which we may be drifting between the possible line of advance in Christian criticism and the line of irreconcilable and arbitrary speculativeness.

The first of these histories that we shall notice is that by Professor Bernhard Stade, of Giessen, the well-known Hebrew scholar and accomplished editor of the *Zeitschrift f. d. Alttestamentliche Wissenschaft*. His "History of the People of Israel" came out in parts in Oncken's Series of Universal History (Berlin). The first six numbers (1881-1886), constituting vol. i., a book containing 711 closely-printed large octavo pages, brought the history down to the period of the exile. Of vol. ii. (1888) Stade contributed the first 269 pages, dealing with the history to the beginning of the Greek period, the remainder down to the destruction of Jerusalem by Titus being written by Oscar Holtzmann.

Nothing has been spared to make this important work complete and attractive. Maps, illustrations, facsimiles are freely introduced: not only the history, but the religion, the literature, the antiquities of Israel are discussed at length. In scope and pretension it takes the lead of all previous histories.

In matters of criticism Stade is well-known as one of the foremost among the extremist school. No one can deny that in his treatment of the literature of the Old Testament he is bold and uncompromising in the application of his canons of criticism. In accordance with the principles which he lays down, he is compelled to deal in the most summary fashion with the earlier pages of the biblical narrative. Not only the Patriarchs, but even the sojourn in Egypt (ed. 1) are relegated to the limbo of untrustworthy fable. The personality of Moses scarcely survives this process, and only emerges from the gloom in a shadowy, hesitating way. The religion of Israel is considered as possibly having taken its rise in that obscure period; but the proper history of the nation is made to date from the beginnings of the monarchy.

It is the merit of Stade's work that he is so profoundly im-

pressed with the function of Israel in the history of the world as the originator of pure religion. With real enthusiasm and intense seriousness of purpose, the historian follows out his investigation into the religion of Israel, tracing it from the seed of Jehovah worship, in the mists of the nomadic period, following it through the triumph of the earlier prophets over Baal worship and the establishment of a national Jehovah worship, until at last the ideal of the prophets becomes stereotyped in the legalism of Ezra and the Scribes.

As might be expected from one of his school of criticism, he has no doubt that the mass of the priestly legislation is post-exilic, and that the description of the Tabernacle is a literary fiction, invented in imitation of the plan of the Temple. Similarly the theophany on Sinai is treated as an imaginative picture, expanding in accordance with the teaching of later times the tradition which accredited the rise of a purer belief to the influence of Moses or the Kenite clan, of which Stade considers Moses may have been a member. This heritage of purer belief, evolved out of the ancestor-worship of yet more remote prehistoric times, at first a faint spark amid the general blackness of degraded and demoralizing superstitions, was fanned into flame by the intellectual influence, the untiring zeal, and the authoritative office of Israel's prophethood.

Of Rénan's "History of Israel" we have at present two volumes,<sup>1</sup> which have appeared in an English translation (Chapman and Hall). The first volume (1888) is divided into two books, book i. being entitled "The Beni-Israel in the Nomad state down to their Settlement in the land of Canaan"; book ii., "The Beni-Israel as fixed tribes, from the occupation of the country of Canaan to the definitive establishment of the kingdom of David." The second volume (1889) is also divided into two books, book i., "The One Kingdom," and book ii. "The Two Kingdoms," the history being brought down to the overthrow of the Northern Kingdom.

The two volumes together would fill about half of one of Stade's volumes. Like all that Rénan writes, there is much in this instalment of his history which is interesting and suggestive in illustration of the Biblical narrative. With his facile style and wide knowledge of Semitic literature, it could hardly have been otherwise. But his repellent tone of self-assurance, his frequent flippancy, and not seldom his despicable moral taste make it almost an impossibility to read his volumes with patience.

From his way of referring to questions of criticism, we are

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<sup>1</sup> The third volume has been published since this was written.

inclined to agree with the judgment of an acute observer, that Rénan's criticism savours of intuition rather than of research. In his preface he says, in a somewhat off-hand manner (p. xxi.), "During the last twenty years more especially, the problems relating to the history of Israel have been dissected with rare penetration by Reuss, Graf, Kuenen, Nöldeke, Wellhausen and Stade. I assume that my readers are familiar with the works of these eminent men. They will find in them the explanation of a number of points which I could not treat in detail without repeating what has already been said by these writers." He also recommends his readers to study "Dillmann on the Pentateuch," but gives no sort of hint that such a study might very possibly lead to different results from those accepted by Wellhausen and Stade. We are no doubt tempted to do him an injustice, and to suppose his methods superficial and wanting in seriousness. His tread is too light, his movements too agile; he is, in a word, ill-suited to the heavy-marching order of the German scholars.

Although he starts with the general assumption that no incident in Israelite history before the time of David has the support of any trustworthy evidence (vol. i., Intro., p. xvi.), he is able to enjoy the freedom from any hard and fast rules, and exercises his privilege by describing the nomad life of the early Israelites out of his own imagination, aided by his acquaintance with Arabic literature and hints supplied by the Book of Genesis. The picture is graphically drawn, and many of his inductions are ingenious in the extreme. He is pleased, we are glad to observe, to allow that the Israelites sojourned in Egypt, and to grant the probability that they were led by a man named Moses. But the arbitrary manner in which he selects some materials and rejects others in his game of history-building, may be exemplified by the following passage, which has been taken almost at random: "Among the fables with which this legend teems none is more improbable than that of a pursuit of the fugitives by the Egyptians, ending in a hopeless disaster to Pharaoh's army. Owing to the dynastic weakness of Egypt, the rule of the sovereigns was little more than nominal in the Isthmus, and a fugitive who had got beyond the Bitter Lakes was certain of his freedom."

His view of Israelite religion will be best understood from his contention that Jehovah-worship is undistinguishable from the religions of neighbouring tribes until the period of Elijah and Elisha. His description of the Hebrew Jehovah is coarse and repulsive; the wilful manner in which he gives the most material meaning to words of ordinary poetical metaphor is only intelligible on the supposition of an unworthy "animus."

The real form of Jahveh, in fact, was never human. He was a kind of dragon, roaring thunder, vomiting flame, causing the tempest to howl; he was the universal "rouah" under a globated form, a kind of condensed electric mass. . . . Sometimes two large nostrils were dilated over the smoke of the sacrifice in order to inhale it. On other occasions the God was seen to ascend from the flame of the sacrifice. . . . He was particularly quarrelsome. He was to be met with in the deserted parts of the country which he preferred; he attempted to kill you, he thirsted after your blood. Or else one fancied that one was struggling with him in a nightmare. One perspired and exhausted oneself against an unknown force. This lasted all night long until day broke. Then one awoke enervated, having struggled against Jahveh or his Maleak.

We have given this repulsive extract at some length. Our own judgment upon this and similar passages is that they vulgarly and perversely materialize the simple language of the patriarchal narrative. In their gratuitous travesty of Hebrew religious metaphor they remind us of a style too familiar, alas! in atheistic leaflets written by violent and uneducated men, but inconceivable from the pen of any man of poetic discernment or refined taste. The passage which is quoted above will enable readers of *THE CHURCHMAN* to decide whether prejudice against such a work is not justified.

We need not expend many more words upon this book. As might, perhaps, have been expected, Rénan depicts David in the blackest colours, and concludes the first volume with a sneer, which reveals that his real purpose in throwing stones at the person of David is to cast ridicule on the faith of those whose trust is in "great David's greater Son." We learn from these pages how grievously Ahab has been calumniated by "the Jahveist historians"; that he was "a remarkable sovereign, brave, intelligent, moderate, devoted to civilized ideas." Describing the conflict between the prophets and the dynasty of Omri, he asserts that "in the struggle between these demoniacs and the monarch, the latter was usually in the right." We feel that a writer is reckless of his dignity when he compares a prophet to "a sandwich-man" in the streets. For the lack of reverence we find but an indifferent substitute in the inventiveness, which can, *e.g.*, describe minutely the mechanism of a little instrument called by the Israelites "Urim and Thummim," which had hitherto baffled the curiosity and the researches of scholars, before this history appeared.

The first volume of Kittel's "History of the Hebrews" (Gotha), which appeared in 1888, deals with the history down to the period of the Judges. This little work offers a striking contrast to both the histories which we have just been noticing: It is absolutely free from pretentiousness of any kind. Its

style is simple and solid; its methods are dry and scholarly. It is a book for students, not for the general reader.

It opens with an introduction, containing a useful sketch of recent Pentateuchal criticism, and concluding with a dissertation upon the country, soil, climate, and fauna of Palestine. In the history proper Kittel's process of investigation is methodical, and at first sight cumbersome; it is certainly not popular. He breaks ground by an inquiry into the available literary materials. For this purpose he goes into the problem of Pentateuchal criticism, and discusses dispassionately the age and relative priority of the component elements. Having arrived at certain definite conclusions, he examines one by one the form and substance of the tradition preserved in the different documents; he then by a process of comparison endeavours to determine the nucleus of historical material.

He applies these methods to the age of the patriarchs, and then to the life of Moses and the wanderings in the wilderness, supplementing his inquiry by a special investigation of the Mosaic period and the historical character of the lawgiver himself. Passing on to the Book of Joshua, he deals with it in a less searching manner; but it is only after an analysis of the text that he proceeds to review the main incidents narrated in the book.

It cannot be doubted that Kittel's work must prove ponderous and unattractive in the estimation of that exacting and fastidious person, the general reader; but to the special student it offers peculiar advantages. The ground is well cleared in advance before a step forward is taken. The continuity and original independence of the different documents are exposed to view. Their individuality can be appreciated; and the claim put forward that the evidence of the Pentateuch gives a fourfold testimony, and not a single voice, is made at any rate intelligible, if not convincing.

Kittel belongs to the school of moderate critics, which we associate with the names of Riehm, König, Dillmann, and Baudissin, which in England is so ably represented by Canon Cheyne and Canon Driver, and from which we look for ever-increasing support to the cause of truth in the Church of Christ, in their union of free and fearless scholarship with the fullest recognition of the claims of a Divine revelation. Accepting in its main outline the distribution of the Hexateuch into its component documents, Kittel and his school differ widely from the position taken up by Stade as to the value of the evidence of the early books upon the primitive history of Israel, and as to the recognition of the existence of the priestly legislation before the age of the exile. Thus, while Kittel is quite prepared to admit the infusion of later legend into

the patriarchal and Mosaic narrative, he maintains stoutly the personality of the patriarchs and the historical character of the narrative both of the sojourn in Egypt and of the wonders of the exodus. Again, while allowing that the details of the tabernacle possibly reproduce the characteristics of a later and more solid structure, he feels that the evidence is convincing that the early Mosaic worship centred round the ark of the covenant and the tent of the congregation.

Putting aside from consideration the more popular and less scientific work of Rénan, let us take the histories by Stade and Kittel as illustrating the treatment of Israelite history by the extreme and the moderate schools of criticism respectively. Perhaps we are not at first much attracted by either. It is natural that we should be startled and repelled by Stade's sweeping and arbitrary treatment of the literary problem. But there is no trifling in his tone, as in Rénan's. There is intense earnestness, and intense sympathy with the religious problem; there is keen effort after mental identification with the times and customs which are portrayed; there is common-sense and reasonableness of historical judgment, which save him from giving way to the ridiculous outbursts of Rénan. It is natural, again, that we should be repelled by Kittel's dry and graduated methods. But his tone is sober, reverent, and candid. He concedes nothing without weighing the reasonableness of the concession. He takes nothing for granted. He takes infinite pains to examine the evidence for and against each controverted point.

By comparing these two critical histories of Israel, we shall be able approximately to discern the amount of agreement and difference in matters of principle between these two scholars and between the opinions which they fairly represent.

Both scholars, it goes without saying, are agreed that a history of Israel must rest upon a perfectly free and unprejudiced use of the extant materials; that to the historian the books of the Old Testament must be as other books of antiquity for purposes of criticism and research.

Both are agreed in recognising in Christianity the goal of Israel's development. Both are agreed in accepting the compilatory origin of the historical books of the Old Testament, and differ only in details as to the correct identification of the original documents. Both are agreed that the aim of the Hebrew narrative is not so much to give an exhaustive and consecutive history of the nation, as to record the origin and progress of its religious life; that religious teaching, rather than annalistic completeness, being the purpose of the records: these describe epochs in the progress of the national religion



rather than furnish any complete chronicle of national events. Both are agreed in recognising a gradual development in religious knowledge, or, as we should prefer to say, in the Divine revelation vouchsafed in and through the chosen people.

Turning next to the points of difference, we need not here do more than mention that in the important, though technical, question of the antiquity of the priestly legislation there is a grave disagreement between them. We only now call attention to two subjects, involving most important principles, upon which the difference of opinion between these two historians and their respective schools seems to be of vital importance. The one is literary, and relates to the credit to be attached to the ancient documents which have preserved the earliest traditions of the history; the other is religious, and relates to the philosophical principle that should interpret the progress of religious thought in the Israelite people.

(a) Stade, as has been hinted above, could scarcely repose less confidence than he does on the Israelite traditions of the pre-monarchical age. He starts with the accepted principle that the credibility of a narrative varies in inverse ratio to the number of the years between the occurrence and its written record; the longer the interval, the smaller is the credibility of the narrative, because the greater the scope for exaggeration, distortion and invention. He then seems to make the rash assumption that the latest chronological notice in a work represents the full measure of its historical value; and, on this hypothesis, has no difficulty in making short work of the evidential value of the reputedly earlier historical books of the Old Testament. No history, he contends, is trustworthy which does not rest on contemporary or almost contemporary sources. The earliest writings in the Old Testament which satisfy this test are the prophets Amos, Hosea, Micah and Isaiah. These, then, he takes to be the norm by which he can test the credibility of all tradition earlier in date, and from their century he feels he can move forward confidently. On these prophetic writings he first finds himself standing, as it were, on firm ground; any earlier traditions are in his opinion only accidentally embedded in later legend. Old Testament history, he contends, is not the history of Israel, but only one aspect of the nation's history, constructed so as to harmonize with the later stage of the religion of Jehovah. The amplification of the history, superimposed by the hand of priests and prophets for the sake of religious edification, has concealed from view the true structure of the history. The object of the historian is to disentangle the few threads of real antiquity from the accumulated conglomerate of later times.

Kittel has no hesitation in admitting that the most ancient

traditions of Israel have been transmitted to us with the religious colouring of a later time. But he retains a much more tenacious hold of the historical outline of the patriarchal and Mosaic period, which, under Stade's treatment, threatens to vanish away. He claims in effect that the latest revision of a work does not in fairness present the only chronological standard of its historicity. The value of a writing as evidence is undoubtedly impaired by the accretion of another century. But it is not destroyed. And it is the province of modern criticism to furnish such an analysis as will in some measure disintegrate a composite record into its more ancient and more recent elements. Kittel is convinced that the application of such sober historical analysis leaves us with a residuum of trustworthy material containing a not incomplete record of the beginnings of the Israelite people. Where there is agreement between the different documents out of which the extant literature is composed, there the historian moves with greater confidence; where only a single thread of tradition preserves the record, there the evidence is proportionately weaker or requires to be supported from other sources. In other words, the historical value of tradition must not be hastily sacrificed on account of the composite structure of its extant literary form.

(b) The other point of difference between these two historians is of even more profound importance, for it is concerned with the governing principle of the religious development in the people of Israel.

Stade, if we mistake not, is of opinion that the faith of Israel had its roots in the fetish, ghost, or ancestor worship of the early Semitic races; that the first germ of something more noble may have been due to the influence of a Moses; but that the chief factors in the evolution from a degraded materialism into a pure and spiritual religion were the prophets of the age, whose chief representatives are known to us as Elijah and Elisha. This process of evolution reached its climax in the system of worship elaborated by Ezra and his contemporaries, who hoped by means of a stereotyped symbolism to give perpetuity to the triumphant Jehovistic religion of the prophets. The traditional idea of a complete revelation in the days of Moses, covering the requirements of all moral, religious and social life, and detailing a complete scheme of worship and ritual for the embodiments of these precepts, is rejected root and branch as unhistorical, as the happy fiction of a late phase of Judæan religion. To use a metaphor, the curve of development, it is contended, is uniform and continuous from the elemental to the final stage, from the earliest conception of a Divine Being to the authoritative

enforcement of Levitical Judaism in the name of the God of Israel. It is claimed that the conception which places at the outset of Israelite religion the most complete scheme of morality and the most ornate system of worship, contradicts the recognised order of development in all known religions; and that the best explanation of the laws in the Pentateuch is found in the theory that the Book of the Covenant (Ex. xx.-xxiii.), the Deuteronomist, and the Priestly writings correspond respectively to the epochs of the Prophets, of the Exile, and of the foundation of Judaism by Ezra.

Kittel, so far as he touches upon these points, keeps well within the bounds of historical probability. Strongly insisting upon a line of development in religious thought, he is very far from demanding that it should maintain a uniform progress. He adheres to the view of a definite revelation, and deems that the testimony is irrefragable, which points to the life and work of Moses as the supreme initial epoch of Israelite religion, as well as of Israelite nationality. He points out, however, that there is a law of decay as well as of growth, and that the reproofs administered to the people by the prophets Hosea and Amos for faithlessness, irreligion, and disobedience, presuppose the existence of a pure worship of Jehovah at a much more remote age than the days of Elijah. So far as the laws are concerned, he readily grants that whether Covenant Laws, Priestly or Deuteronomic, the form in which we have them carries with it evident signs of revision and later accretion; while alleged differences between, for instance, Deuteronomic and Priestly laws are the natural result of a comparison between a hortatory people's law-book and the regulations of the priestly class. Most emphatically it is contended that, granting the great fact of a Divine revelation (whether vouchsafed little by little, or at once in complete manifestation), we must acknowledge the inevitable strength of the temptation to relapse into the degradations of Canaanite worship. Surely this tendency to relapse into lower forms of religion is not rendered more improbable by its being in agreement with the traditional representation of Israelite history.

We have now carried far enough the comparison between the two schools of Biblical criticism represented in the treatment of the early history of Israel by Stade and Kittel. It is possible that what has been said will only deepen the conviction of some of our readers that the methods of modern criticism stand condemned by the differences which divide its principal representatives. We will venture, however, on the basis of this inquiry, to add a few words to illustrate the position of those who, while convinced that the extreme school of criticism are not, so far, warranted by the evidence to hand, are equally

convinced that blank acquiescence in traditional views would be as incompatible with honesty as it seems to be irreconcilable with reasonable scholarship.

It seems to be a supposition neither irreverent nor unreasonable, that the Hebrew Scriptures, although the inspired instrument of revelation, and ordained to prepare the way for the coming of the Saviour of the world, should nevertheless be compassed with the imperfections belonging to their age, and incidental to the methods of their composition. To be clothed with Divine grace is not the deification but the sanctification of our earthly powers; and there is no sanctification of human work, which either separates it in character from the generation that it serves, or severs it from the limitations and imperfections that it has inherited. Similarly, any theory which admits in any degree, however limited, the principle of the incorporation, by compilation, of a variety of miscellaneous writings into a book that was received into the sacred canon first of the Jews, and afterwards of the Christian Church, must lead us to expect that the Divine message lies in its spiritual teaching as a composite whole, rather than in any absolute perfection inherent in its component parts, or in its literary form. The familiar difficulties, whether of Genesis or of Chronicles, are inseparable from the human conditions of their compilation. The Divine Spirit which overruled the selection of these chosen witnesses for Revelation neither purged them first from the weaknesses of their origin nor protected them against defects of human treatment in the process of compilation or in the stages of subsequent revision. The message is Divine, but not the messenger. The lamp of God's Word burns true and bright, though the oil be prepared by human hands and be unprotected from the dust of human industry. The prophet and the scribe, even more than the Apostle who "was caught up into Paradise, and heard unspeakable words which it is not lawful for a man to utter" may say that in their case God's "power is made perfect in weakness. Most gladly, therefore, will I rather glory in my weaknesses, that the strength of Christ may rest upon me" (2 Cor. xii. 5, 9).

To take only one concrete example, it is surely not unreasonable to acknowledge the presence of national religious colouring in the presentation of historical facts. The decree of Cyrus for the restoration of the Jews is recorded as if expressed in the language of an ardent believer in Jehovah. But Cyrus was no Jewish proselyte: he was not even, as recent discoveries seem to show, a monotheist like Darius the Persian, but, on the contrary, an idolater and a devout polytheist. In spite of this, however, our confidence in the

Biblical story is not shaken. It would rather have been open to suspicion, if its tone had been free from the national leaning of its composers.

So far as the doctrine of development is concerned, we gladly recognise its operation in the expansion of religious ideas in Israel respecting the nature of the Deity, the relations of sin and suffering, human responsibility, the future state and the doctrine of the resurrection. But we are quite unable to concede, that the development of religion in Israel is to be explained either in its origin by any theory of spontaneous evolution, or in its progress by any theory of uninterrupted and evenly-continuous expansion. In its origin we require the recognition of Revelation; in its progress we require the recognition of relapses and deviations. It is in the world of religious thought as it is in the physical universe: we desiderate in the most remote time the supreme event. The implanting of the seed of revelation in the chosen family corresponds to the primæval communication of life; and after germination the line of its development is subject to the ordinary retardations and tendencies to degradation arising from the renunciation of common religious responsibilities as in the days of the Judges, or from the aspirations after earthly empire as in the days of a Solomon, or from the externalizing influences of a barren ritual in the days of the prophets.

Touching, lastly, on the question of the priestly legislation, are we not sometimes apt to forget that laws of worship existed in Semitic races before the days of Abraham, and that many an indigenous usage (*e.g.*, circumcision and sacrifice, to mention the most obvious) received not, as we are accustomed to suppose, its origin, but its new and spiritual significance, from the ordinances of Israel's worship? There is nothing elevating in ritual divorced from the true spirit of its symbolism. Levitical ceremonial had many points in common with the pagan worship of Moab or of Edom; and, as the prophets frequently testified, the unspiritual ritualism of the Israelite was not the least among the causes of his spiritual backsliding. So far as the rules, which regulated the life of the priests and the intricacies of public worship, became insufficient for the needs of later generations or altered circumstances, so far we may surely believe they would receive modification and alterations. There is nothing to show that before the age of Ezra variation in ritual or ceremonial was regarded as any very heinous offence. The spirit, not the letter, of such regulations was most insisted on by the prophets. Their preservation would depend on the faithfulness of the priests, to whom was entrusted the

maintenance of the worship, and the decision between the clean and the unclean. The priestly laws are not, therefore, to be confounded with an inviolable charter in the period before the exile. But after the exile the case was altered. The formation of the people into a religious community, the dispersion among the Gentiles, the institution of the synagogue—these and many other causes made it necessary that rules, which had been the rubrics of Levitical ceremony and the heritage of the priestly order, should become the possession of the people at large, the standard of their nationality, and the safeguard of their worship in a foreign land. From that time forward the appeals in literature to the authority of the priestly laws are as frequent as they had previously been rare.

The age of an Ezra is not the age of creative or originating power, but rather of conservative and devout veneration. We expect from it, not the manufacture of new systems, nor the creation of a perfectly harmonious and homogeneous ritual, but the faithful and servile preservation of all that was extant and ancient, regardless of petty divergencies and absorbing apparent contradictions; and in this expectation we are not disappointed.

In these questions, as in certain others, there is plenty of room for latitude of opinion. There is room for the policy of "live and let live." It is better for us who are among the younger labourers in the Church to express our thoughts openly and honestly, and not to conceal them. Let us at least deserve the confidence, if we cannot hope for the approbation, of many who dread criticism. We have no fear of consequences, for Christ is to us, too, all and in all. Our individual views are nothing; we seek only intensely for the truth. We cannot rest in a position that seems to us one of half-truth, or in an attitude that may savour of insincerity towards the brother who has been confronted, and, perhaps, been overthrown, by similar difficulties. Fruitful in joyfullest hope, and true in tenderest consolation, is the thought in which all can rest, that the Saviour of the world has blessed to our usage the sacred food of the Word, which his servants, the prophets and saints of Israel, were privileged to make known unto men. That He condescended thus to make use of the weak work of man's hand that came forth from the storehouse of the family of Israel, conveys to my mind, as it were in a figure, the key to the solution of a great mystery, the reconciliation of the weakness of the letter with the presence and power of the indwelling Spirit.

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