

CHAPTER NINETEEN TESTIMONY OF THE POETICAL BOOKS

Delitzsch assures us that the literature of the time of David and Solomon presupposes the existence of the entire Thora in its present form. He verifies this statement by several quotations, of which the greater part do doubtless show acquaintance with the Pentateuch. Still, we would be greatly mistaken if we considered his argument as decisive. What Delitzsch assigns to the Davidic and Solomonic age, becomes with our present critics the product of a much later time. Reuss supposes Job to have been written about the time of the destruction of the Northern kingdom, before Deuteronomy and the Priest Code were as yet in existence; and that the Song of Solomon was composed shortly after the schism. He declares that his doubts do not go so far as to deny to the period of the Kings the composition of any Psalm whatever. After this magnanimous and liberal concession, he hastens to add that it must be limited to the first division of the Psalter, which originally contained Ps. 3-41. Even the largest part of this is post-Deuteronomic, the whole collection not pre-exilic; and for our present purpose we would retain nothing more than Ps. 2, 18, 20, 21 (45, 46, 49). Probably the Psalter contains no Davidic Psalms at all.

He claims that the Solomonic authorship of not a single line in the Book of Proverbs can be proved. The book, as a whole, was published after the exile. Koheleth (Ecclesiastes) is remanded to the time of the Ptolemies, 200 B.C.

Reuss, however, goes farther, especially with regard to the Psalms, than the very boldest among German doubters have done. Hitzig and Ewald agree on the Davidic origin of at least Ps. 3, 4, 7, 8, 11, 19a. Ewald admits in addition, 2, 20, 21, 24, 29, 32, 110. Hitzig, on the other hand, 9, 10, 12, 13, 15, 16, 17, 19b. Leaving out of the account those Psalms which both Hitzig and Ewald consider as pre-Deuteronomic, we obtain the number of twenty-one Psalms, to which we may safely appeal, without being suspected of traditional prejudice in calling our witnesses.

After all this deduction, our harvest must be scanty. Its power lies, not so much in the number of witnesses as in the unequivocal character of their testimony. A single indisputable mention of the Thora, or reference to it, outweighs many arguments *e silentio*. The former leaves no choice: the latter do.

A most important objection to the newer theory of religious development may be drawn from the deep spiritual conceptions, the lofty moral sentiments, which these Davidic Psalms breathe throughout. A David who was the prototype of the picture drawn by the critics could not have written such hymns. He could by no means have anticipated what lay hidden in the future consciousness of prophetism two centuries after his reign. All the laws of development protest against it. Moreover, there is no trace in his songs of that peculiar reaction against an exaggerated ritual which characterizes the prophets of the ninth and the eighth centuries. The outward is here the clear mirror in which the inward throws its spontaneous reflex. This leads to a twofold observation: 1. When spiritual religion and ceremonial worship conflicted afterwards, this cannot have been the original, normal relation, but must be considered as the result of externalization of the ritual. Thus, the testimony of the prophets, that Israel's religious state was one of apostasy, is verified anew. 2. This spiritual conception of the law as we find it in David cannot be the product of a natural development, but

testifies to a divine origin of both the spirit and the letter. Whether a development of religion by contrasts on the principle of negativity may, or may not, account for the opposition to ceremonies on the part of the prophets, it certainly fails to explain the synthesis of this spiritual appreciation in David. The following passages are noteworthy in this respect Ps. 4:5, *seqq.*, 7:8, 9, *seqq.*, 15, *passim*, 20:3, *seqq.*, 24:3, 4, and especially the whole of 32.

The “judgments” of the LORD are mentioned (10:5); his words (12:6), “his judgments and statutes (18:22). The second part of the nineteenth Psalm speaks of the Thora in a way not different from that in which a Jew after the exile would have done. It is easy to remand all this to Maccabean times; but when even Hitzig concedes the Davidic origin, we may safely say that our critics have no other reason to deny it than an over-anxious regard for their own hypothesis.

Zion is the only legal sanctuary, where God dwells in the center of his people (9:11); the holy temple, a symbol of his heavenly dwelling-place (11:4); the tabernacle, to which only the pure and righteous may ideally approach (15:1, *seqq.*), from whence help is sent in the day of trouble (20:1, 2); his holy place (24:3), from whence the rod of his strength is sent (110:2), where the cherubs are attached to the ark as a symbol of his throne and power (18:10).

It may also be remarked, that in Ps. 7:7 the term עֲדָה occurs, which, according to Wellhausen, can only be understood in connection with the Levitical system, and is therefore post-exilic. The few instances that it occurs in Judges may be set to the account of a redactor, but in a Davidic Psalm this will not do. Perhaps also 110:4 implies a contrast with the Aaronic priesthood.

Ps. 24:4 reminds us of the third commandment in a very striking way. Ps. 4 has several allusions to the very words of the Covenant-law; likewise Ps. 16 (Compare Delitzsch in Luth. Zeitschrift, 1882, Heft vi.).

Neither do references to the historical portions of the Pentateuch fail. Ps. 7:6, קוּמָה, “arise,” and verse 7, שׁוּבָה, “return,” may be compared with Num. 10:35, 36 (Jehovistic); 17:8, אִישׁוֹן בַּת עֵיִן, with Deut. 23:10, אִישׁוֹן עֵינָיו; Ps. 11:6, אֵשׁ וּנְפִרִית, with Gen. 19:24.

Some of the allusions which Delitzsch finds in Proverbs are of no use for our purpose. The “tree and the way of life” are both Jehovistic; so that, when the critics assign a relatively late date to the collection of Proverbs, they lose their value. The comparison of Deut. 6:6, 8, with Prov. 7:3; Lev. 19:36 with Prov. 11:1, has more force.

A connection between Canticles 6:13 and Gen. 32:1, 2, cannot be proved. Neither is it necessary to translate Job 31:33 “as Adam.” But the allusions in Job 31:11 to Lev. 18:17; of ver. 8-12 to Deut. 22:22; of ver. 26-28 to Deut. 17:2-5, can hardly be denied. Even Kuenen calls them far from improbable. And, as we saw, even Reuss thinks that Job is pre-Deuteronomic.