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THE INTEGRITY OF THE LUCAN NARRATIVE OF THE ANNUNCIATION¹

The Lucan narrative of the birth and infancy in Lk. i. 5-ii. 52 is strikingly Jewish and Palestinian both in form and in content.² That narrative contains an attestation of the virgin birth of Christ. But according to the prevailing view among those who deny the historicity of the virgin birth, the idea of the virgin birth was derived from pagan sources. If so, the question becomes acute how such a pagan idea could have found a place just in the most strikingly Jewish and Palestinian narrative in the whole New Testament.

This question has been answered by many modern scholars by a theory of interpolation. It is perfectly true, they say, that Lk. i. 5-ii. 52 is of Palestinian origin; and it is perfectly true that an attestation of the virgin birth now stands in that narrative; but, they say, that attestation of the virgin birth formed no original part of the narrative, but came into it by interpolation.

It would be difficult to exaggerate the importance of this question; indeed we may fairly say that if the interpolation theory is incorrect the most prominent modern reconstruction proposed in opposition to the historicity of the virgin birth falls to the ground. The view as to the origin of the idea of the virgin birth which has been most widely held by those modern historians who deny the fact of the virgin birth stands or falls with the interpolation theory.

¹ This article contains part of the manuscript form of the lectures on the Thomas Smyth Foundation which the author delivered at Columbia Theological Seminary in the spring of 1927.

² Compare "The Hymns of the First Chapter of Luke" and "The First Two Chapters of Luke" in this REVIEW, x, 1912, pp. 1-38, 212-277.

ECHOES OF THE COVENANT WITH DAVID*

No one can form a just estimate of the influence which the brief oracle of Nathan preserved in 2 Samuel chapter vii. has had upon the thought of later times, without going through the Old Testament (to say nothing now of the New) with an ear open for the many echoes which this one clear voice has awakened in the souls of hoping, believing men of Israel.

There is no question of priority here. All schools of criticism admit the priority and influence of our historical narrative in Samuel. Debate about it, therefore, turns not on the relative dating, but on the absolute dating, of the voice and its echoes. If Volz, Marti, Budde, Duhm, and the rest, whose pronouncements became more and more positive and sweeping during the two decades from 1890 to 1910, are right, then the entire type of mind which rested its hopes for Israel's future on the coming of a glorious king of David's line—a "Messiah," as he is commonly termed—belonged to the period of the Exile or subsequent to it. In that case it belonged to a time when the Davidic dynasty had played its historical part, and had already passed as truly into the realm of yesterday as had the Ark, Solomon's Temple, or the twelve-tribe nation. But if these critics are wrong, then every passage in psalmody or prophecy, which reveals the practical use the people of Israel before the Exile made of this hope in David's covenant, contributes to the cumulative proof that that covenant is an historical fact and that our account of it in Samuel is credible.

It would manifestly be impossible, within the limits of a single article, to state and answer the arguments relied on to prove that the many passages in Isaiah, Jeremiah, and other prophets, and in the Psalter, which refer to the Davidic Covenant, are in reality exilic or post-exilic. We shall have to content ourselves with rehearsing some of these echoes from prophet, psalmist, and historian, calling attention to their

* The substance of this article was delivered in Miller Chapel, October 13, 1921, as the fourth of five lectures on "The House of David," constituting the Stone Lectures for the year 1921-2.

number, distribution, and variety, and pointing out that the burden of proof—not assertion, or conjecture, but *proof*—rests upon those who would uproot the whole growth and transplant it to another age than the one from which it has come down to us on the authority of uniform and abundant testimony.

We begin with the Book of Amos, that prophet who, together with his contemporary Hosea, belongs to the Northern Kingdom and to the 8th century B.C. Amos sees the climax of his predictions in the coming of a “day,” when, as he makes Jehovah say, “I will raise up the tabernacle of David that is fallen, and close up the breaches thereof; and I will raise up its ruins, and I will build it as in the days of old; that they may possess the remnant of Edom, and all the nations that are called by my name, saith Jehovah that doeth this.”¹

We notice here, in general, the figure of a building as the literary vehicle for the representation of a dynasty’s existence and fortunes, just as in the basic passage in 2 Sam. vii., where Jehovah promises to “build” for David a “house.” To be sure, the word *sukkah*, a booth or tabernacle, is used here in place of *bayith*, a house, which appears there, but this change is clearly due to the prophet’s desire to emphasize the idea of the dynasty’s ruinous condition—the same desire that prompted him to add to it the descriptive participle *hannopheleth*, meaning “in a falling condition” or “about to fall to the ground,” as well as those other strong words in the subsequent clauses, “breaches” and “ruins.” Note also the words “raise up” and “build” both here and in Samuel: the only difference is that here it is a repairing or rebuilding, while there it is a building *ab initio*. And finally, it should not escape our notice that Amos refers to “the days of old” as the standard of comparison. Perhaps he uses this phrase in an absolute sense, in allusion to the centuries (roughly, two and a half) that had already elapsed since David’s day—as long a period

¹ Amos ix. 11f.

of time as separates our own day from, say, the settlement of Philadelphia by William Penn. Perhaps he uses it in a relative sense, as he in spirit places himself in "that day" of restoration of which he is prophesying. In either case the argument holds good: David's age stands out in Amos' time as an age in the past when a standard was set for the utmost future prosperity. Rebuilding will be a restoration of what was then built. Thus the impression which this entire prediction makes on us is that it was framed in an allusive fashion on the model of 2 Sam. vii., not only by a prophet who knew, but for a people who likewise knew—and cherished—the oracle of Nathan to David.

We turn to Hosea, and with him reach more abundant material. Amos was a man of Judah, sent to preach among the northern tribes. His acquaintance with, and zeal for, the Davidic House, and his association of it with the brighter side of his prophecies, may therefore be attributed to this fundamentally political circumstance. Indeed, Winckler has gone so far as to represent Amos as King Ahaz' *agent provocateur*, to stir up in the Northern Kingdom sentiment for the reunion of Israel under the Davidic line.² While this view has not prevailed, even among radical critics, it may serve to remind us that we must place Hosea on a somewhat different basis from Amos: Hosea was a man of the North, and when *he* gives to Judah and Judah's dynasty the pre-eminence, either in present rights or in future hopes, it means that a tradition of permanent Davidic supremacy over all Israel was a heritage of the entire nation.

What then does Hosea say? In predicting the ultimate blessings, which lie beyond the dark days impending over Israel, Hosea more than once makes his climax a reunion of Judah and Israel under one sovereign. The first time he does not name that sovereign: to the people he addressed this was obviously unnecessary. He says: "The children of Judah and the children of Israel shall be gathered together, and they

² Winckler, Hugo, *Geschichte Israels in Einzeldarstellungen*, Teil I, pp. 91-95.

shall appoint themselves one head, and shall go up from the land."³ The second time he is specifying, in a list of some length, the things which God's people shall enjoy in "the latter days," succeeding upon those dark days in which they are to be deprived of all privileges, real or fancied, which they now enjoy. For those "many days" just ahead they shall be—among other things—"without king and without prince." But, "afterward shall the children of Israel return, and seek Jehovah their God, and David their king, and shall come with fear unto Jehovah and to his goodness in the latter days."⁴

The significance of these passages is that they individualize the ruler of the House of David under the name of David, and that they place the return to David alongside the return to Jehovah's House, as jointly constituting that renewed unity which marks the restoration of the old United Monarchy, with its Davidic sovereign enthroned beside the Temple of Jehovah. In 2 Sam. vii. the building of that Temple and the building of David's house are put side by side; here in Hosea the place where Jehovah manifests His "goodness" as the objective of the nation's return stands side by side with a throne, the occupant of which bears the name of David because the heir to all of David's "mercies," and belongs to the entire nation—"David, *their* king."

Just as Amos and Hosea form a pair, both exercising their ministry in the Northern Kingdom near its fall in the 8th century, so Micah and Isaiah form a pair, belonging to the latter part of the same century, but preaching *in* the Southern Kingdom, and *to* it so far as the primary aim of their message is concerned. Apart from many other points of contact, as we should expect, Isaiah and Micah have in common that remarkable passage about "the mountain of the Lord's house," to which "all peoples shall flow in the latter days," there to learn truth, practise righteousness, and enjoy prosperity.⁵ But inasmuch as no earthly Vicegerent of Jehovah is here alluded

³ Hos. i. 11.

⁴ Hos. iii. 4f.

⁵ Is. ii. 2-4; Mic. iv. 1-3.

to, we shall not insist upon the witness of this passage to the Davidic promise, even though Zion—at once “the city of David” and “the city of Jehovah”—is expressly made the scene and seat of the sovereignty there exercised.

But in Micah we are able to trace the progress of the prophet's thought back from this “city of David,” Zion, to that earlier “city of David,” Bethlehem, whence the Davidic House took its rise. “But thou, Bethlehem Ephrathah,” says the prophet in a passage familiar to every reader of the Gospel of Matthew, “which art little to be among the thousands of Judah, out of thee shall one come forth unto me that is to be ruler in Israel; whose goings forth are from of old, from everlasting.”⁶ The house of David, heir to the promise of eternal rule, started in a humble town; and it is God's pleasure that, although the dynasty which sprung thence be humbled to a common station—such a station as Jesse, the pre-royal, private citizen of Bethlehem, held—it shall nevertheless produce the ultimate Ruler after God's heart (“unto me”). Great as the contrast was between the humble position of Bethlehem among the proud cities of Judah, and the exalted station of the line of kings it sent forth, greater still shall be the contrast between the humble, nameless, human parentage of that Coming One, Son of David, and the eternal background of His divine origin. For the “goings forth” (whether the word refers to place or to circumstance) of that Figure shall be of double character: a going forth out of Bethlehem because of the Davidic family; and a going forth out of his eternal pre-existence because divine.

This same double character appears in the following sentences, where Micah continues with his reference, first to the human motherhood of the Messiah (“until the time that she who travaileth hath brought forth”),⁷ and then to his divine prerogatives: “He shall stand, and shall feed (that is, *rule*, from the common metaphor of the flock and its shepherd for a people and its ruler) in the strength of Jehovah, in the majesty of the name of Jehovah his God: and they (his flock,

⁶ Mic. v. 2 (Heb. 1). Comp. Matt. ii. 6.

⁷ *Ibid.*, ver. 3.

his people) shall abide; for now shall he be great unto the ends of the earth. And this (Person) shall be peace"—as it were, peace incarnate.⁸ And although in the following verses Micah continues in a warlike strain, recounting the martial exploits of "the remnant of Jacob"—the future Israel, purified and converted, under the leadership of this Figure—it is all simply an attempt to depict, in impressionistic strokes, with brilliant coloring and striking contrast and composition, the basis of the Messianic peace, won for Israel and by Israel in a world which divides into two camps—its enemies and its friends, the enemies conquered and annihilated, the friends saved and blessed.⁹

Even if the prophet Micah stood alone, and we had only this fifth chapter of his brief book, to carry the predictions of 2 Sam. vii. from the level of Hosea up to the level of Jeremiah and the New Testament, still we could not fairly question the word of revelation which Micah has transmitted to us out of the 8th century. Wonderful as it is, it belongs at just that point in the development of the implications of David's covenant. Yet we have in fact a mighty confirmation, both of our interpretation of Micah and of the genuineness of his Messianic utterances, in the contemporary and kindred predictions of Isaiah. To attempt to cover these predictions adequately in the space at our disposal would manifestly be impossible. But we must look in turn, at least briefly, at three passages of Isaiah, which are of capital importance for this story of the House of David.

First, in his eleventh chapter, we find Isaiah describing the Messiah in His characteristics, personal and official, and in His merciful, just, victorious, and peaceful reign.¹⁰ The designation he gives this Ruler, first at the beginning and then again at the end of that description, is "a shoot out of the stock of Jesse, and a branch out of his roots"; and again "the root of Jesse." When we put these phrases alongside Micah's

⁸ *Ibid.*, vs. 4, 5a.

⁹ *Ibid.*, vs. 5b-9.

¹⁰ Is. xi. 1-10.

address to "little Bethlehem"—the humble source of the glorious Monarch—we see the identity of thought underlying both. For it is not David, the king, but Jesse, the humble citizen of Bethlehem, who is singled out by the prophet to describe the source of the Messiah: Jesse is the root (and apparently the unsightly, cut-down stump or stock), which shall bud and branch and grow again into beauty and glory—a glory greater than anything yet realized—when *He* comes forth from it in whom Jehovah shall rule.

The second passage is in that seventh chapter of Isaiah, to which we have had occasion to refer more than once in the sketch of the history of David's House.¹¹ When Ahaz, threatened with dethronement, refused to accept God's way of faith and relied on the King of Assyria, Isaiah gave to him, for a sign that his predictions were from Jehovah who is faithful, the birth of the child whom he names Immanuel—which means, "God with us." Familiar to us in its wording on account of Matthew's quotation of it in his birth-narrative,¹² it is not commonly grasped as clearly as it should be when it is known *only* from Matthew. One needs to study it in Isaiah vii., in its remarkable setting, and to compare it especially with Micah, chapter v., in order to feel the force and import of its prediction about the Messiah.

"Hear ye now, O house of David," cries the prophet, addressing the whole "House of David" as the collective heir to the promise in 2 Sam. vii.—"behold, a virgin shall conceive, and bear a son, and shall call his name Immanuel."¹³ So reads our American Revised Version; though the original calls for the rendering "*the* virgin," since the noun has the definite article prefixed, and the word is broad enough to mean any young woman whether married or not. Why is this young woman definite, not only to Isaiah, but equally, to all appearance, to his auditors, whereas to modern interpreters she has been so very *indefinite*? Clearly, because, like

¹¹ See art. *The Davidic Dynasty*, in this REVIEW, April, 1927.

¹² Matt. i. 23.

¹³ Is. vii. 14.

the woman alluded to by Micah as "she that travaileth" (properly, the woman about to bring forth a child), this woman was definite precisely through what is said about her, both here and there: namely, that she is the mother of the Messiah. Her name? Who knows? Who cares, in comparison with what she does? This King of David's line must have a mother: this is she. If the Gospel story seems to any to lay too great stress on the word *parthenos*, by which this Hebrew noun had centuries before been rendered into the Greek, we ought not to overlook the justification for this which lies here in Isaiah's language, though not in the word we render "virgin." It lies in the exclusive prominence of motherhood here, just as in Micah v., together with the absence of all reference to human fatherhood.

Strange, inexplicable circumstance, to such as are unwilling to see in this a pre-adumbration of a Gospel fact! It was precisely their descent in the male line, father to son, and father to son, through four and a half centuries, that constituted the proudest boast of the royal dynasty of Jerusalem. True, the mother of each heir to the throne was generally mentioned in connection with his accession, but this was because of the peculiarly proud position of the queen-mother at the Davidic court, from Bathsheba onward. Yet here there is something more and something different. *That* Son of David, whose name of *Immanuel* seems to stamp upon Him, with its symbolic significance, His divine origin, takes His human origin through "that young woman" who bears Him—the woman whom the divine purpose selects for this sole, supreme honor—to be (what Elizabeth calls Mary) "the mother of my Lord."¹⁴

¹⁴ Luke i. 43. The most recent developments in criticism seem to justify the expectation that such exegetical vagaries as Duhm's "any woman whatever that is about to bring forth" have seen their day. Kittel (*Die hellenistische Mysterienreligion und das Alte Testament*, p. 7) does not hesitate to call such interpretations by Duhm, Marti, and their school, "ephemeral errors." While Kittel's thesis does not require from him a positive verdict as to the genuineness of all three "Messianic" passages of Isaiah, it is plain that the ideas with which he and Gressmann, Sellin, and

Rather than dwell longer on implications of the name Immanuel, we turn to the third of the three passages in Isaiah which we are to consider, since in it we shall find the same implications more fully and unmistakably set forth. That is the passage in the ninth chapter, familiar to us, not like the seventh chapter from New Testament quotation, but from the marvellous—one is almost tempted to say, the inspired—use made of it by Händel in his "Messiah." "For unto us a child is born," exults Isaiah, as he thus justifies all his extravagant predictions of light, joy, victory, and peace that precede, "unto us a son is given; and the government shall be upon his shoulder; and his name shall be called Wonderful, Counsellor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace. Of the increase of his government and of peace there shall be no end, upon the throne of David, and upon his kingdom, to establish it, and to uphold it with justice and righteousness from henceforth even for ever."¹⁵

Again the birth of a child! It is a son of David, born to sit on David's throne. "For ever"—again that old refrain of 2 Sam. vii. rings out, as the climax of this prophecy by Nathan's greater successor. The kingdom which David founded, this child shall establish and uphold. It shall go on increasing, for his mighty shoulder can bear the weight of a world's government. And what He is shall be summed up in the symbolic name—His throne-name: for the four elements that make it up, consisting each of two words bound closely together, reveal the figure of the Messiah, a *multum in parvo*, a cameo of the Christ. "Wonderful Counsellor"—One unique in His ability to guide His people by means of His extraordinary, His superhuman wisdom. "Mighty God"—that divine Leader who in the past had striven for His people and would yet show Himself their champion against all foes in

the other comparative-religionists are operating find no obstacle in the Isaianic authorship of these passages; and as for their interpretation—they defend their "Messianic" character as stoutly as any of the older or younger conservative critics.

¹⁵ Is. ix. 6f. (Heb. 5f.).

days to come. "Everlasting Father"—none other, in essence, than the timeless, ageless, eternal God in human guise. "Prince of Peace"—exalted on a throne, of which Solomon, the peaceful king, once occupied the type, but before which shall come to bow, not only Sheba's queen, but every prince of earth, since He is "King of them that reign as kings and Lord of them that rule as lords" and "the kingdom of this world shall become the kingdom of Jehovah and of His Messiah."¹⁶

When we pass on from the age of Micah and Isaiah to that of Jeremiah and Ezekiel, we find the whole background changed—that background of their present upon which their predictions of the Messiah and His age are projected. Notably, the representatives of the Davidic dynasty on the throne of Judah during its last century of existence were, with the sole exception of Josiah, unworthy of the house to which they belonged, of the promises to which they were heirs, and, above all, of the God whose earthly vicegerents they were within His kingdom. Jeremiah's ministry fell, in part, within the reign of Josiah, but most of it was exercised in the times of his miserable successors. It included the successive sieges of the city by the Chaldaeans, its final fall, the deportations, and the earlier years of the Exile. Ezekiel, himself among the earlier deportees, gave utterance to the prophecies in the first half of his book before the final fall of Jerusalem, to the remainder after the whole nation was sharing with him the experience of exile. Since the Exile is the latest period to which criticism of even the most radical type has reduced the date of 2 Sam. vii., we not only need go no further than Jeremiah and Ezekiel in assembling the prophetic echoes of it, but even with these two prophets we find ourselves at a time admittedly influenced by "Messianism"—as that tendency is called which exalts the promised king of David's line into the center of the national hopes. Yet inasmuch as this tendency, whatever its pre-prophetic source, is supposed to be found in the very process of absorption into prophetic doctrine precisely in

¹⁶ Rev. xi. 15; xix. 16, &c.

these two prophets, Jeremiah and Ezekiel, we ought to attend to their utterances also, if we are to have any fair notion of what pre-exilic Messianism contained.

Two companion passages in Jeremiah, xxiii. 5, 6 and xxxiii. 15-26, hold out to his people the promise that after the days of their punishment are over God's changeless purpose of grace shall be accomplished, in spite of men's faithlessness, in the establishment of His own righteous rule among them. In the former passage the promise comes at the end of a long series of prophecies concerning the successive princes of David's line under whom Jeremiah had exercised his own ministry. In contrast to Josiah, who is praised for his justice and mercy, his successors are condemned as reprobates by their God; and after a general statement that God will punish the worthless shepherds of His flock and substitute for them good shepherds, Jeremiah continues with more detail: "Behold, the days come, saith Jehovah, that I will raise unto David a righteous Branch, and he shall reign as king and deal wisely, and shall execute justice and righteousness in the land. In his days Judah shall be saved, and Israel shall dwell safely; and this is his name whereby he shall be called: Jehovah our righteousness."

In the second passage, too long to quote here in its entirety, Jeremiah introduces his promise of the Messiah's gracious, righteous rule as the climax to his predictions about the land and its fortunes. The symbolic action of burying the deed of sale, chapter xxxii., signified that even the Exile, which the prophet was announcing as imminent and inescapable, was not to write *finis* across the history of God's people in the Holy Land. And with this for his starting-point he goes on to comfort those who sorely needed comfort in this day of gloom—himself included. "Is anything too hard for me?" asks Jehovah of the despairing prophet, who expostulates with his God on the inconsistency of that symbolic act with all the rest of what has been revealed to him. I shall destroy as I have said; but I shall also build up. After the deluge, the remnant. This remnant I will Myself gather out

of the lands to this their ancient covenant-home, and there shall be "abundance of peace and truth." Personal renewal for the repentant sinner, and national restoration for a chastened nation, will be followed by prosperity and the joy and praise that befit it. And, as the climax of all, that phase of My covenant which consists in the promise of a righteous Ruler for ever for My people, shall not be forgotten: "In those days, and at that time, saith Jehovah, will I cause a Branch of righteousness to grow up unto David; and he shall execute justice and righteousness in the land. . . . For thus saith Jehovah, David shall never want a man to sit upon the throne of the house of Israel. . . . Thus saith Jehovah, If my covenant of day and night stand not, if I have not appointed the ordinances of heaven and earth; then will I also cast away the seed of Jacob, and of David my servant, so that I will not take of his seed to be rulers over the seed of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob."

Bearing the fundamental passage in 2 Samuel in mind, we ought to note two points in this prophecy. (1) Precisely that feature of the Messianic King is here emphasized, which connects Him with the House of David: He is a Branch (more properly, a Scion, or Shoot) of David's stock. From this time onward the word *branch* came to have more and more the character of a technical term for the Messiah; Zechariah uses it as His actual name.¹⁷ Jeremiah himself, like Hosea, calls the Messiah directly by the name of his forefather: "David." He also gives him, as Isaiah does, a symbolic name, based not upon His origin but upon His character or office: "Jehovah our righteousness." When we remember that the throne-name of the last king of David's line in Jerusalem was Zedekiah, which means *righteousness of Jehovah*, we can hardly doubt that the name *Jehovah-zidh-genu* was constructed by Jeremiah to suggest that the Messiah was to be all that Zedekiah should have been but was not. And if in chapter xxxiii. the prophet applies his sym-

¹⁷ Zech. iii. 8; vi. 12.

bolic name not to the Messiah but to Jerusalem or Judah,¹⁸ we should observe that the context is here concerned, as we have just seen, with the land and the city rather than with its kings, and that Isaiah had long before declared that Jerusalem in the day of its Messianic salvation should be called *'Ir-hazzedheq*, that is, "the city of righteousness."¹⁹ The moral character of its king shall "in that day" become also the moral quality of His people: in New Testament phraseology, "We shall be like him; for we shall see him even as he is."²⁰

(2) It is a covenant which binds Jehovah to the performance of His promise of a Messiah, as surely as He has covenanted not to disturb the fixed order of Nature, the days and seasons and years. And this covenant, made with David, "His servant," at an historical point of time, is parallel in every respect to the earlier covenant with the patriarchs that their seed should be His people "for ever." (Compare Jer. xxxi. 35-37 with 2 Sam. vii. 24). And in connection with this latter comparison, which puts the relation of the covenant-keeping Jehovah on the one hand, and Israel and David on the other hand, upon an identical footing of election, of salvation, and of eternity, this further fact should not be lost sight of: that Jeremiah (xxx. 21f.) expressly ascribes to this Messianic Prince a priestly function as Mediator: "Their prince," he writes, "Shall be of themselves, and their ruler shall be from the midst of them; and I will cause him to draw near, and he shall approach unto me: for who is he that hath had boldness to approach unto me? saith Jehovah. And ye shall be my people, and I will be your God." "Taken from among men," as the author of Hebrews writes, in describing the high priest's status and function,²¹ this Prince will represent those men, sinners as they are, in their relation to God: for them, who dare not approach Jehovah's holy majesty, he

¹⁸ Jer. xxxiii. 16.

¹⁹ Is. i. 26.

²⁰ I John iii. 2.

²¹ Heb. v. 1.

draws near to mediate, by divine appointment, with divine favor, and, as a result, a rebellious, reprobate nation again becomes Jehovah's people, and an offended God becomes reconciled and deigns to call Himself "their God."

In Ezekiel there are two passages which demand mention, before we close this list of pre-exilic and exilic allusions to the Messiah's person and work. In his 34th chapter Ezekiel develops more completely than it is developed anywhere else in Scripture save by our Lord in the 10th chapter of John's Gospel, that figure of the flock and the shepherds, so common in both Testaments in its briefer forms of application. It is Jehovah's gracious purpose to destroy the evil shepherds who have neglected or abused His flock, and Himself to save and heal and tend the sheep that now are "lost" or "driven away" or "broken" or "sick." But in verse 23 God announces His purpose to "set up one shepherd over them." "He shall feed them, even my servant David; he shall feed them, and he shall be their shepherd. And I, Jehovah, will be their God, and my servant David prince among them. I, Jehovah, have spoken it." Then the chapter closes with a figurative picture of the blessings that shall come to the flock under this beneficent treatment, and in its last verses expressly interprets the whole figure as a parable of Jehovah and Israel in their mutual relations.

Here again we find this kingly Figure called by the name of his father David. Again it is the whole nation over which he is to reign. Again, as repeatedly in 2 Sam. vii., David is termed by Jehovah "my servant." And again we have the association of this figure of the shepherd with the Messiah: is it fanciful to trace this also to 2 Sam. vii? For there, in the words of Nathan, the judges²² who preceded David as Israel's rulers were the "shepherds" commanded by God to "feed" His people; and as for David, "God," says Nathan, "took thee, David, from the shepcote, from following the sheep, that thou shouldest be prince (the word is *leader*—quite suit-

²² See marginal note on 2 Sam. vii. 7. The text in Chronicles is undoubtedly correct.

able for the shepherd as leader of his flock) over my people, over Israel."

Chapter xxxvii of Ezekiel is the familiar prophecy about the Valley of Dry Bones. Upon these dry bones descends the spirit of the Lord, so that the dead arise and live again. No more shall the scattered nation remain as in the grave of its exile: it shall come together and God's Spirit will breathe into it the breath of life. It shall become one nation again. It shall return to its homeland. And over it—*who* is to reign over it? "My servant David," says the prophet (ver. 24), "shall be king over them; and they shall all have one shepherd . . . and they shall dwell in the land that I have given unto Jacob my servant, wherein your fathers dwelt; and they shall dwell therein, they, and their children, and their children's children, for ever: and David my servant shall be their prince for ever. . . . My tabernacle also shall be with them; and I will be their God, and they shall be my people."

This Messianic passage in xxxvii. leads up to Ezekiel's climax—the vision of God's sanctuary among His people—which occupies chapters xl-xlviii. And although it has been objected that the Prince of Israel who appears in that vision does not play a rôle quite worthy of the Davidic Messiah, but represents an altered attitude of Ezekiel, toward the end of his ministry, with respect to Messianic hopes, there is in fact no evidence that those chapters come from a date substantially later than this 37th chapter. And in any case the prophet would hardly have left side by side in his published book such conflicting views—the evidence of a wavering attitude on so important a subject as the Davidic dynasty and the Messianic King. We feel rather that the whole book should be taken together, the allusions to the Prince in xl.-xlviii. being treated as intended to deal only with this Person's relation to sanctuary, sacrifice, and land, and the prophet's entire volume being allowed to tell its whole story collectively. Certainly in chap. xxxvii. we have the old familiar features of 2 Sam. vii. repeated: the name "David," linking the Messiah thus to the ancient dynasty

and its promises; "my servant," as on the lips of Nathan and David; the unity of the whole people under one sovereign; the "shepherd"; the "covenant"; "for ever"; and, with no thought of such incongruity as critics have professed to see in Samuel, God's permanent sanctuary "for ever" standing side by side with the Prince's throne.

For the same reason that we stop with the Exile in this review of the prophets, we may dismiss the Psalms with but a few words. Everyone who knows and loves the 2nd Psalm, the 72nd, the 110th, or any one of half-a-dozen more in the Psalter, which deal with the king who rules in Zion, is aware of the powerful influence which 2 Sam. vii. has had upon the imagination of Israel's poets. With the depth and beauty of feeling which the poetic spirit lends to a surpassingly grandiose theme, all the elements of Jehovah's promise to David through Nathan are embodied in these religious lyrics: the "sonship" of this king in Zion; his divine throne, might, commission, prerogative, destiny; the universal scope and eternal duration of his dominion; the moral basis on which his sway is founded; the prophetic and priestly, as well as regal, functions he exercises; the absolute and indissoluble identity of his cause with the cause of Jehovah in the earth as well as in Israel.

Psalms lxxxix. and cxxxii. are, in fact, paraphrases of Nathan's oracle: the former as the basis for an appeal to God to deliver Israel from its afflictions; the latter to reflect greater glory thereby upon Zion, as at once the city of David, the seat of his perpetual dominion, and the city of Jehovah, where stood the sanctuary.

But other psalms are none the less footed in the same oracle. At the head of them all stands the brief, obscure, but charming lyric, contained, not in the Psalter, but in 2 Samuel, chapter xxiii., and entitled "the last words of David." Criticism has no adequate internal ground for denying its Davidic authorship,²³ which it claims, not in a separate prefixed title

²³ The essay of O. Procksch, *Die letzten Worte Davids*, in the volume of *Alttestamentliche Studien* published in 1913 in honor of Kittel's

merely, like the titles of the psalms in the Psalter, but in the body of the poem, bound there by the rhythmic structure of its first stanza, and stressed by the use of no less than three descriptive parallels. Thus,

David, the son of Jesse, saith,
And the man who was raised on high saith,
The anointed of the God of Jacob,
And the sweet psalmist of Israel.

In estimating the value of this song for the purpose of our inquiry, it is by no means necessary to establish the personal, strictly Messianic reference in the third and fourth verses, where David sings of

One that ruleth over men righteously,
That ruleth in the fear of God.

For even if this be merely an introduction to the poetic description of those blessings which accompany the reign of such a pious and upright king—of any such king—as given in the succeeding verses, still we have in verse 5 an unmistakable and universally admitted allusion to 2 Sam. vii.

For is not my house so with God?²⁴
Yet he hath made with me an everlasting covenant,
Ordered in all things, and sure:
For it is all my salvation, and all my desire,
Although he maketh it not to grow.

It is true, this language is obscure, because it is epigrammatic, allusive, lyrical in a high degree—though not more so than might be expected with the theme, the author, and the occasion. Nevertheless, there can be but one background for the association together of the ideas here assembled: "David's

sixtieth birthday, may be regarded as a turning-point in the history of critical opinion on 2 Sam. xxiii. He introduces his sane and valuable critique of the poem with these words: "Today it is attributed to David by scarcely any exegetes and is transferred generally to the age of the psalms after the Exile; only Klostermann upholds its genuineness, and Gressmann advocates at least the Davidic age. In the following study the effort will be made to restore this wonderful poem as a gem to the crown of the poet-king." At the conclusion he permits himself a short review of what he calls "echoes," corresponding to the substance of this article, and finding their source in 2 Sam. vii.

²⁴ This line according to the margin of ARV.

house," God, a covenant, eternity; and, we may add, in view of the prophetic development—"make to grow," since this is the same word as was to yield later the symbolic name of Messiah, "The Branch."

This review of the Old Testament echoes of 2 Sam. vii. would not be complete, if we were to say nothing of the references to it in the historical books. We have seen how Wellhausen himself at first refrained from mutilating the oracle of Nathan by excising verse 13 of the passage in 2 Sam. vii., because held back by the consideration of 1 Kings v. 5 (Heb. 19), as a witness to its genuineness.²⁵ Later he was ready to do what all his followers have since done: to discredit the evidence of the Books of Kings and so to attain the desired end—the rejection of 2 Sam. vii. 13. But it is very important to realize that 1 Kings v. 5 by no means stands alone. It is merely one member of a series of passages, running through all the Books of Kings and Chronicles, which testify not only to the view of their respective authors concerning David's interest in the erection of a permanent Temple in Jerusalem, but also to the accepted tradition in Judah that on the occasion when David proposed to build such a Temple God promised to him perpetual sovereignty over His people. Let us rapidly scan this series.

At the time of Solomon's accession the aged David, in his satisfaction that his will has been carried out and fratricidal war avoided in determining the succession to the throne, cries out, "Blessed be Jehovah, the God of Israel, who hath given one to sit on my throne this day, mine eyes even seeing it" (1 Kings i. 48). He marvelled at the unexpected pleasure of living to see with his own eyes the fulfilment in its first stage of that eternal covenant which Jehovah had made with his house. And when he addresses Solomon (ii. 2-4), he repeats in paraphrase (ver. 4) the substance of God's promise to his house, as given in 2 Sam. vii. 14-16, saying, "that Jehovah may establish his word which he spake concerning me, say-

²⁵ See art. *The Davidic Covenant* in this REVIEW, July 1927.

ing, If thy children take heed to their way, to walk before me in truth with all their heart and with all their soul, there shall not fail thee (said he) a man on the throne of Israel." Solomon's own pronouncements, in the same chapter, after he is seated on his throne and is determining the fate of Adonijah and Shimei, show amidst their complacency a perfect consciousness of the oracle on which his house rests its claim and confidence: note especially the phrase, "Who hath made me a house, as *he promised*" (ver. 24).

The exchange of messages between Solomon and the King of Tyre furnished the occasion for that distinct allusion to Nathan's oracle which has already been referred to several times. "Thou knowest," says Solomon to his father's ally, "how that David my father could not build a house for the name of Jehovah his God for the wars which were about him on every side, until Jehovah put them under the soles of his feet. But now Jehovah my God hath given me rest on every side; there is neither adversary, nor evil occurrence. And, behold, I purpose to build a house for the name of Jehovah my God, as Jehovah spake unto my father, saying, Thy son, whom I will set upon thy throne in thy room, he shall build the house for my name."²⁶ This is an unusually full reference to the historical situation in Samuel, and even to its language and connection. Köhler observes with perfect propriety, "If Solomon says to King Hiram that his father had been hindered from erecting a temple by his continual wars, this is because he did not care to impart the more inward reasons to the heathen prince."

After Solomon had begun to build, he was reminded afresh of the original connection between the proposal to build a Temple and God's promise to the Davidic House through Nathan in these words: "Concerning this house which thou art building, if thou wilt walk in my statutes, and execute my ordinances, and keep all my commandments to walk in them; then I will establish my word with thee, which I spake unto David thy father" (1 Kings vi. 12).

²⁶ 1 Kings v. 3-5 (Heb. 17-19).

When the house was dedicated, Solomon's blessing (viii. 15-20) rehearses much of what Nathan had spoken to David, and concludes with this complacent remark: "Jehovah hath established his word that he spake; for I am risen up in the room of David my father, and sit on the throne of Israel, as Jehovah promised, and have built the house for the name of Jehovah, the God of Israel." Then, immediately afterwards, in the dedicatory prayer, Solomon begins from the same starting-point of faith and praise: "O Jehovah, the God of Israel, there is no God like thee, in heaven above, or on earth beneath; who keepest covenant and lovingkindness with thy servants, that walk before thee with all their heart; who hast kept with thy servant David my father that which thou didst promise him: yea, thou spakest with thy mouth, and hast fulfilled it with thy hand, as it is this day. Now therefore, O Jehovah, the God of Israel, keep with thy servant David my father that which thou hast promised him, saying, There shall not fail thee a man in my sight to sit on the throne of Israel; if only thy children take heed to their way, to walk before me as thou hast walked before me. Now therefore, O God of Israel, let thy word, I pray thee, be verified, which thou spakest unto thy servant David my father" (vs. 23-26). And at the conclusion of the festival of dedication, we are told, the people "went unto their tents joyful and glad of heart for all the goodness that Jehovah had showed unto David his servant, and to Israel his people."²⁷ Why to "David his servant" rather than to "Solomon his servant," unless with allusion to that covenant with David which was bound up in their minds with this Temple and which was regarded by all as on a par with the divine covenant with Israel?

In the narrative of a special revelation of Jehovah to Solomon contained in the next chapter (1 Kings ix. 4, 5), Jehovah attaches directly to His promise of permanent acceptance of the new Temple as His dwelling-place a promise

²⁷ 1 Kings viii. 66.

of eternal sovereignty for Solomon and his house, provided only that he and his seed shall be loyal and obedient—precisely the order of thought in 2 Sam. vii., and expressed in language reminiscent of that chapter when it does not actually quote it verbally.

When in his later life Solomon was rebuked for the idolatrous practices tolerated for the sake of his heathen wives, the divine message of rebuke is tempered by reminiscences of the promise to David: "In thy days I will not do it, for David thy father's sake: but I will rend it out of the hand of thy son. Howbeit I will not rend away all the kingdom; but I will give one tribe to thy son, for David my servant's sake, and for Jerusalem's sake which I have chosen." It is the sanctuary in Jerusalem, of course, to which the last clause refers: again there is the same association of the Temple and the promise to David.

The terms in which Ahijah the prophet announces to Jeroboam his distinguished future (1 Kings xi. 31-39) are not only full of allusions to the analogous promise to David in 2 Sam. vii., but the conditional character of the promise to Jeroboam's house is almost as striking a witness to the content of the Davidic covenant as a quotation of that covenant could be. And after Jeroboam has written his record in sin the same prophet is sent to announce the doom of his short-lived house in language equally reminiscent of the Davidic covenant (xiv. 7-10).

All down through the long history of David's royal line, allusion is constantly made to the special favor of Jehovah which the founder of the house had enjoyed, whether by way of contrast between the moral character and religious fidelity of David and some unworthy successor, or by way of a plea for deliverance or an explanation of deliverance at times when the fortunes of the house were at the lowest ebb. And it is the rule, rather than the exception, to find in such passages that the author associates the persistence of the regnant dynasty and the inviolability of the city and sanctuary in the same way that they are associated in 2 Sam. vii. The Books

of Kings are full of these "echoes of the covenant" with David.

Although we should find the same testimony duplicated, or rather, multiplied and enlarged, in the Books of Chronicles, it is unnecessary for us to submit it separately as evidence, inasmuch as "the Chronicler" is admittedly a post-exilic writer. While he undoubtedly had valuable sources that were independent of anything now preserved to us, nevertheless he belonged to a time and a circle wherein everything Davidic was of peculiar interest, and his specific testimony to this oracle is swallowed up in the general witness he bears to David's peculiar relation to Jehovah's service and sanctuary. Inasmuch as every critic of the Old Testament has his own principal attitude towards that general witness, the evidence of the Books of Chronicles must be regarded in this matter as a question by itself.

We have now completed the review of what we have called the echoes of the Davidic covenant. Only such a review, lengthy as it must be even at the briefest, can leave on the mind the due impression of mass, variety, and wide distribution. It is scarcely too much to say of it that it is scattered all through the Old Testament from the time of David down. Admittedly influenced by the narrative in 2 Sam. vii., which purports to give the historical setting of the covenant, all this mass of testimony has to be re-dated, if the narrative itself is brought down to, or nearly to, the Exile.

Say, for example, the historian of the Books of Kings lived in or just at the threshold of the Exile. That being so, a few decades at most separated him from the date of composition of 2 Sam. vii. according to the majority of the Wellhausen school of criticism, and the interpolated verse 13 would be actually contemporary with him. Yet he is supposed to have written his story with constant recurrence to this oracle, of which his father and the fathers of his readers had never heard. Indeed, according to Volz half the story, according to H. P. Smith the whole story, was not even written until his own time.

For all such critics everything that has a touch of the diction or phraseology of the Book of Deuteronomy, or that betrays a Deuteronomic way of judging history, must be later than B.C. 622, when that "book of the law" was "discovered" in the Temple in the reign of Josiah. Has 2 Sam. vii. such marks stamped on it? Some say, Yes. And some of these again account for such marks by a retouching subsequent to the original publication. Yet even for those critics who are free (in respect of literary considerations) to place that chapter as early as they please, there remains the need of coming down to Josiah's reign in order to find any circumstances which might give occasion to such enthusiasm for the Davidic dynasty as this chapter reveals. And Josiah did not reach the throne till 639, and was not of age till more than a decade later still.

Thus the margins left for all the developments presupposed by such critics are quite too narrow. The law of development, instead of being respected, is outraged. If, on the other hand, the Bible's own dates for its historical, prophetic and poetic witnesses are accepted, how fine is the development of the Messianic promise! Even from the beginning it is all there in seed—in principle. But with experience, national and individual, with the varied lights of revelation cast upon it, that germ develops, till at length we admire the marvellous plant of promise as it stands forth in Isaiah and Micah and Jeremiah and Ezekiel, in full bloom now and ready to yield the fruit that ripens in the New Dispensation—the age of fulfilment.

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