

Theology on the Web.org.uk

Making Biblical Scholarship Accessible

This document was supplied for free educational purposes. Unless it is in the public domain, it may not be sold for profit or hosted on a webserver without the permission of the copyright holder.

If you find it of help to you and would like to support the ministry of Theology on the Web, please consider using the links below:



Buy me a coffee

<https://www.buymeacoffee.com/theology>



PATREON

<https://patreon.com/theologyontheweb>

[PayPal](https://paypal.me/robbradshaw)

<https://paypal.me/robbradshaw>

A table of contents for *Journal of Biblical Literature* can be found here:

https://biblicalstudies.org.uk/articles_jbl-01.php

Theodoret and the Law Book of Josiah.

PROF. JAMES A. KELSO.

WESTERN THEOLOGICAL SEMINARY, ALLEGHENY, PA.

IN the last volume of the *Zeitschrift für die alttestamentliche Wissenschaft*, Professor Nestle¹ has called attention to the fact that several of the Church Fathers identified the law book, found in the reign of Josiah and referred to in 2 Ki. 22^{8 ff.}, with Deuteronomy. He mentions three: Jerome, Procopius of Gaza, and Chrysostom. It is entirely unnecessary to repeat the details presented by Professor Nestle. However, his suggestion that other references along the same line might be found in the Patristic literature led the writer to investigate further. The search did not prove entirely futile, for in the commentary of Theodoret² on the Second Book of Kings, known as "*Quæstiones in Librum IV Regnorum*," the following passage was found under *Interrogatio LIV*: ὁ δὲ ἔκγονος τὴν ἄκραν ἤσκησεν ἀρετῆν, καὶ τοῦ προγόνου Δαβὶδ ἐκτίησάτο τὴν εὐσέβειαν. καὶ πρῶτον μὲν τὰ θεραπέας δέοντα τοῦ θεοῦ νεῶ πάσης ἐπιμελείας ἤξιώσεν. ἔπειτα τῶν θεῶν λογίων ἀκούσας, τῶν ἐν τῷ Δευτερονομίῳ κειμένων, καὶ τὴν ἐσθῆτα διέρρηξε, καὶ ἐπὶ πλείστον ἐθρήνησε, καὶ μαθεῖν τὸ πρακτικόν περὶ τοῦ θεοῦ τῶν ὄλων ἐζήτησεν.

This passage has apparently escaped the notice of investigators, as Holzinger,³ although giving a quotation from Theodoret, makes no allusion to it in his chapter entitled "*Geschichte der Kritik*," § 6, where he discusses the apparent traces of later critical views in the writings of the Church Fathers.

While Theodoret was a member of the celebrated Antiochian school of exegesis that rendered the cause of sound hermeneutics such signal service, it would be a serious historical anachronism to infer from the above quotation that he had even an inkling of the modern critical theory. Much less had he any conception of the part Deuteronomy and the narrative of 2 Ki. 22 would play in the documentary hypothesis. Notwithstanding this, it is of interest to know that Patristic testimony and modern scholarship agree in regard to the limits of the ספר התורה found in the reign of the godly Josiah.

¹ *ZATW.*, 1902, pp. 170, 312. ² Migne, *Patrolog.*, vol. 80, p. 794.

³ Holzinger, *Einleitung in den Hexateuch*, pp. 25 ff.