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# Trends in Old Testament Theology

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THE revival of Old Testament theology is at once an important and a dangerous phenomenon of the mid-twentieth century. On the one hand it has driven men to look for the pattern of God's dealing with Israel, using all the resources of scientific and historical research. On the other hand it has brought with it the temptation to impose a theological scheme on the Old Testament which does violence to its heterogeneous character. Even competent scholars have succumbed to the danger, but the real trouble arises in preaching. This article is an attempt to show some of the developments that have taken place, and to provide some guide to resources available to the preacher. No effort has been made at complete coverage, and in places selection has had to be arbitrary.

For history of the discipline prior to 1950 reference may be made to papers by Porteous and Dentan. The former<sup>1</sup> surveys the significant contributions since Davidson's *Theology of the Old Testament* (1904). He summarizes the tensions resulting from a generation of study as follows:

There is legitimate ground for difference of opinion as to precisely where the line between Old Testament theology and dogmatic theology should be drawn. But we are not entitled to speak of a theology, if we mean no more than a history of beliefs about God which men at different times have held . . . We have come across a welcome emphasis on the fact that revelation is mediated in historical events when, through the divine-human encounter, a Word is spoken to which a response is made. This intimate response of man's whole being to God is what the Bible means by knowledge of God, and the classic record of such knowledge of God, culminating in the complete knowledge which Christ possessed, is contained in the Bible. Old Testament theology is essentially part of the critique of this knowledge and it can only be rightly undertaken from an inside point of view.<sup>2</sup>

A theology of the Old Testament will be worthy of the attention of men today in the measure in which it keeps close to life and does not operate merely at the academic level where thought and action are apt to be divorced.<sup>3</sup>

Dentan<sup>4</sup> begins his survey with the 17th century, but the bulk of his history of the discipline is devoted to the period since 1787. In that year Gabler<sup>5</sup> attempted to define biblical theology and to show its relationship to systematic theology. The former must include strict exegesis of biblical passages, comparison of those passages with one another, and formulation of general

1. N. W. Porteous, "Old Testament Theology," in H. H. Rowley (Ed.), *The Old Testament and Modern Study* (Oxford, 1951), pp. 311 ff.

2. *Op. cit.*, p. 343.

3. *Op. cit.*, p. 344.

4. R. C. Dentan, *Preface to Old Testament Theology* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1950).

5. So far as I know Gabler's work exists only in Latin, and I have not seen a copy.

ideas from the same "without distorting [the] materials, or obliterating distinctions."

It was Gabler who first showed that biblical and dogmatic theology are neither to be confused with each other, nor set in irreconcilable opposition, but are two clearly separable and equally necessary steps in the formulation of a Christian view of the world. This separation of function was of momentous consequence both for dogmatics and for biblical studies, and every subsequent attempt to obscure the distinction which Gabler made has resulted only in confusion in both fields.<sup>6</sup>

The above quotations, and the history of the subject as described by Dentan and Porteous, show that there are certain matters which remain in tension: the relationship between the history of Israel's religion and Old Testament theology; the meaning of exegesis and its function in theology; the relation between systematic theology and biblical theology; the relation of Old to New Testament; the relevance of biblical theology to modern life. There is also the problem of method in presenting Old Testament theology. It would be fallacious to say "mere" method. Careful study of the major works shows that in some way the manner of presentation is in each case dictated by the solutions the author has worked out to the various tensions—or else his solutions and his method are disharmonious.<sup>7</sup> For example, can Old Testament theology be fitted into the systematic theologian's categories of Theology, Anthropology, and Soteriology? Or must there be some other framework such as: God and people, God and the world, God and man? We should note at any rate that most writers endeavour to find a central, dominating theme such as covenant, holiness, God as Lord, God's Word, around which all other doctrines revolve.

The years since 1950 have not resolved any of the tensions with finality, but significant work has been done.<sup>8</sup> An increasing number of scholars are addressing a major part of their energies to some aspect of Old Testament theology. Sheer numbers should not blind one to the fact that historical and exegetical studies, in the strict sense, are still the corner-stone of Old Testament research. I hope I never live to see that stone broken! Some scholars are indeed opposed to anything that could remotely be called a theology of the Old Testament. In a lengthy review of Dentan's book Lachemann<sup>9</sup> vehemently, indeed almost querulously, appealed for the abandonment of the dangerous pursuit. "With all my imagination I cannot see what an Old Testament Theology could do that a history of the religion of the Old Testament could not do much better." More urbanely, if less cogently,

6. Dentan, *op. cit.*, p. 8.

7. See, e.g., Porteous, *op. cit.*, pp. 326, 329.

8. Developments since 1950 have also been studied in some other recent histories of exegesis. Each in its own way is valuable. The most important are: H. F. Hahn, *Old Testament in Modern Research* (Philadelphia: Muhlenberg, 1954); E. G. Kraeling, *The Old Testament Since the Reformation* (New York: Harper, 1955); H.-J. Kraus, *Geschichte der historisch-kritischen Erforschung des alten Testaments von der Reformation bis zur Gegenwart* (Neukirchen, 1956).

9. *Journal of Bible and Religion*, XIX (1951), pp. 71-75.

Irwin<sup>10</sup> has registered his continuing protest against the trend. Some scholars have at least orally dismissed such opinions as those of "unreconstructed liberals," "humanists," etc.<sup>11</sup> This judgment misses the genuine concern of these men with careful linguistic study, detailed and painstaking exegesis, comparative methods, etc., which may be overlooked in the new enthusiasm.

The most significant works which we must consider are based squarely on careful preliminary exegesis. Undoubtedly pride of place must be given to von Rad.<sup>12</sup> Although the second volume is still unpublished, it is clear that the author has gone further than most of his predecessors in resolving the tension between history and theology within the Old Testament itself. He begins with a sketch of Israel's faith in Yahweh, and of the several institutions which developed over the centuries. This is a prelude, outlining the elements which must be reckoned with in a theology of the Old Testament. The history of religion looks solely at the beliefs of Israel as they unfolded in time. Von Rad is concerned with what Israel herself proclaimed about Yahweh's saving acts in history. The documents we have reveal a kerygmatic intention, and the witness of each is elucidated in turn. For some documents the Exodus is the central act, but for Deuteronomy the building of Solomon's temple is fundamental. The Chronicler makes central the foundation of the cultus, and the Messianic associations of the Davidic dynasty. On the other hand, Jeremiah and Deutero-Isaiah look for the abrogation of the faith in the Yahweh of the Exodus, since there will be new acts in place of that great event. Israel was continually refashioning her faith as Yahweh acted for her, and examining anew the acts of the past. Her history is therefore a constitutive element of her faith, and its representation an action of her faith.

Von Rad devotes over half of his volume to the witness of the varying traditions preserved in the Hexateuch and in the work of the Deuteronomist and Chronicler. The last section, entitled "Israel before Yahweh (Israel's answer to Yahweh)," shows that God did not choose Israel as a passive object for his will in history, but as a people who could respond to him in a personal way. It was not a unified response, for men vary in their understanding and insight. The Psalms praise Yahweh in his many-sided character. In the Wisdom literature there is a development from Israel's concept of the norm of her relationship to Yahweh. All through the Old Testament men are confronted in various ways with *sedhaqa*, "righteousness." Community and individual are tempted away from following this divine norm. The sages wrestled with the problem as posed by their times. Von Rad clearly integrates their work into the total life of Israel. The Wisdom

10. *Journal of Biblical Literature*, LXXVIII, (1959), pp. 1-12. See his earlier statement in *Journal of Religion*, XXV (1945).

11. I cannot at once lay my hands on a published opinion such as I have described, but my own ears have heard!

12. G. von Rad, *Theologie des Alten Testaments* (Muenchen: Chr. Kaiser Verlag, 1957).

writers are not, therefore, a separate phenomenon in Israel, but one part of the many-sided response to God.

As a description of Israel's faith this book is probably one of the most important so far. The fact that the author has already made such extensive and detailed studies of the sources heightens one's confidence in his work. It is tempting to regret that he has confined himself to description, and has not dealt with the faith we can have in what he describes, but final judgment cannot be made until the work is complete. He promises to deal in volume II with the prophetic movement, and with fundamental theological discussion of the Old Testament. An English translation of both volumes will be imperative.

In 1958 translations of two important "Theologies" appeared. The first, by Jacob,<sup>13</sup> is in many ways the most useful book now available in English, so far as the ideas of the Old Testament itself is concerned.<sup>14</sup> The author defines the theology of the Old Testament "as the systematic account of the specific religious ideas which can be found throughout the Old Testament and which form its profound unity."<sup>15</sup> He says further:

A theology of the Old Testament which is founded not on certain isolated verses, but on the Old Testament as a whole, can only be a Christology, for what was revealed under the old covenant, through a long and varied history, in events, persons and institutions, is, in Christ, gathered together and brought to perfection. Such a statement does not in any way mean that we should only consider the Old Testament in the light of its fulfilment, but a perfectly objective study makes us discern already in the Old Testament the same message of the God who is present, of the God who saves and of the God who comes, which characterizes the Gospel. Unless it is based upon the principle of the unity of the two Testaments, and *a fortiori* on the internal unity of the Old Testament itself, it is not possible to speak of a theology of the Old Testament.<sup>16</sup>

His method of approach is soundly theocentric. It is the living God who dominates Israel's experience, revealing his many-sided character. His action is manifested through his Spirit and his Word. The world is his creation, and creation is the stage of man's life. God's greatest gift to man is life.

Life, having its source in God, can only be a gift, yet this gift, just like God himself, is the object of choice on man's part; it is only by choosing life . . . that man truly becomes what he is.<sup>17</sup>

Jacob quotes with approval a statement of H. W. Robinson's that "history is the sacrament of the religion of Israel."<sup>18</sup> He distinguishes the "two realities," "raw facts and their interpretation." Israel retained in its recorded history only those facts which bear on God's plan of salvation. This is certainly a proper emphasis, though one wishes the author had developed

13. E. Jacob, *Theology of the Old Testament*, transl. by Heathcote and Allcock (London: Hodder & Stoughton, 1958). The French edition appeared in 1955.

14. Bibliographies at the end of various sections are a very useful feature.

15. *Op. cit.*, p. 11.

16. *Ibid.*, p. 12f.

17. *Ibid.*, p. 180.

18. *Ibid.*, p. 183.

it at greater length. A weakness of his approach is that he seems to have no integral place for Job and Ecclesiastes. It is true he gives to the Wise Men a position along with king, prophet and priest as one of the "ministries" through whom God communicated, but the praise is faint. Curiously enough, another weak spot is the lack of weight given to the covenant. Perhaps this is a reaction against Eichrodt, who made it so central to his theology.

The institutions through which God works are two-fold: human and permanent. The human instruments are the ministries mentioned above. With the qualification already made this is an excellent section. The permanent setting includes the sacred place, the cult, and the law. The final division of the book deals with sin and redemption, death and the future life, and the consummation. It is surprising that despite his Christological emphasis Jacob gives so little space to a treatment of eschatology and the Messianic kingdom.

The other work of the year<sup>19</sup> was originally published in Dutch in 1949, but only noticed in passing by Porteous. The treatment of the theological ideas in the Old Testament is thorough within the limits of space, and generally sound. The more significant and creative part is the "Introduction" of 125 pages, in which Vriezen examines these tensions which keep recurring in our discussion. The Old Testament is the Word of God for the Church, and the theologian meets

men of like passions with himself, men who know that God has spoken to them, who have come to know Him in His holiness as the God of their lives, of the life of the people and of the future new world. For essentially it is these people who have come to know Him and who have heard the Word, who speak in the Old Testament.<sup>20</sup>

Scholarly research must take account of many things which do not directly concern the theologian. The theologian must examine the whole and the parts in the light of the Gospel. Even though subjectivity may be unavoidable, the Church must seek agreement on the meaning for itself of the Old Testament in whole and in part.

The Old Testament is the record of God's revelation, and therefore cannot be secularized by mere history of religion. The historical relations of Israel and her internal development are part of the record, but

there was another peculiar spiritual factor, which again and again interfered decisively in the life of Israel, and . . . it was this factor that gave the Old Testament to the world.<sup>21</sup>

The New Testament is the confirmation and the crowning of the Old. They are essentially one, but this unity can be seen in its proper perspective only when the revelation of God is admitted to be continuous and the existence of the line of historical development is recognized.<sup>22</sup>

19. Th. C. Vriezen, *An Outline of Old Testament Theology*, translated from the second Dutch edition of 1954 (Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1958). Like Jacob, he includes useful bibliographies at the end of various sections.

20. *Op. cit.*, p. 10.

21. *Ibid.*, p. 15.

22. *Ibid.*, p. 18.

At the same time Christ as Mediator brought something essentially new. The Holy Communion celebrates his mediatorship, and this fact of our experience leaves much of the Old Testament to the history of revelation. But it still has much to teach us. The spiritual structure of the Old Testament writings brings "greater, more profound truths."<sup>23</sup> Vriezen follows this with a discussion on the authority and use of the Old Testament in the Church. Its authority lies in its truth, *i.e.*,

the reliability and unrestricted character of its message of salvation and life; and therefore in the existential validity of what the Bible has to say about God and man, sin and grace, life and death, the world and its creation anew.<sup>24</sup>

It is the authentic record of the salvation that God gave to Israel, derived from the Spirit of God through human agencies. It is the word of God, in that it "contains the testimony to the revelation of God, objective as well as subjective."<sup>25</sup>

These considerations lead to some remarks about exegesis and preaching. The fundamental unity of the two Testaments is in the eschatological perspective. The Kingdom of God, basic to the Old Testament eschatology, is fulfilled in Christ, but the fulfilment is in many ways incomprehensible without the Old Testament as guide. It is one of the functions of exegesis to control the excesses to which theologians and preachers alike are prone. After this discussion it is not surprising that when Vriezen outlines the basis, task and method of Old Testament theology he regards biblical theology as the link between dogmatic and historical theology.

... it [biblical theology] collects the materials supplied by the Bible as it has come to understand them in the light of history, so that the dogmatician, engaged in his systematic work, may know what the points at issue in the Bible are. Old Testament theology as a branch of Biblical theology fulfills this task so far as the Old Testament is concerned.<sup>26</sup>

It is not primarily concerned with the history of the religion of Israel, but with the "message of the Old Testament both in itself and in its relation to the New Testament."<sup>27</sup>

The confrontation with the New Testament need not always take up a prominent position or be elaborated, but in principle it is always present, even if only in the way of arranging the materials.<sup>28</sup>

The method cannot be fully systematic without some arbitrariness, but some system is inevitable.

Attention has been concentrated on these three works, but there have been

23. *Ibid.*, p. 78.

24. *Ibid.*, p. 86.

25. *Ibid.*, p. 96. On this subject see also S. Mowinckel, *The Old Testament as the Word of God*, transl. by Bjornard (New York: Abingdon, 1959).

26. Vriezen, *op. cit.*, p. 119.

27. *Ibid.*, p. 121.

28. *Ibid.*, p. 124.

several others, which can only be noticed in chronological order. Wright<sup>29</sup> maintains that biblical theology is the confessional recital of the redemptive acts of God in a particular history. This *kerygma* gives unity to the Bible. His book is a semi-popular presentation of a point of view akin to that of von Rad. Van Imschoot's still unfinished *Théologie de l'Ancien Testament* I have (*mea culpa*) not yet read. From all reports it is a significant contribution to the literature from a competent Roman Catholic.<sup>30</sup> Though not strictly a theology, McKenzie's *Two-Edged Sword* deserves mention.<sup>31</sup> It is designed to acquaint literate Roman Catholics with the Old Testament, including its theology. Rowley's *Faith of Israel*<sup>32</sup> is a series of lectures on leading motifs in Old Testament theology. Together with his two earlier volumes<sup>33</sup> it is an important contribution to the current discussion. Koehler's *Theologie des Alten Testaments* has at last appeared in English.<sup>34</sup> Although of uneven merit it should not be overlooked.

Most recently G. A. F. Knight has contributed a book whose title, *A Christian Theology of the Old Testament*,<sup>35</sup> indicates its nature. The central theme of the Old Testament is "the redemptive activity of God in and through the Son, Israel." This means that a "whole" view of the meaning of the Old Testament is possible, and that the Old Testament has a message for the twentieth century in the light of the Christian revelation as a whole. The author is most stimulating and imaginative in his approach, and he writes for a wide audience. Sometimes his enthusiasm leads him to more vivid figures than strict exegesis justifies.

By no means all the work in Old Testament theology has been done in compendious syntheses such as have been described. The renewed emphasis on what Israel believed has arisen in part from the development of form-criticism and tradition-criticism.<sup>36</sup> The attempt to see the total life-situation (*Sitz im Leben*) of Israel's Scriptures required an examination of her beliefs, as reflected in single verses or in the whole corpus. A number of recent commentaries bear witness to this fact.<sup>37</sup> So also do a number of special studies of specific terms and doctrines. Word studies have always been of major importance in Old Testament research, as they are in many

29. G. E. Wright, *God Who Acts: Biblical Theology as Recital* (Studies in Biblical Theology, No. 8. London: S.C.M., 1952).

30. See the review in *Journal of Biblical Literature*, LXXV, (1956), p. 339 f.

31. J. L. McKenzie, *The Two-Edged Sword: An Interpretation of the Old Testament* (Milwaukee: Bruce, 1956).

32. H. H. Rowley, *The Faith of Israel* (Philadelphia: Westminster, 1957).

33. *The Authority of the Bible* (1949); *The Unity of the Bible* (1953).

34. L. Koehler, *Old Testament Theology*, transl. by Todd (London: Lutterworth, 1957).

35. London: S.C.M., 1959.

36. See especially Hahn, *op. cit.*, for the contribution various fields of interest have made to the rise of Old Testament theology.

37. Only a random selection need be given. The fullest, and perhaps the best, is the *Biblischer Kommentar Altes Testament*, edited by Martin Noth. Some parts of the *Interpreter's Bible* belong in this category. In more popular vein *The Torch Bible Commentaries* are indicative of the trend. Most of them are outstandingly good for the general reader. Of individual works, N. K. Gottwald's *Studies in the Book of Lamentations* (Studies in Biblical Theology, No. 14. London: S.C.M., 1954) is representative.

of the "Theologies" currently appearing. The *Theologisches Woerterbuch zum Neuen Testament*<sup>38</sup> is a basic tool both of exegesis and of theology. In many cases Old Testament words are treated almost as fully as their New Testament counterparts.

Judged by the number of English works at least, scholars are concerned especially with the Hebrew view of man. This is probably due in part to the important work begun by Pedersen 40 years ago,<sup>39</sup> and in part to the exigencies of the times. As Eichrodt said in 1944, "In the tumult of our present existence the human spirit is seeking new and better ways of understanding its place and task in our time."<sup>40</sup> Eichrodt's little book lies outside our period, but to my knowledge it is still the best work in English devoted entirely to the Old Testament doctrine of man. Koehler's *Hebrew Man*<sup>41</sup> has some merits, but it is ill-proportioned, and not primarily theological. Three writers who have written on the biblical doctrine of man in various lights might be mentioned here: Rust,<sup>42</sup> Wright,<sup>43</sup> and Shedd.<sup>44</sup> It is probable that much more of this study of biblical doctrines, as opposed to studies of the doctrines of either Testament, will be done.

In view of the evident Christological interest in the Old Testament it is gratifying that special attention is being paid to the Messianic concept. A sound view of Old Testament thought on the subject is vital to prevent excesses in reading the New Testament back into the Old. This alone would be justification for mentioning a few important books here, even though not all of them are primarily theological. The fullest and most important is Mowinckel's *He that Cometh*.<sup>45</sup> Klausner's work on the messianic hope should not be overlooked.<sup>46</sup> A brief but useful treatise is Ringgren's *Messiah in the Old Testament*.<sup>47</sup> Finally there is a considerable literature dealing with aspects of the Royal Psalms, which has considerable bearing on the Messianic and eschatological thought of the Old Testament.<sup>48</sup>

It is clear from what has been said that the tension between exegesis and

38. Now edited by G. Friedrich. The sixth volume has just been completed. English translations have appeared from time to time of some of the articles, under the general title of *Bible Key Words* (London: A. & C. Black). These include Love, The Church, Sin, Righteousness, Gnosis, Apostleship, Basileia, Lord. The S.C.M. has published the article on Servant of the Lord as *Studies in Biblical Theology*, No. 20.

39. J. Pedersen, *Israel: Its Life and Culture* (Oxford and Copenhagen; Vol. I/II, 1926; Vol. III/IV, 1940). The first Danish edition appeared in 1920.

40. W. Eichrodt, *Man in the Old Testament* (*Studies in Biblical Theology*, No. 4. London: S.C.M., 1951).

41. London, S.C.M., 1956.

42. E. C. Rust, *Nature and Man in Biblical Thought* (London: Lutterworth, 1953).

43. G. E. Wright, *The Biblical Doctrine of Man in Society* (*Ecumenical Biblical Studies*, No. 2. London: S.C.M., 1954).

44. R. P. Shedd, *Man in Community* (London: Epworth, 1958).

45. S. Mowinckel, *He that Cometh*, transl. by Anderson (New York: Abingdon, 1954).

46. J. Klausner, *The Messianic Idea in Israel from its beginning to the Completion of the Mishnah*, transl. by Stinespring (New York: Macmillan, 1955).

47. H. Ringgren, *The Messiah in the Old Testament* (*Studies in Biblical Theology*, No. 18. London: S.C.M., 1956).

48. Space permits mention only of A. R. Johnson, *Sacral Kingship in Ancient Israel* (Cardiff: University of Wales Press, 1955).

theology continues. As Barr expressed it,<sup>49</sup> one must accept one or both of two propositions: (1) Israel believed God had acted in history. (2) God has in fact acted in history. No one would dispute the first, nor its corollary that she interpreted her history in the light of that belief. It is difficult, sometimes impossible, to know whether the historical event can be recaptured. The acceptance of the second proposition is a matter of faith, but the historian is still left with the task of recapturing the event.

We may return to the fundamental conviction of the Hebrew people that God is most clearly revealed in history and say that whether the revelation of God in history is seen or overlooked depends upon the seeing eye. Yet the revelation of God is not "in the eye of the beholder" but is the *datum* of history. Therefore it is important that the facts should be correctly recorded and accurately assessed.<sup>50</sup>

But is Krister Stendahl right in saying that when the biblical scholar has described the faith of Israel or the Church he must hand over to the theologian the question of "what all this 'means' to the Church?"<sup>51</sup> The difficulty is in part sheer human limitation. In order to deal with the question of what the Old Testament "means" to the Church, one must have some acquaintance with the work being done in New Testament, Church History and Systematic Theology. For example, it is difficult for me, a student of the Old Testament, to deal adequately with Barth's exegesis of 1 Kings 13,<sup>52</sup> or of the Creation story.<sup>53</sup> That he has done violence to the text I have no doubt. Bultmann<sup>54</sup> accuses Barth of using a body of abstract categories in his biblical exegesis, of an inadequate statement of what "history" is, and of failing to define the relation between historical event and faith. He himself demands that scientific exegesis deal with the "relevant interpretation of human existence." All of this is important to me as an exegete, a Christian, and a preacher—but I do not have the philosophical and theological competence to enter fully into the debate. On the other hand, I do not believe that this absolves me from all participation, if for no other reason than that my own unexamined presuppositions are brought out thereby. As indicated earlier, the preacher must at least come to terms with the questions raised.

In "coming to terms" it is helpful to know how the Bible has been used in the Church. At least two aspects of the subject are important here—how the Church interpreted the Old Testament, and the authority with which

49. *Canadian Journal of Theology*, III (1957), p. 145. The entire article, "The Problem of Old Testament Theology and the History of Religion," is well worth reading.

50. S. B. Frost, "History and the Bible," *Canadian Journal of Theology*, III (1957), p. 96. Cf. B. D. Napier, *From Faith to Faith* (New York: Harper, 1955). Also the symposium, "Problems in Biblical Hermeneutics," in *Journal of Biblical Literature*, LXXVII (1958), pp. 18 ff.

51. *Ibid.*, p. 37. This is the problem which Fairweather discusses from the theologian's point of view in *Canadian Journal of Theology*, II (1956), pp. 65 ff.

52. *Church Dogmatics*, II, 2 (Edinburgh: T. & T. Clark, 1957), pp. 393 ff. Cf. Mathers, "Biblical and Systematic Theology," *Canadian Journal of Theology*, V (1959), pp. 23 ff.

53. *Church Dogmatics*, III, 1 (Edinburgh: T. & T. Clark, 1958), *passim*.

54. "The Problem of Biblical Hermeneutics," in *Essays Philosophical and Theological* (London: S.C.M., 1955), pp. 258 ff.

it vested the Jewish Scriptures. (A further question is the extent of the Canon, but space precludes a discussion of this important point.) I do not for a moment suggest a return to the views of the Fathers regarding Scripture, but we have much to learn from them. The studies of Grant,<sup>55</sup> Hanson,<sup>56</sup> and Smalley,<sup>57</sup> to mention only a few, have cleared away a lot of the rubbish which has accumulated. Too often "typology" has been sneered out of court by "modern" scholars. We cannot use the method as the Fathers did, but we must understand the principles and the ends the Fathers had in view. Once we grant that the Old Testament must speak to us, we must somehow translate its images into contemporary terms. What the Old Testament said to the Fathers is part of the life-blood of their faith, and we are in some measure, however differently we may define the term, heirs of the Fathers.

There has indeed been a revival of typological exegesis. Vischer<sup>58</sup> was almost as thoroughgoing as any of the Fathers in his use of this method to show that every page of the Old Testament witnesses to Jesus Christ. His book has been severely handled,<sup>59</sup> and seems to have had few followers in the scholarly world.

The charge has often been laid that typology ignores history. The real problem is to define the canons by which typology can be applied. As Lampe points out:

The typological method of exegesis, when properly applied, is essentially the recognition in our interpretation of Scripture of its character as the record of the continuous process of the acts of God. In the light of their climax in the Christian revelation, we can begin to discern, with the New Testament writers themselves, the pattern of that record, and, as its name implies, the function of typology is to trace that pattern from its first adumbrations in the Old Testament to its clear manifestation in the New. It is primarily a method of *historical* interpretation . . .<sup>60</sup>

There must be, he says later, a real correspondence between the original historical and theological situation and its later fulfilment. Mere "verbal and etymological juggling" is obnoxious. The Old Testament must be interpreted in the light of the New, not *vice versa*. The fact that workable criteria for so doing are hard to find must not inhibit the continuous search for them.

55. R. M. Grant, *The Bible in the Church* (New York: Macmillan, 1948); *The Letter and the Spirit* (London: S.P.C.K., 1957).

56. R. P. C. Hanson, *Origen's Doctrine of Tradition* (London: S.P.C.K., 1954); *Allegory and Event: A Study of the Sources and Significance of Origen's Interpretation of Scripture* (London: S.C.M., 1959).

57. B. Smalley, *The Study of the Bible in the Middle Ages* (Oxford: Blackwell, 1952).

58. W. Vischer, *Das Christuszeugnis des Alten Testaments*. This has been appearing from time to time. An early volume was translated into English as *The Witness of the Old Testament to Jesus Christ*.

59. See, e.g., Kraeling, *op. cit.*, pp. 219-226; Porteous, *op. cit.*, pp. 337-340.

60. G. W. H. Lampe, "Typological Exegesis," *Theology*, LVI (1953), p. 202. See also Lampe and Woollcombe, *Essays on Typology* (Studies in Biblical Theology, No. 22. London: S.C.M., 1957). Von Rad seems to have been thinking along the lines of typology as correspondence in his article "Typologische Auslegung des Alten Testaments," *Evangelische Theologie*, 12 (1952/53), pp. 17 ff. I regret that I have not been able to survey some of the interesting studies of typology and hermeneutics which have been coming out in Germany.

In the wider field of allegory, or spiritual exegesis, some work has been done. Most recently G. Cope<sup>61</sup> has entered the field with a fascinating and irritating book, *Symbolism in the Bible and the Church*. The biblical part is an attempt, among other things, to interpret the Bible in terms of Jung's "archetypes." Genesis 1:26, for example, is "more than an echo of an androgynous 'parent.' Somehow the sexes are thought of as being in the likeness of a single God who has a plural name."<sup>62</sup> The scientific exegete throws up his hands in horror. And yet—given the Jungian world-view, which I only understand sketchily at second hand, can one sweep Cope away simply because his exegesis is faulty? In quite another connection C. S. Lewis<sup>63</sup> speaks of "second meanings" in the Psalter, intending to show that great writers, especially poets, often said far more than they knew. The Genesis story deals with sexuality, procreation, fertility. These are, rather obviously, still part of man's life. How does the Genesis version apply to us? Cope's method may not appeal to us—to my own way of thinking it is wrong—but he has in his own way taken the Old Testament seriously and tried to interpret it to modern conditions.

Much more restrained is E. C. Blackman, in *Biblical Interpretation*.<sup>64</sup> He deals with the meaning of revelation, the question of authority, then with the development of exegesis from the Rabbis to modern criticism. It is admittedly a sketch, but because it is there one reads the last chapter, on "the present trend in Biblical exposition," with the greater confidence. The author quite clearly states that after sound exegesis of the literal sense the preacher must expound the spiritual sense, and gives three examples from the Old Testament, and a number from the New. He seems to be on the right track, though he has only scratched the surface.

This discussion of the history of exegesis, typology, and preaching brings us back to the principle that all study of the Old Testament must begin with sound study of the literal sense. Though little space has been devoted to it in this essay, the bulk of the major works of Old Testament theology reviewed here are primarily concerned with the reconstruction of the faith of Israel in its many-sided manifestations. This *must* be assimilated if any wholesome study or preaching is to be done. The descriptive work does lead to questions of organization and of "meaning." Though the problems are vast, so many tools are now available that the Old Testament scriptures are open for the Church to use as they have not been for a generation or more.

61. London: S.C.M., 1959.

62. *Op. cit.*, p. 113.

63. *Reflections on the Psalms* (London: Bles, 1958), pp. 99 ff. It is sometimes said that footnotes are the repository of undigested ideas. To this category belongs my feeling that Old Testament exegesis and preaching would benefit from consideration of works by contemporary students of literature. Lewis' *Allegory of Love* (Oxford, 1936), and Dorothy L. Sayers' works on Dante come to mind. Prof. D. K. Andrews called my attention to Helen Gardner's *The Business of Criticism* (Oxford, 1959), in which the author deals with Biblical matters, including allegory, as well as with her own field of English studies.

64. Philadelphia: Westminster, 1957. See also the short studies by R. H. Fuller, *What is Liturgical Preaching?* (London: S.C.M., 1957), and J.-D. Benoit, *Liturgical Renewal* (London: S.C.M., 1958).