

THEOLOGY OF THE OLD TESTAMENT (1904)

by MacDuff

MacDuff's scholarly theological examination of the doctrinal content of the Old Testament, designed as a textbook for theology students seeking a comprehensive understanding of the theological concepts and divine revelation found in the Hebrew Scriptures.

1 Chapters

Table of Contents

1. 00 The Theology of the Old Testament (1904)

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THE THEOLOGY OF THE OLD TESTAMENT by Andrew Bruce Davidson

(1904)

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PREFACE. THE master hand, it will easily be seen, has not put this work in order for the press. The subject was long in Professor Davidson's mind. He gave it a large place in his College Lectures. He was constantly engaged in writing upon it and in recasting what he had written, modifying his statements and revising his conclusions. He prepared a large mass of matter, but he did not survive to throw it finally into shape for publication.

It has been a difficult and anxious task to deal for the best with the abundant material Dr. Davidson's manuscripts bear on every page impressive evidence of the immense pains he took with things, and the lofty standard he set before him in all his professional duty. Much of the matter

came to me in a variety of editions, four, five, or six in not a few cases, the long results of unceasing study and searching probation of opinion. It has been far from easy to de'cide between one form and another, all being left undated, and to bring the different parts into proper relation.

I have not thought it right to take liberties with my departed friend's work. I have given it substantially as he left it, adding only an occasional note where that seemed specially appropriate or needful. Nor have I judged it within my province to depart from his ways in the use of Scripture or in anything else. When expounding any

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VI PREFACE Biblical truth he was iii the habit of making copious quotations from the sacred text, referring to the same passages again and again as they offered themselves in different aspects and connexions. He did this, too, with much freedom, using sometimes the Authorised Version and sometimes the Eevised, furnishing sometimes a trans- lation of his own, and sometimes giving the sense rather than the terms. His methods in such things are followed as they are found in his manuscripts. Had Dr. Davidson been spared to complete his work and carry it through the press, it would have been different, no doubt, in some respects from what it is. It would have been thrown into the best literary form. Its statements at some points would have been more condensed. It would have had less of that element of iteration of which he made such effective use in his class-room. But even without the last touches of the skilled hand, it will be seen to be a distinct and weighty contribution to a great subject. Fine thinking, penetrating exegesis, spiritual vision, a rare insight into the nature and operation of Eevelation, make the book one which the student of Old Testament Scripture will greatly value.

One thing that gave Dr. Davidson much concern was the question of the plan on which a work of this kind should be constructed. His object was to bring the history and the ideas into living relation, to trace the progress of Old Testament faith from stage to stage, and to exhibit the course along which it advanced from its beginnings to the comparative fulness which it obtained at the end of the prophetic period. But he never carried out the scheme.

He had an increasing distrust of ambitious attempts to fix the date of every separate piece of the Hebrew literature, and link the ideas in their several measures of immaturity and maturity with the writings as thus arranged. He

PREFACE VII became more and more convinced that there was no solid basis for such confident chronological dispositions of the writings and juxtapositions of the beliefs. In his judg- ment the only result of endeavours of this kind was to give an entirely fictitious view of the ideas, in their relative degrees of definiteness, the times at which they emerged or came to certainty, and the causes that worked to their origin and development. The most that we had scientific^ warrant to do, in view of the materials available for the purpose, was, in his opinion, to take the history in large- tracts and the literature in a few broad divisions, and study the beliefs and the deliverances in connexion with these. My work is at an end. During its course the mist has been often in my eyes. The sense of loss has been revived. A voice has spoken to me out of the past. A face that

was darkened has seemed to be turned upon me again with its old light. I have felt how long art is and how short is life.

S. D. F. SALMOND.

ABERDEEN, April 2, 1904.

CONTENTS.

L THE SCIENCE OF OLD TESTAMENT THEOLOGY.

MM 1. The Idea of Old Testament Theology . . . 1 2. Studies preliminary to Old Testament Theology . . . 4 3. Definitions and Characteristics of Old Testament Theology 6 4. The Relation of Old Testament Ideas to the Old Testament History 11 5. Divisions of the Subject 12 G. The great Historical Periods 15 7. General Course and Drift of the History . . .22 8. Literary and Historical Criticism in relation to Old Testament Theology 28 II. THE DOCTRINE OF GOD.

1. General Character of the Old Testament Conception of God 30 2. The Idea of the Divine Name36 3. Particular Names of God38 4. The Name Jehovah 45 5. Jehovah the God of Israel 58 6. The historical Occasion of the Application of the Name

Jehovah . 67 III. THE DOCTRINE OF GOD THE DIVINE NATURE.

1. The Knowledge of God 73 2. The Essence and Attributes of God82 3. The Unity of God 96 4. The Doctrine of the sole Godhead of Jehovah in later Prophecy 100 5. The Personality and Spirituality of God . . .106 tv

X CONTENTS IV. THE DOCTRINE OF GOD THE SPIRIT.

PAGE 1. The Spirit of God115 2. The Spirit of God within God Himself . . .117 3. The Activities of the Spirit120 4. What the Spirit is126 V. THE DOCTRINE OF GOD THE DIVINE ATTRIBUTES.

1. The Righteousness of God129 2. The Holiness of God144 3. The Natural Attributes160 4. The Redemptive Attributes169 5. God's Relations to Nature and to Men . . .174 VI. THE DOCTRINE OF MAN.

1. Human Nature and its Constitution182 2. The terms ' Body ' and ' Flesh '188 3. The term 'Spirit' 192 4. The term 'Soul' 199 VII. THE DOCTRINE OF MAN SIN.

1. Sin its Nature and Extent 203 2. The Consciousness of Sin 227 VIII. THE DOCTRINE OF REDEMPTION.

1. The Covenant.235 2. Why the Covenant with Israel and not another ? . . 249 3. The Terms descriptive of the Covenant Relation . . 252 4. The Second Side of the Covenant The People a righteous People 259 5. Righteousness in the People 271 6. Righteousness, Grace, and Faith 278 7. Suffering and Imputation 282 IX. DOCTRINE OF REDEMPTION SUPRAHUMAN

GOOD AND EVIL.

1. Angels 289 2. The Angel of the Lord296 3. Satan 300

CONTENTS XI X. DOCTRINE OF REDEMPTION-PRIESTHOOD AND

ATONEMENT.

PAGE 1. The Priest 306 2. Sacrifice 311 3. Atonement and Forgiveness315 4. Atonement by Priest and High Priest . . . 324 5. The term 'Atone' 327 6. Ritual Use of the Term338 7. The Principle of Atonement 352 XI. THE DOCTRINE OF THE LAST THINGSTHE

MESSIANIC IDEA.

1. Distinctive Contributions to the Doctrine . . . 356 2. The Consummation of the Kingdom . . . 3C5 3. The Day of the Lord374 4. The Day of the Lord in Deutero-Isaiah . . . 384 5. Redemptive Righteousness in Deutero-Isaiah . . 395 XII. DOCTRINE OF THE LAST THINGS IMMORTALITY.

1. Differences in Modes of Thought 402 2. Fellowship with God the Fundamental Idea . . 415 3. Preliminary Questions as to Man's Nature . . .417 4. Conception of Sheol 425 5. Conception of Death 432 6. Life and its Issues 437 7. Problems of Righteousness and their Solution . . 453 8. Ideas of an After-Life in Psalms xvii., xxxvii., xlix., lxxiii. 459 9. The Idea of an After-Life in Job 466 10. The Hope of an After- Life in relation to the Ideas of Life and Death 495 11. The Moral Meaning of Death511 12. Further on the Reconciliation between the Idea of Death and the Idea of Life 522 NOTES OF LITERATURE 533 INDEX OF SCRIPTURE PASSAGES , , 541 INDEX OF MATTERS . . 548 THE THEOLOGY OF THE

OLD TESTAMENT THE

UNIVERSITY OF THE THEOLOGY OF THE OLD

TESTAMENT.

/ . THE SCIENCE OF OLD TESTAMENT

THEOLOGY.

1. The Idea of Old Testament Theology.

OLD Testament Theology is the earlier division of Biblical Theology. We speak of a Natural Theology, a Biblical, a Systematic Theology. These adjectives attached to the term Theology indicate the source of our theological knowledge, or the orderly form into which the knowledge is thrown. In Natural Theology nature is the source of our know- ledge. In Systematic Theology, while Scripture supplies the knowledge, some mental scheme, logical or philo- sophical, is made the mould into which the knowledge is run, so that it comes out bearing the form of this mould. In Biblical Theology the Bible is the source of the know- ledge, and also supplies the form in which the knowledge is presented. Biblical Theology is the knowledge of God's great operation in introducing His kingdom among men, presented to our view exactly as it lies presented in the Bible. Now the Bible is a book composed of many parts, the composition of which extended over considerably more than a thousand years. And the operation of God in bringing in His kingdom extends even over a larger space. But in the Bible we have writings contemporary with this operation, and reflecting it for more than a thousand years, and writings which sketch that operation in brief 2 THE THEOLOGY OF THE OLD TESTAMENT and in its principal

turning-points during the ages preceding. This at once suggests to us, therefore, when we consider that God's operation extended over this long period, and yet that it took end at last in the coming of His Son, that two characteristics belong to it. It is historical, and it is progressive ; it covers a long period, and it advances from less to more, and finally culminates. And the Bible keeps pace, so to speak, with this operation, reflects it, and gives us the knowledge of it in this form. In its fullest sense the kingdom of God was only introduced in the Coming of the Son of God into the world ; and in this sense all that went before might seem only capable of being regarded as preparation for this kingdom, or at most shadows of it. And this is the view which has often been taken of what is called the Old Testament dispensation, namely, that it is a designed shadow or adumbration of the new. But this is not the view which it takes of itself ; the consciousness of Israel as reflected in the minds of its prophets and highest men was that it was the kingdom of God already. The apparent discrepancy disappears on a little consideration of what the kingdom of God is. It is the fellowship of men with God and with one another in love. In a perfect sense this could not be till the Coming of the Son in whom this fellowship is fully realised. And in a sense all that went before was preparation for the kingdom rather than the kingdom itself. But how was the perfect kingdom prepared for ? Not by mere predictions of it and references to it as a thing to come, nor by setting up a thing which was a shadow of it ; but by setting itself up in as perfect a form as was possible to begin with, awakening within men both a sense of dissatisfaction with its imperfections then, and lofty ideals of what its true condition would be, and thus kindling in them an enthusiasm which made them not only long for the perfect kingdom, but struggle for its attainment. For as the kingdom of God in its perfect form does not lie in mere knowledge, but rather in the life which the knowledge awakens, so it could not be prepared for by the THE IDEA OF OLD TESTAMENT THEOLOGY 3 mere knowledge that it was approaching, nor even by the knowledge outwardly communicated of what it was. It could be prepared for only by bringing in, and that in ever fuller tides, the life of which it consists. That life no doubt depended on the knowledge of what the kingdom truly was ; but this knowledge could be learned by men only by living within the kingdom itself.

Thus the perfect kingdom was gradually prepared for by setting up such a kingdom in an imperfect state and under temporary forms, and by administering it in such a way as progressively to suggest to men's minds the true ideal of the kingdom, and communicate to them in broader streams the true life in such a kingdom. And each step of this communication was a more perfect bringing in of the kingdom itself, an advance towards its perfect form. Thus a life and a thought were awakened within this kingdom of God set up in Israel, which grew and expanded till they finally burst and threw off from them the imperfect outward form of the kingdom in which they were enclosed. Now the Old Testament Scriptures exhibit to us the growth of this life and this thought. We can observe the stream of life and ideas flowing from the Exodus at least, or even from a source higher up, ever broadening as it proceeds, and finally pouring itself into the sea of life and thought in the New Testament age. We can fathom this stream here and there along its course, mark the velocity and breadth of its current, observe the changing colour of its waters as it pursues its way through region after region of the people's history, and perceive what subsidiary streams poured their contents into it and helped to swell it. To do this and present the results to ourselves is to be Old Testament theologians.

What we shall have to look for is a point of view ; and that point of view will be this, that in the Old Testament we have presented to us an actual historical religious life, men filled with the profoundest thoughts of God, and living to God a most close personal life, and, having such thoughts of God and such experiences of life to Him, importunate in their desires and attempts to 4 THE THEOLOGY OF THE OLD TESTAMENT awaken in those around them the same thoughts and the same life. This is the strange scene, full of the intensest reality, which the Old Testament exhibits to us, a scene continued down through a long historical period, changing in some ways, but always presenting the same main feature namely, that of a body of profoundly religious men speaking the truth to their countrymen, and seeking to turn them to God. Thus we do not go to the Old Testa- ment with any general conception that it is the word of God spoken to us. We do not go to it with this concep- tion, but we rise from it with this conception. This is the thing which will be made plain to us, the personal religion of all the writers of Scripture, their life to God and with God. This becomes plainer the lower down we come, in the Psalter, for example, and in such books as Job. In the period after the Exile we shall find problems raised by the conditions of life, problems touching God's rule of the world, His relation to Israel, the people who knew Him, and were the representatives of His cause in the world ; problems, too, of His relations to the godly in an ungodly generation. To the intellect these questions might be insoluble. But we shall see something that enabled men to live without a solution. This was their religion, their conscious fellowship with God. We shall find that more and more religious certainty was based on this consciousness. It was the only thing the pious mind possessed, but it was at last always found enough. " Nevertheless," said the Psalmist, tried by misfortune and intellectually paralysed before the riddles of providence, " nevertheless, I am continually with thee" (Ps. lxxiii. 23). The consciousness of God becomes the other side of self consciousness, and this in- ward assurance will be seen to be strong enough to face all the difficulties raised by what is external.

2. Studies preliminary to Old Testament Theology. This conception of what Old Testament Theology is at once suggests that certain studies must precede it. If it PRELIMINARY STUDIES be the presentation to ourselves of the gradual advance of the kingdom of God as exhibited to us in the successive books of Scripture, it is necessary that we should see how these books follow one another, and know the age to which they belong, and of which they reflect the life and the thought. Criticism or Introduction must precede any attempt at a scientific Old Testament Theology. And this fact is what legitimates Criticism and gives it a place as a handmaid to Theology. As a mere literary science whose object was to settle the ages of the various literary components of the Bible, and describe their characteristics, and indicate their connections with the history of the People of Israel regarded as any other ancient people, Criticism would have no proper place among our theological disci- plines. But when it is not pursued simply for its own sake, so to speak, but is used as an instrument for disposing the books of the Old Testament in their proper place so that we may correctly perceive how ideas arose and followed one another in Old Testament times, and may observe how history reacted upon the thought and life of the people, then Criticism has a very important place to fill.

Obviously, too, Old Testament Theology must be pre- ceded by scientific exegesis of the literature in its length and breadth. We cannot create a trustworthy theology of the Old Testament by merely picking out a text here and there in an Old Testament book. We must know the whole scope of the book. Individual passages always derive their meaning from the context. Torn from their

surroundings their mere language might suggest to us much more or sometimes perhaps much less than they really mean. Such passages have usually some bearing on the circumstances of the author's time. This bearing often greatly modifies their meaning, and it is seldom that we can really discover the true sense of any single passage in a book unless we have made a study of the whole book and learned to estimate the author's general modes of thinking, the broad drift of his ideas, and discovered to what matters in the history of his people and what 6 THE THEOLOGY OF THE OLD TESTAMENT condition of their minds it is that he is directing his whole work. Such studies of whole books are useful and almost necessary preliminaries to Old Testament Theology. Such studies, exhibiting what the Germans call the *Lehrbegriff*, the general drift of the teaching of a book, have not been uncommon in connection with the New Testament. They have been less attended to with regard to the Old

Testament.

3. Definitions and Characteristics of Old Testament Theology.

Old Testament Theology has been defined to be the historical and genetic presentation of the religion of the Old Testament ; or as others express it, it is that branch of theological science which has for its function to present the religion of Revelation in the ages of its progressive movement. These definitions do not differ from the one already suggested, namely, that it is the presentation of the great operation of God in bringing in the kingdom of God, so far as that operation was carried on in the Old Testament period. The one definition speaks of the religion of the Old Testament, and the other of God's operation in bringing in His kingdom. But these two things are in the main the same. The kingdom of God is within us. To bring in the kingdom was to awaken a certain religious life in His people, and to project great thoughts and hopes before their minds. This life and these thoughts are reflected to us in the Old Testament Scriptures. These various definitions all imply the same distinct characteristics.

They all imply, e.g., that Old Testament Theology is a historical science. It is historical in the same sense as that in which the Old Testament is historical, i.e. in the sense that its parts follow one another down through a long period of time. We can readily perceive reasons sufficient to explain the gradual and historical inbringing of the kingdom of God. For instance, one of the first necessities to one who will take his place in the kingdom of God is that God should DEFINITIONS OF OLD TESTAMENT THEOLOGY 7 be known to him, at least on the moral side of His being. But God could not make His moral nature known by mere statements concerning Himself delivered at once. His power He could reveal in one terrible act, but the principles lying behind His power, and governing the exercise of it, His justice, His goodness, His grace, in a word His moral nature, could not be shown except by a prolonged exhibition of Himself in relation to the life of men. When we look at the Divine names we observe that the attribute which the Shemitic mind earliest laid hold of was the Divine power. The Shemitic people were slower to learn His other attributes, especially to learn the constancy and unchangeableness of these attributes, in other words, to rise to the conception of God as a transcendent moral Person. They could be taught this only by observing how God acted in their history with a terrible consistency, punishing evil with an inflexible uniformity, and making righteousness on their part the condition of His being their God and protecting them. When we read the Prophets we perceive that they considered that this was the chief lesson which the people's history was fitted to teach them. In opposition to their superficial

hopes, founded on Jehovah's being their national God, and their expectation that they could at any time secure His favour by making their burnt sacrifices fatter and more abundant, these prophets insist upon the ethical uniformity of the Divine Mind, which cannot be bribed by gifts, but demands rectitude : " I hate, I despise your feasts ... let judgment roll down as waters, and righteousness as a mighty stream "

(Amos v. 2124, E.V.). This lesson in regard to the nature of God is the chief lesson which the prophets draw from the history of the people. But one can conceive many other uses served by the long preliminary history of Israel. Its many vicissitudes threw individuals into very various circumstances, often trying, sometimes joyous, and thus we have those beautiful pictures of the life of the individual with God which are contained in the Book of Psalms, almost the most precious heritage which the Church has THE THEOLOGY OF THE OLD TESTAMENT derived from Israel, and to which there is almost nothing similar in the New Testament period.

These definitions also all imply that the presentation of the Old Testament religion in Old Testament Theology is f/enetic. This means not only that Old Testament Theology shows us the religion of the Old Testament in gnesi, that is, in the condition of actually arising or originating, but that its progress was, so to speak, organic. It grew, and that not by mere accretion or the external addition of truth to truth. The succeeding truth rose out of the former truth. This was due to the fact that the kingdom of God was planted into the life of a people, and thus its progress was inseparably connected with the progress and destiny of the nation of Israel. We cannot get a religious progress without a religious subject in whose mind we observe the progress. Now, fche religious subject in the Old Testament was the people of Israel and the progress can be studied in the mind of this subject as influenced by its history. Revelation of truth was not, so to speak, communicated from without ; but the organs of revelation rose within the people in the persons of its highest re- presentatives, men in whom its life beat fullest and its aspirations were most perfectly embodied. Thus the truths concerning the kingdom of God which they were enabled, stage after stage, to reach, had a connection with one another parallel to the connection between the stages of the life of the people. The truths regarding the kingdom of God appearing in the Old Testament are all given in terms, so to speak, of the history, institutions, and life of the people of Israel. It is customary to regard the institutions of Israel, its offices and ordinances, as all prearranged parallels to the things of the Christian Church, shadows and adum- brations or types, as they are called, of the realities of the New Testament kingdom. Now, of course, it must be maintained that the perfect form of the kingdom of God, the form which it was to have in the New Testament, was contemplated from the beginning. There was a deter- minism impressed on the Old Testament kingdom toward CHARACTERISTICS OF OLD TESTAMENT THEOLOGY 9 its perfect form ; it was a growth, an organism of which we see the complete stature only in the New Testament kingdom. But we must not regard those institutions in Israel as only having this use of foreshadowing the future.

They were real institutions and offices there, and their re- ference to the future was probably, in many instances, not understood or even surmised. The way they bore reference to the future in the minds of the people was rather this. The highest thinkers among the people, such as the prophets, perceived the idea lying in the offices and institu- tions, and expressed their longing and certainty that the idea would be yet realised.

Thus it was, for instance, with the kingship. Its idea was a king of God's kingdom, a representative of God sitting on the throne in Jerusalem. Such an idea of the kingship led to the most brilliant idealising of the king and his office. Being king for God and in God's kingdom, he had attribute after attribute assigned to him, all reflections of the Divine attributes, till at length he was even styled the 'mighty God,' he in whom God Himself would be wholly present. And not only the kingship, but other offices and other characters appearing among the people were idealised ; and as it by and by came to be felt that such ideals could not be realised in the present, the realisation of them was thrown into the future. One of the most remarkable of these ideals is the Suffering Servant of the Lord, which is rather a personification of the suffering people idealised. But, in general, everything significant in the people's history and life was, as it were, abstracted from its relations in the present ; it was held up and magnified by a process of moral idealisation and the realisation of it thrown into the future. Thus the people's minds were directed to the future, not, as is often thought, because they understood beforehand or ever were taught that their institutions were all predetermined shadows of a reality to come, but because they perceived that the ideals which their institutions suggested to them, and which their history and experience had called up before their 10 THE THEOLOGY OF THE OLD TESTAMENT mind, were ideals that could not be realised in the present, in the conditions of the people and the world that then existed, nor even under those institutions which had been the very means of suggesting the ideals to their minds.

But, again, these definitions all imply that Old Testament Theology is a development. It is not a thing complete, it is but the earlier part of Biblical Theology, and is completed in New Testament Theology. Still, Biblical Revelation being an organism, Old Testament Theology is not a torso. It is a growth which, though it has not attained perfection, has attained a certain proper development. All its parts are there, though none of it is yet in full stature. There is perhaps no truth in the New Testament which does not lie in germ in the Old ; and conversely, there is perhaps no truth in the Old Testament, which has not been expanded and had new meaning put into it in the New. The Old Testament contains the same truths as the New Testament, but in a less developed form, and we must avoid two errors which are not uncommon. The one is the mistake of separating the Old Testament from the New in such a way as leaves us with no authoritative truth in the Old. The other is to confuse the New and the Old so that we shall find the Old equally advanced with the New. The difference between the New and the Old is not that the same truths are not found in both, but that in the one the truths are found in a less degree of development than in the other. The Old Testament is as good authority for a truth as the New ; only we must not go beyond the degree which the truth has yet reached in the Old Testament. This fact, however, that the progress of the kingdom was organic and at last culminated, suggests that the Old Testament should be read by us always in the light of the end, and that in framing an Old Testament Theology we should have the New Testament completion of it in our view. What we shall be engaged in is mainly discovering the thoughts and estimating the life of the Old Testament people in its various stages. But it is obvious THE IDEAS AND THE HISTORY 11 that at no time was the consciousness of the Old Testament Church able to take in the whole meaning of the development in the midst of which it stood. It must be our first object to discover what views the prophets and other Old Testament writers had, to present them to ourselves, and to take care not to impose New Testament conceptions upon them. Still, it will be of interest to ourselves to compare the two together, and to see how far the Old Testament Church had been able to realise to itself the point towards which the development was moving ; and, knowing this goal, we shall be in a better position to estimate

the meaning of the Old Testament from the light in which it is thus set for us.

4. The Relation of Old Testament Ideas to the Old Testament History.

If the view which we have taken of our subject, then, is correct, it will appear that, though we speak of Old Testament Theology, all that we can attempt is to present the religion or religious ideas of the Old Testament. As held in the minds of the Hebrew people, and as exhibited in their Scriptures, these ideas form as yet no Theology.

There is no system in them of any kind. They are all practical religious beliefs, and are considered of importance only as they influence conduct. We do not find a theology in the Old Testament ; we find a religion religious con- ceptions and religious hopes and aspirations. It is we ourselves that create the theology when we give to these religious ideas and convictions a systematic or orderly form. Hence our subject really is the History of the Religion of Israel as represented in the Old Testament.

We have seen, too, that the presentation or exhibition of the religious ideas is to be historical. This is the systematic form under which the religious ideas are pre- sented, and which the Old Testament itself supplies. The historical character of the Old Testament religion is one of its chief characteristics, that is, its continuance and 12 THE THEOLOGY OF THE OLD TESTAMENT growth during a long period of history. And, further, we have seen that the presentation is organic. This, indeed, is contained in the fact that it is historical. The history of any individual consciousness must be organic, whether the mind be that of a nation or that of a person. Our successive experiences and the phases of mind which we go through during a lifetime are not isolated occurrences.

They rise each out of the other. They are connected with our external history ; many times they are due to it. But even our external history has a unity and an organic char- acter in it. And this is no doubt truer of a nation, or at least its truth may be more distinctly perceived in national life. When, therefore, it is said that the Old Testament religion is to be presented organically, it is meant that each step of progress was intimately connected with the people's history with their experiences. Revelations of this truth or that were not made sporadically, but were given in con- tinuous connection with the national life and experience, and so the truths are interlinked with one another in the same way as the successive stages of evolution in the national history are. 15. Divisions of the Subject.

Now, the question arises, What divisions of the subject shall we adopt ? If we employed the ordinary threefold division, Theology, Anthropology, and Soteriology, we 1 "From an evolutionist point of view, men speak of the development of the religion of Israel. From a different point of view, the history of Israel's religion is called a progressive revelation. We must remember that a progressive revelation from the Divine side must exhibit itself among men as a persistent struggle to realise new truths. Every new thought of God is first understood in a soul which has been made receptive for it ; and, once grasped, it maintains itself in him who is illumined by it, as well as in those around him, only by conflict. This conflict appears to one man as a progressive development ; to another, who, by experience, has learned to know the gulf between God and the human heart as a terrible reality, it appears as a progressive revelation. But, however it be regarded, all are agreed that from the Tora and Nebiim [Law and Prophets] we can understand how the precious

treasure of Israel's religion came more and more fully to light, and maintained itself ever more firmly" (Wildboer, Canon, p. 162).

DIVISIONS OF OLD TESTAMENT THEOLOGY 13 should have to take each of these subjects and trace it down, step by step, through the whole length of the nation's history, marking the points at which the current of thought on the subject received new additions or a new momentum.

Perhaps, however, the easier way would be to divide the history into periods, to cut it into zones, as it were, and examine in each of these zones the whole religious thought of the people during the period, as it is reflected in the literature of that period. This method preserves better the historical character of the study, and this is the method usually adopted by writers on the subject of Old Testament Theology. In point of fact, the three- fold theological division Theology, or doctrine of God;

Anthropology, or doctrine of man ; and Soteriology, or doctrine of salvation is somewhat too abstract for a subject like ours. What we meet with in the Old Testament are two concrete subjects and their relation. The two are :

Jehovah, God of Israel, on the one hand, and Israel, the people of Jehovah, on the other ; and the third point, which is given in the other two, is their relation to one another. And it is obvious that the dominating or creative factor in the relation is Jehovah. The Old Testament contains almost exclusively a theology (^0709 irepl Seov) or doctrine of Jehovah the God of Israel. It is to be observed, too, that what we have to do with is not a doctrine of God, but a doctrine of Jehovah, Israel's God. We have reached now such a stage of thinking on the Divine that, while some may doubt whether there be a God at all, nobody supposes that there is more than one. But this point is just one that has to be inquired into regarding Jehovah how far Israel's God was believed to be God alone. At all events, as I have said, He was the normative factor in the relation.

He moulded the people, and the mould into which He cast them was that of His own nature. The conceptions of the people regarding Jehovah immediately reacted on the people and created corresponding conceptions regarding themselves. The people must be what their God, Jehovah, was.

Now, thoughts of Jehovah or revelations regarding 14 THE THEOLOGY OF THE OLD TESTAMENT Him, for the two things are the same, seeing that a revelation is no revelation until it takes the shape of human thought, might run on two chief lines. One would be ethical or spiritual conceptions of Jehovah conceptions which immediately reacted on the people and made them feel that the same ethical character was demanded from them, if they were to be His people. And a second would be thoughts of how Jehovah was to be served in acts of worship in other words, thoughts regarding the sacred ritual. Now, these are the two lines on which most of the sacred writings of the people run. The first line of conceptions, the ethical or spiritual, whether in regard to the nature of Jehovah or the conduct of His people, was chiefly developed by the prophets. The line of ritual service naturally was developed mostly by the priests, or a't least by men who were more practical than the prophets. But even the ritual legislation was influenced by the prophetic teaching it was often an embodiment in a practical form of their ideas. This second line, then, is that of the legislation, for all the legislation relates to the worship or ritual service of Jehovah at least in the main. These two streams of thought might be called objective, so far as the body of the

people was concerned. For, though the prophetic thoughts were, of course, profoundly subjective to the prophets themselves, that is, rose up out of their own hearts with the greatest intensity and fire of conviction, yet the prophets were a small body compared with the whole mass ; they were the organs of revelation to the general body. And in like manner the legislation, which was many times a mere practical embodiment of prophetic teaching, was formulated by small bodies of priests, and was imposed upon the mass by authority.

Besides these two objective streams there were two others, which might be called subjective. One of these was the expression of personal devotion, or the spiritual experience and exercise of the individual mind, such as we have in the Psalms. There is no reason at all to suppose that the bulk of the Psalms are the production of one individual. THE GREAT HISTORICAL PERIODS 15 They are the expression of the devotion, and many times of the religious conflicts of the individual mind, throughout the whole of the people's history, particularly during its later stages. And, secondly, the other subjective stream of thought was that embodied in the Wisdom. This is the expression of the religious reflecting mind, as the other was of the devotional mind. The pious emotions responded to the prophetic truth, and to the demands of the law, in words that run through the whole scale of religious feeling. The reflecting mind delighted itself by observing how the great ethical truths of Jehovah's nature were everywhere verifying themselves in His providence in the world and in men's lives. Or it was startled at a later time, when even the godly lay under grievous calamities, to find that the prophetic teaching was contradicted by events of actual providence. This gave rise to doubts and questionings, by which men were sometimes almost driven to despair. This Wisdom we have in the Proverbs, many of the Psalms, Job, and Ecclesiastes ; and, of course, to all these have to be added many expressions of religious faith and many examples of religious conduct in the historical writings.

Keeping, then, all these general lines of thought in view, which are in the main four, prophecy, or religious politics ; legislation, or the ritual of worship ; devotion, and reflection, we have the literary materials which we have to divide into periods, so as to exhibit the historical growth of the conceptions which the materials embody. Naturally, any division will to some extent break in upon things closely connected, because the growth of thought or the stream of history cannot be cut into sections. For it is a thing continuous and uninterrupted. But with this admission the following division marks the great points in the literary history of Israel.

6. The great Historical Periods.

(a) A preliminary or introductory period terminating with the Exodus. The Old Testament religion hardly begins till 16 THE THEOLOGY OF THE OLD TESTAMENT the Exodus. Therefore the religious subject in Old Testament times with whom Jehovah's covenant was made was the people Israel, not individual Israelites, and the people was the creation of the great act of redemption at the Exodus. This period, then, would be preliminary. We have no literature from this period itself. What we have is the view of this period taken in the ninth and eighth centuries. This view contains many elements particularly two, national traditions of early human history not peculiar to Israel, but shared in by most Shemitic nations ; and, secondly, the penetration and modification of these traditions by the principles of the religion of Jehovah e.g. in the narratives of the Creation, the Fall, the Flood, etc. So the patriarchal period is the period of tradition, and of tradition possibly religiously coloured. What is perhaps most important for us is this religious

colouring, rather than the mere details of the history.

(b) The period from the fixodus to written prophecy, B.C. 800. The beginning of written prophecy in the deliverances of Amos and his successors is a point of such importance that it is natural to make it an era. Apart from the religious truths taught by the canonical prophets there is one thing which characterises them all from Amos downwards. They have completely broken with the nation, whose condition they condemn and pronounce to be hopeless, and on the eve of destruction. This destruction is inevitable, Jehovah their God being what He is. No doubt earlier prophets express the same judgment, but less universally. Even as early as Solomon, Ahijah of Shiloh predicted the downfall of his kingdom (1 Kings xi. 3139). And Elijah's attitude was the same towards the kingdom of the north. Perhaps during this period we can trace only two of the four great streams of thought with much certainty.

1. Of Prophecy, we have examples in Deborah, Samuel, Elijah, and Elisha. Except the Song of Deborah, there is no literary prophecy. Under prophecy, however, according to the Jewish modes of classification, fall historical writings, e.g. Judges, the Books of Samuel. THE GREAT HISTORICAL PERIODS 17 2. The other stream is that of Legislation. Here we can put with certainty the so-called Book of the Covenant, Ex. xx.-xxiii. It may be the case that more should be placed here ; but this is disputed. It is probable, however, that there were both Psalms and Proverbs during this period the latter certainly, as, e.g., in the fable of Jotham. But it is difficult to identify those of this age. As to this oldest legislation, however, all scholars are agreed, and with it goes, of course, a good deal of the history in Genesis, Exodus, Numbers, and Joshua. It is very probable that laws more strictly ritual than those in the code Ex. xx. xxiii. existed. But it is not certain that they were yet reduced to writing, being merely traditional among the priests. If written, they were kept within the priestly circles.

(c) From 800, written prophecy, to 586, the Exile of Judah. 1. Prophecy. The stream of prophecy beginning with Amos gradually widens out to be a broad and imposing river. The great prophets whose names we know belong to this period Amos, Hosea, Micah, Isaiah, and Jeremiah. Perhaps it would be safest to close the period with Jeremiah, who survived the Exile only a very short time, and to carry Ezekiel into the next period. He survived the Exile a number of years, and for other reasons he rather belongs to the post-Exile sphere.

2. In Legislation we have belonging to this period the Book of Deuteronomy. This may be said apart from any theory of its origin or even its date of composition. It ought to be placed in this period on other grounds. It was discovered in the Temple in the year 621. Made public in this year, it exercised immediately a powerful influence upon the worship, and also upon the general current of the people's thoughts. This period of its discovery was that when its teaching really became a factor in the public life and the religious conceptions of the nation. It became public law, and powerfully influenced both religious practice and religious literature from this date. It is also the general impression among writers on the Old Testament 18 THE THEOLOGY OF THE OLD TESTAMENT that Deuteronomy follows the great prophets Amos, Hosea, and Isaiah, and reflects in its spirit their teaching. So far as its legislative contents apart from its spirit are concerned, they are an expansion of Ex. xx. xxiii.

(d) From the Exile, 586, to 400, the close of the prophetic Canon. This might be called the period of the Restoration and Reconstruction of the State. It deserves to be considered a distinct

period, because undoubtedly new conceptions and a new way of reading the past history of the nation arose, and also a new ideal for the future. The prophet Ezekiel belongs to this period, at least as a powerful influence, though in point of fact he lived mainly during the preceding period.

It includes : 1. Prophecy Ezekiel, II Isaiah, Zechariah, Haggai, Malachi. 2. Legislation the Levitical legislation of Ezra and Nehemiah. 3. The Psalter. 4. The Wisdom.

(1) As to Prophecy. The second half of Isaiah is usually placed in this era. Its contents refer it to this period. If Isaiah was its author, he was enabled to project himself in spirit into the Exile, and see and estimate that period, with its personages and forces, precisely as if he had lived during it in the body.

(2) The Legislation of this period is the so-called priestly or Levitical legislation, contained now in Ex. xxv. xl..

Leviticus, and good part of Numbers. It is disputed, indeed, whether this legislation as a whole belongs to this period. And it may be allowed to be probable that there were written ritual laws as early as other laws. There were customary ritual actions a ritual praxis, consuetudinary and practised embracing the various kinds of sacrifice, though the numbers of victims, etc., might not be fixed. This ritual praxis gradually expanded, and became more splendid, more refined, more expressive in details of the underlying ideas. We see it in great grandeur in the time of Amos and Isaiah ; it was about complete in the time of Ezekiel. It is not at all probable that these ritual laws were for the first time written at this late period, but at this period they appear to have been THE PSALTER 19 brought together and codified, and no doubt additions were made to them to give them theoretical completeness.

They are probably the result of the ritual practice throughout the history as it was modified and improved. It appears to me that the Book of Ezekiel shows that before his day the ritual was almost the same as it became after the Restoration. But how far the ritual customs had been reduced to writing before this period is difficult to ascertain. Being largely for the guidance of the priests, they had less public importance.

Apart, however, from other considerations, there are, at any rate, these two reasons for placing the priestly legislation here first, it was certainly not completed or codified in the form in which we have it till this period ; and, secondly, what is more important, it did not become an element in the national life till this era. Whether it existed before or not, it was not obeyed, the nation did not subject themselves to it. From the year 444, when Ezra and Nehemiah read the Law before the people, it is certain that this Levitical law, as a ritual, and the hierarchical system as a government, became the ritual and government of the community. The theocracy, which was, so to speak, ideal before (i.e.

Jehovah was king), now became hierarchical : the theocracy was a government by priests ; the high priest was the head of the community.

(3) The Psalter. The Psalter must be placed here for various reasons. It was only now that the Psalms were collected together, and as a whole made the medium of the devotional service in the temple. Not before this time did the Psalter enter into the people's life as the expression of their devotions, and as a powerful influence upon their life. In estimating the progress of religious

thought and devotional life, we must recognise the public acceptance of the Psalter as the expression of this thought and life to be one of the most important events with which we have to deal. Many of the Psalms, of course, may be ancient. It would be as untrue to say that the Psalmody of Israel took its rise with the Second Temple, as to say that the Thames rises 20 THE THEOLOGY OF THE OLD TESTAMENT at London Bridge. But though the Thames rises higher up, it begins at London Bridge to bear on its bosom the commerce and the industrial life of the nations ; and the Psalter, too, begins with the Second Temple to express the religious life, not of individuals, but of Israel. And the national use of the Psalter shows how completely all the conflicts which the prophets had to wage against idolatry and the like, had been fought out and the battle won. The providence of God had set its seal on the prophetic teaching, and it was accepted by the restored nation.

(4) The Wisdom. The Proverbial literature probably would fall largely into the preceding period. But some of the most splendid fruits of the reflective mind of Israel, such as the Book of Job, probably belong to this epoch. The Wisdom belongs to the literature of the individual's religious life ; Prophecy and Legislation to the sphere of the national life. Consequently the Wisdom literature is mainly late.

(e) From 400 to the Christian era. This embraces:

1. Prophecy Daniel; 2. Wisdom Ecclesiastes ; 3. History Chronicles. This is the period of the Law. The division which we have followed gives five periods, a preliminary one, and four others From Moses to prophecy, 800 ; from 800 to 586, the fall of Jerusalem; from 586 to 400; and from 400 to our era. But perhaps the whole period from the Exodus might be divided into three characteristic stages 1. Pre-prophetic period, down to 800 ; 2. Prophetic period, down to 586 ; and 3. Levitism, down to our era. Of course, these names are general. Prophetism is but the development of Mosaism on one side ; but it is a distinct development and a literary development. Similarly, Levitism is a development of Mosaism on another side, but it is no doubt an expansion ; and historically the Levitical system during this period actually made itself master of the people, and brought them into subjection to it, which historically had not been true at an earlier period. The prophets, being statesmen in the kingdom of God, stand in closest relation to the history, and in their THE PROPHETIC LITERATURE 21 pages the significance of the various momenta and turning points in the national career can best be estimated. And it is their teaching that we should chiefly have before us. From 850 or 800 to 400 B.C. they are the main figures in the history of Israel ; and unquestionably the prophetic literature is the most characteristic, and has most affinities with the New Testament. We are able to receive a better general idea of the religion of the Old Testament by studying the Prophets than by reading any other part of the Hebrew Scriptures. The literature of the period ending with 800 or 750 B.C. is scanty, being chiefly contained in the part of the Pentateuch called J, or the united elements JE. It is different with the prophetic period, 800-586, which is the most important for an Old Testament theologian, i.e. for one who wishes to understand the development of Revelation or the religion of Israel historically in other words, to understand the faith and hopes of Israel as they existed actually in the minds of the prophets and the people. All the great religious conceptions of the Old Testament come to view in this period. An exception might be made in regard to the doctrine of immortality. But there are two doctrines of immortality in the Old Testament that of the people, the kingdom of God ; and that of the individual person. The former is fully developed in the prophetic age ; that of the

individual, perhaps not until the period of Judaism. For the prophetic teaching is, so to speak, national ; it was only on the down- fall of the State that the meaning and worth of the individual life began to be adequately felt, and consequently that the destinies of the individual began to be earnestly pursued and reflected upon. But very much of the Christian doctrine of immortality e.g. the concomitants of it, the judgment ; the result of it, eternal peace and fellowship with God, and the like is taught in the Old Testament in connection with the eschatology of the king- dom or people of God. But if the prophetic period be the most important period for the Old Testament theologian, the period of 22 THE THEOLOGY OF THE OLD TESTAMENT Judaism, from the East oration in 537 to our era, is of supreme importance for the Christian theologian or exegete.

Because, although this period is not so rich in original productions, it is the period of reflection and generalisation on the prophetic teaching, and of appropriation and as- similation of it into the individual life. This process in great measure stripped off the nationalism from the pro- phetic truths, and brought them under individualism. But individualism is universalism. The individual is of no nation. But this way of looking at the ancient literature generalised the contents. The circumstances in which a truth was uttered ceased to be of importance, while the person who uttered it or to whom it was uttered was equally unimportant. All those things ceased to have meaning. The things that had meaning and had universal applicability were the ethical and religious principles.

These were the Word of God. So that in a sense it is true that the better historical Old Testament theologians we are, the worse fitted are we to comprehend the New Testament writers. It is admitted that the sense put by New Testament writers on much of the Old Testament which they quote is not the true historical sense, i.e. not the sense which the original writers, prophets, or wise men had in their mind. The sense which the New Testament writers express is the sense which arose during the period of Judaism which experience and reflection and personal piety put upon the Old Testament. Hence is it that to the Christian theologian or exegete the period of Judaism is of the utmost importance.

7. General Course and Drift of the History. The literature of Israel, then, being so closely connected with its history, it is of importance to understand the general course and drift of the latter. As in all ancient States, the religion was national. The religious unit or subject was not the individual in the State, but the ideal unity GENERAL DRIFT OF THE HISTORY 23 formed by the State as a whole. Now, this unity came into existence at the Exodus from Egypt. From that hour Israel was conscious of being a people, and Jehovah, who had delivered them, was their God alone : " I am Jehovah thy God, who brought thee out of the land of Egypt " (Ex. xx. 2 ; cf. Hos. xiii. 4). The sense of being a people, and the sense of being the people of Jehovah, if not identical feelings, reacted very powerfully on one another ; and hence the religious literature of the .people reflects from age to age all the changing hues of its history. That history ran very much such a course as we should have expected.

(1) The migration of the ancestors of the people from the East, the descent into Egypt, the oppression and bondage there, and the delivery under Moses, are events testified to not only in the formal history of the Penta- teuch, but by frequent incidental allusions in other writing.

These allusions express the fundamental historical feeling of the people, the very basis of their national and religious consciousness (Amos ii. 9 seq. ; Hos. xii. 1 3 ;

Mic. vi. 4).

(2) Disintegration under the Judges. It was natural that the unity into which the tribes had been welded at the Exodus by the necessity of facing a common danger, or sharing a common enterprise, should become relaxed when the danger was over and the enterprise had in great measure succeeded ; and, accordingly, after the settlement in Canaan, we find the unity in some degree disintegrated, and the various tribes fighting each for its own hand, and only entering into combinations when some danger more serious than usual threatened. Such is the history as reflected in the Book of Judges. No doubt a religious disintegration in some measure ran parallel to the political one. Even in this troubled period, however, although 1 The tribes entered Canaan, or at least conquered a place in it, not in common, but independently, or in smaller combinations. There were two Canaanite belts between Judah and the northern tribes, and between the northern tribes themselves, i.e. the

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