

## FOREWORD

ONE may give a book the title "Old Testament Theology" if it manages to bring together and to relate those ideas and thoughts and concepts of the Old Testament which are or can be important. Before such a compilation is possible, however, a great deal of preliminary work has to be done. Exposition of the entire Old Testament must have reached a certain degree of adequacy and reliability. The literary and historical critics must have done their work. The students of comparative religion must have made their contribution—without it the Old Testament can be appreciated neither in its uniqueness nor in its dependence. All these various studies are a necessary presupposition of an Old Testament theology. It makes use of them as required, but it does not dabble in them itself; and one would do this present book less than justice were one to overlook the fact that it confines itself strictly within its proper limits.

The Old Testament itself does not offer any scheme for that compilation we call its theology. One must therefore borrow it from elsewhere and take good care that it does not distort the facts. No scheme could be borrowed either from the New Testament or from systematic theology if it were going to obtrude itself. A very simple scheme has therefore been chosen—theology, anthropology, soteriology, and it has proved possible, following this scheme, to put everything in its proper place and assign to it its proper importance. Only one chapter, that on the cult, was difficult to place. It does not belong to the realm of soteriology, for it is not part of the divine plan of salvation; nor yet does it belong to the realm of anthropology, being concerned with man's works, not with his nature. It is, however, the essential dialectic of the Old Testament cult that man tries to save himself by his works. We have therefore placed the cult at the end of the part on anthropology. For the rest, the book with its plan, its notes and indices must speak for itself. A foreword should not be a defence.

Perhaps it should be stated, however, that on account of space no attempt has been made to deal with the history of Old Testament theology and that intentionally not much space has

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been given to references to relevant literature. Those who know this literature will be able to read a great deal between the lines; they will also know that in the last decades the real theological merit of this literature was small. We welcome the new movement and wish it God speed! Those who know not merely the literature but also the young theologians of the day know that they all too often tend—and the fault is partly their teachers’—to settle questions of theology by invoking famous and not so famous names; but as teachers of Holy Scripture we must produce a theology which does not settle but decides; which does not enquire about names but about grounds, and judges accordingly. This book tries to serve that end, and how could it be otherwise in view of the famous date below? Reformed theology is always and can only be a theology based on clear grounds, not on names.

Zürich, on the anniversary of the publication of Luther's  
*Theses*, 1935.

LUDWIG KOHLER

## FOREWORD TO THE THIRD REVISED EDITION

THE book remains on the whole unaltered. The opportunity was taken to adjust the text in a number of places and anything of importance from the recent literature on the subject has been added.

L.K.

*Advent*, 1952.

## TRANSLATOR'S NOTE

BIBLICAL quotations follow the text of the Revised Version as far as is practicable, that is, except where the Hebrew text is emendated, or where a more exact rendering of the Hebrew is necessary to bring out the point in discussion.

A.S.T.