

## Preface

THEOLOGY IN THE JUDEO-CHRISTIAN tradition, which is discourse about God and the things of God, has benefited enormously from philosophic inquiry at various times in its history, most prominently in the Hellenistic period, the High Middle Ages, and the Modern Era, where Greek thought, for the most part, has been pressed into service to give systematic expression to revelations in the Bible, salvation history, and the experience of faith. The yield has been significant, and what is here presented should not be taken as a dismissal of this enterprise, which is a legitimate one, except as it has become the only means to do theology, or for one reason or another has gone awry.

The present collection of essays draws upon other resources for theological insight. The essay on Psalm 23 makes use of anthropology and human-development theory; the essay on Deuteronomy incorporates wisdom themes; the essay “Jeremiah and the Created Order” looks not only at ideas about God and creation but about the seldom considered idea of God and a return to chaos; and the essay “The Confessions of Jeremiah” examines, not words this extraordinary prophet was given by God to convey, but what he himself felt and experienced in the office to which he was called. Other essays argue that theology is rooted in biblical words—in and of themselves, and in context—and in rhetoric, where the latter must also include composition. And it goes without saying that careful exegesis of the biblical text continues to be as necessary as it has always been in developing proper theological understanding, in spite of more recent trends to read back into the Bible ideas emanating from here, there, and everywhere in our modern world.

I am dedicating this book to Richard and Herbert Anderson, two pastors in my family who, over the years, have had an important influence in my life. Rev. Herbert Anderson spoke to me when I was yet a young boy about entering the Christian ministry, and over the years has followed me

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with prayers and pastoral concern. During an unusually long life he has been, among other things, a Baptist pastor, teacher, mission executive, and college president. His elder brother, the late Rev. Richard Anderson, was for many years a missionary with the Evangelical Free Church in Congo (Kinshasa), and served as a consultant in translating the Bible into Lingala, giving the people of that country a Bible in their own tongue. The essay “Biblical and Theological Themes,” given originally in 1981 as lectures to CEUM pastors in Congo (then Zaire), was translated by him into Lingala for pastors attending the seminar, and is here included following the lectures.

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