arguments too reasonable to be convincing. However, though the specialist may raise his eyebrows in many places, no layman who reads this book can lay it aside without feeling that he has made some discoveries. And even the specialist will concede its relevance to the contemporary religious situation and to the situation of man as a whole.

OLD TESTAMENT THEOLOGY

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One's reflections on this new addition[1] to the recent succession of books devoted to the Theology of the Old Testament might well start from the author's words on p. 275: 'Not a trace should be allowed to remain of the conception, or rather, misconception, that the teaching of the Old Testament depicts a God quite different from the God of the New Testament.'

The fact that Dr. Vriezen mentions the possibility of such a misconception being held is an indication that he supposes that among his readers there may be some who are still attracted by the ancient heresy of Marcion. Irenaeus, it will be recalled, said of Marcion that he called the God of the Old Testament 'a worker of evils, delighting in wars, inconstant in judgement and self-contradictory.'[2] In distinction from, and superior to the God that made the world, Marcion speaks of the Father of Jesus. The Early Church refused to accept Marcion's distinction, but is there not a possibility that Christians in the twentieth century, particularly in a cultural environment so different from that of the sub-apostolic age as we find here in India, may be tempted to see in Marcion's answer the most convenient way out of a dilemma? Vriezen quotes the well-known dictum of Harnack: 'To reject the Old Testament in the second century was a mistake which the Great Church rightly refused to make; ... but that Protestantism since the nineteenth century should continue to treasure it as a canonical document is the result of religious and ecclesiastical paralysis.'[3] The allowances which Harnack was evidently prepared to make for the Church of the early centuries is one which some might be willing to concede to the Church in the West, while asserting that the Church in India has no right to set the Old Testament on a pedestal which is not shared by equally ancient scriptures which have long formed part of the nation's religious heritage.

Dr. Vriezen describes the use of the Old Testament in the Church as 'one of the most urgent contemporary problems.'[4] If this is so in Europe, we cannot afford to overlook it here in India

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[1] Th. C. Vriezen: *An Outline of Old Testament Theology*. Basil Blackwell. 42*s*.

[2] Adv. Haer. I: xxvii.

[3] p. 98, n. 1, citing Harnack: *Marcion*, p. 253.

[4] p. 97.

or to indulge in the 'ecclesiastical paralysis' which would allow the solution to the problem to be based simply on the experience of the Church in other situations. G. E. Phillips in a book dealing with this problem, to which Dr. Vriezen also alludes on p. 80, quotes Dr. Radhakrishnan's attitude to the Old Testament in such a way as to suggest that that book is a serious obstacle between many Hindus and their acceptance of the Gospel: 'The intolerance of narrow monotheism is written in letters of blood across the history of man from the time when first the tribes of Israel burst into the land of Canaan . . . The spirit of old Israel is inherited by Christianity and Islam.'[1] If our study of the Old Testament does not provide us with some kind of answer to such criticisms as this, its retention in the Christian Scriptures can only prove to be an embarrassment to the Church. And one justification of the present emphasis on Biblical Theology, the outcome of which has been the production of such books as that which we are now considering, is a growing emphasis on the *theological* study of the Old Testament.

Such a study involves commitment, in the sense that it recognizes the place of the Old Testament in the *Christian* canon of Scripture. It would not be reasonable to suppose that a Theology of the Old Testament written by a Christian would have the same emphasis as one written by a Jew, since in both cases the writers would be standing outside of their subject and looking at it from different viewpoints. It is not legitimate to argue that scholarly objectivity is lost in such a process, since one of the aims of Old Testament Theology is to bring us to an understanding of what the Old Testament has to say to *us* in our present situation. In the process it is unavoidable that it should be refracted, as it were, through the medium of that which is looked upon as its fulfilment.

One of the values of Vriezen's study is the emphasis he lays on the close connection between the Old Testament and the New Testament, as for example on p. 111, where he lists four important lines of connection, viz. typology, preparation, similarity, and contrast. His book is, in fact, divided into two main portions, 'Introduction', which occupies one-third of the whole book, and 'The Content of Old Testament Theology'. Much of the Introduction is devoted to an examination of 'The Old Testament as the Word of God, and its use in the Church.' That is to say, before we reach the study of such themes as God and Man we have had to face the issue of the validity of the Christian emphasis on the Old Testament. One is constantly made aware that Dr. Vriezen is interested in the Old Testament as that from which one preaches the Gospel, and that for him questions of critical scholarship are of interest only in so far as they can be made to serve the primary task of evangelism through the Word of God.

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[1] G. E. Phillips: *The Old Testament in the World Church*, p. 15, citing S. Radhakrishnan: *The Hindu View of Life*, p. 55.

It is in this connection that Vriezen makes the distinction which may at first sight seem irrelevant, between two objects of study, namely the Religion of Israel and the Old Testament itself. 'I make the distinction', he says, 'between the Old Testament and the religion of Israel because in my opinion the Old Testament cannot simply be called the document of the religion of Israel.'[1] In other words, the Theology of the Old Testament must have as its object the Old Testament as it came to be formed under the influence of certain historic events which, had they been otherwise, would have resulted in the preservation of a very different corpus of literature. It is the Old Testament as the *witness* to God's saving acts through, and one may even say despite, the empirical religious experience of Israel, which should be the object of our study. Naturally this involves a consideration of the extent to which the Old Testament reaches its fulfilment in the New Testament, and what, in fact, we mean by fulfilment.

A number of answers might be given to such a question, and more than one is offered by Vriezen. For example, he describes Christ as the fulfilment of the Law in that 'He actualizes the law by making the kingship of God the essence and basis of His life and in that way bringing it to its full revelation and development.'[2] In other words, Jesus brings out more from the pages of the Old Testament than its readers (and, we might add, its writers) had ever seen there before.

Nevertheless, fulfilment means more than that. It involves the recognition that 'there *is* a line that leads from the Old Testament to Christ',[3] though such a line can be seen by faith rather than by systematically classifying the so-called Messianic prophecies of the Old Testament, and claiming that Christ is the answer to the expectations of the prophets. It must not be forgotten that the coming of Christ was at least as much a denial of the Jewish expectations of a Messiah as an affirmation of them. Mowinckel goes so far as to say: 'Jesus came to be, not the Messiah, but the Son of Man. He wanted to be the Messiah only in so far as the idea of the Messiah had been modified by, and was compatible with, that of the Son of Man.'[4] In other words, there is a sense in which the Messiahship can be included among the 'lines in the Old Testament that lead to Judaism and may draw the reader away from Christ.'[5]

That Jesus believed Himself to be the answer to the expectations of the prophets is clear from such passages as Luke 4:21; 7:18-23, to mention no others, but this is a very different thing from saying that He was content to be fitted into any one of the many Old Testament patterns for the Coming One. It is, in fact, the very variety of thought-forms and expressions which are

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[1] p. 40.
[2] p. 77.
[3] p. 87.
[4] Mowinckel: *He that Cometh*, p. 445.
[5] Vriezen, p. 87.

taken up from the Old Testament into the New Testament that adds force to the validity of a Christocentric Theology of the Old Testament such as Vriezen provides.

If a Theology of the Old Testament were to be viewed from the perspective of the New Testament simply because the one hope of the Messiah received its fulfilment in the Incarnation, we might well dispense with the Old Testament. But in actual fact, the connection between the two parts of the Bible is so varied in its manifestation that the amputation of the Old Testament from the New may indeed be likened to a major surgical operation. The New Testament proclaims that in Jesus of Nazareth the Son of Man has already appeared in humility preparatory to His appearing with the clouds of heaven, that the anonymous figure of the Suffering Servant has stepped out of the pages of Scripture and has suffered under Pontius Pilate, that the Prophet like unto Moses has spoken unto Israel all that God has commanded Him, that the Good Shepherd of Ezekiel 34 has come to seek that which was lost, that the Word whereby the heavens were made has become flesh, that the Wisdom which was the firstborn of all creation is the one in whom we have our redemption.

Is this penetration of the New Testament by the thought-forms of the Old something artificial, or is it the development of a process already at work within the Old Testament itself? If we can make out a case in favour of the latter alternative, we have a further argument in support of the organic unity of the two testaments and of Vriezen's contention with which we started. At this point we may make use of a suggestion which he puts forward that 'the connection between Old Testament and New Testament may be called one of *perspective* . . . At the heart of the Old Testament message lies the expectation of the Kingdom of God, and it is the initial fulfilment of this expectation in Jesus of Nazareth, who is, for that reason, called the Christ, that underlies the message of the New Testament. *The true heart of both Old Testament and New Testament is, therefore, the eschatological perspective.*'[1] What Vriezen is evidently emphasizing here is the forward look of both Old Testament and New Testament, but a forward look which continues beyond what is denoted by 'the initial fulfilment' which he mentions. It is this common outlook of expectation which we find in the New Testament no less than in the Old Testament which strengthens the conviction that we have here a proclamation which originates from the one Divine Source, which is responsible for the initial expectation in the Old Testament, for the preliminary fulfilment in the Incarnation, and for the final fulfilment which is still awaited, but whose outlines are coloured both by the initial expectation and by the firstfruits of the fulfilment.

Yet another link which binds together the Old Testament and the New is the occurrence in the Old Testament itself of

[1] p. 100.

precisely the same acknowledgement that the way in which God has acted in the past is being repeated in the present age as we find to be characteristic of the New Testament. Perhaps the best example of this recognition that God is acting in Old Testament times as He had already acted in the past is the theme of the Second Exodus, which we find particularly in Hosea and in various passages in Isaiah. In Hos. 2:14f. the prophet sees a repetition of the wilderness-experience as Israel's only hope for renewal. In Isa. 11:11-16 we appear to have a post-exilic passage looking for a repetition of the miracle of the crossing of the Red Sea, based in part at least on the expectations of a highway through the desert which we find in Second Isaiah (cf. Isa. 48:20f.; 52:11f.). In these latter passages the prophet is clearly thinking in terms of a saving act that will occur in the immediate future, and which will be as effective a means of deliverance for the Israel of his generation as the Exodus was for their forefathers.

Another example of this theme of a repetition of God's saving pattern in history may perhaps be found in Isaiah's attitude to Jerusalem, though here the theme of salvation is interpenetrated by that of judgement. The first of the relevant passages is to be found in Isa. 28:21, where the God who won a victory for David is represented as being about to repeat the victory on the same battlefields outside Jerusalem, but with this difference, that now He will overcome, not the Philistines, but His own people. The following chapter opens with a reminder to Jerusalem that David had encamped against it in the past, and by his conquest of it had brought it within the scope of God's saving history, but that the time was now imminent when not David, but God Himself, would encamp against her in judgement. This particular example is noteworthy as being one which appears to be taken up in its turn into the New Testament in the account of the weeping of Jesus over the same city (Luke 19:41-44), where the language used is reminiscent of this passage in Isaiah.

Granted the validity of these examples in the Old Testament itself, we can go on to draw the conclusion that the writers of the New Testament were not using the Old Testament in a way that was alien to its own thought-patterns when they claimed that the age in which they lived was the age of the fulfilment of God's ancient promises. For this very process of balancing type and antitype, which to many seems so artificial, was no novelty, but simply a continuation of a process which had already been at work in the Old Testament, as when the prophet of the Exile saw in the events of his own day a reflection of an earlier deliverance by God of His people.

Just as the Old Testament writers saw a consistency of pattern in what God had done at the Red Sea and what He was about to effect in the age of the Exile, so, we may surely claim, the writers of the New Testament had every right to look upon the events of their own day, not as the antithesis of what had gone before, but simply as a further stage in that same saving history

in which God had been active for His people from the time of Moses and earlier. The conception of God's saving activity as something that involved His 'coming down' for the salvation of His people was not something new and unforeseen when it made its appearance in the New Testament; that same pattern was recognized from the call of Moses onwards, to whom God had spoken of 'coming down' to deliver His people (Exod. 3:8). And however dubious may be the text of Isa. 63:9, 'In all their affliction he was afflicted', there can be little ambiguity about Isa. 43:2 or Isa. 46:3f. The parabola described in John 13:3f., to borrow Dr. Wheeler Robinson's graphic expression, is already anticipated in the Old Testament record of the God who stooped down to teach His first-born to walk, supporting his first steps by His fatherly arms (Hos. 11:3).

Yet another characteristic of God's nature as it is revealed in both Old Testament and New Testament is the indirectness of His communication with man, so that the God of Israel who is the Saviour is a God that hides Himself so effectively even in His fullest revelation that John the Baptist himself had his doubts whether Jesus was indeed 'He that cometh'. As an example of the hiddenness of God's revelation of Himself in the Old Testament, Vriezen mentions on p. 235 the call of Moses, where the prophet asks in vain for a clear-cut answer to his questions with which he can convince the Israelites. But faith is demanded of them too, no less than of the disciples in the New Testament. Even in the very language of His revelation the God who speaks in the New Testament can be recognized as the same who had spoken long before to the Fathers.

The experience of the Church clearly teaches us that those who abandon the Old Testament thereby leave the door open to substitutes for it which distort the interpretation of the New Testament itself. The presence of the Old Testament in the Church is therefore a safeguard to ensure that the Gospel of the New Testament is understood in the correct perspective, and that such expressions as 'Kingdom of God' are not given subjective interpretations in accordance with the fancies of the individual exegete or his ecclesiastical tradition. And so we return to the point from which we started, and may fittingly quote some words of Dr. Vriezen which may have special relevance to readers of this journal: 'We cannot agree with the younger churches, therefore, when they allow themselves to be deterred by the somewhat strange and archaic form of the Old Testament message; they will have to gain more practice in the reading and exegesis of the Old Testament.'[1]

So far we have touched only on the fringe of this thought-provoking book and have said virtually nothing about its second half, dealing with the content of Old Testament Theology, with its chapters on God, Man, the Intercourse between God and Man,

[1] p. 92.

the Intercourse between Man and Man, and the concluding chapter on the Kingdom of God. All these themes are treated with clarity and a deep insight into the essential meaning of the Old Testament message.

Dr. Vriezen's pronouncements on questions of Biblical criticism may not commend themselves to every reader. While he accepts the critical method of interpreting the Old Testament as that which most effectively ensures that it is the living Word of God for us, and in fact, reminds us that Jesus Himself refused to be bound to the letter of the Old Testament, not only in the Sermon on the Mount, but in His quoting of the Old Testament in Luke 4:18f. (cf. Isa. 61:2), he himself tends to be conservative in his judgements. On p. 358 he attributes the conclusion of Amos to the prophet of that name, and this view is also implied elsewhere. He appears to attribute most of the book of Micah to the prophet of that name (e.g. p. 60), so that on p. 139 Micah 6:6-8 is attributed to 'the simple farmer of Moresheth'. The treatment of Genesis 2–11 on p. 210f. is rather uncritical, with its assumption that all the Yahwistic portions there are from the same hand, including the portrayal of Noah both as the survivor of the Flood and as the father of vine-culture. The suggestion that 1 Sam. 7 and 8 reflect an earlier viewpoint than chapters 9 and 10 is also rather difficult to accept.

It is a pity that the index of references could not have been more complete; only a small proportion of the references liberally scattered through the text are listed there. The bibliographies which conclude most of the main divisions of the book are full and up-to-date, though a high proportion of the books listed are in languages other than English.

We can be grateful for a very successful rendering of the second (1954) Dutch edition of the original work into English by a Dutch schoolmaster. There are very few misprints although the book is printed in Holland. It can be wholeheartedly recommended to theological schools and colleges, and even individual purchasers can be assured that this is good value for money in these days of expensive books.