

Roman rule." How was this possible? Cassidy believes that if large numbers of people had ever accepted the social patterns advocated by the Lucan Jesus and adopted his stance toward ruling political authorities, the Roman government, or any other government based on a similar social order, could not have continued.

Andrews University

GEORGE E. RICE

Clements, R. E. *Old Testament Theology: A Fresh Approach*. London: Marshall, Morgan & Scott, 1978. x + 214 pp. £6.95.

The student of the OT is aware of a constellation of OT theologies such as those by W. Eichrodt (1961-67), G. von Rad (1965), E. Jacob (1958), T. C. Vriezen (1970), J. L. McKenzie (1974), S. Terrien (1978), W. C. Kaiser (1978), C. Westermann (1978) and W. Zimmerli (1978). Indeed, there have been more than a dozen volumes on that subject between 1970 and 1978. The decisive differences between such tomes in OT theology are indicative of the disarray and inherent difficulty of the enterprise of the discipline. The volume under review is actually not a new OT theology, but rather a kind of preface (or call it prolegomenon) to an OT theology.

Clements is a Baptist teaching at Fitzwilliam College, Cambridge, England, and is a well-known international figure in OT studies. He divides his monograph into eight chapters, the first two and the last two of which are particularly concerned with the issues of writing an OT theology, i.e. matters of methodology and related subjects. Chaps. 3 through 6 (pp. 53-154) deal with what Clements regards as central themes in the OT. Thus the theme of "The God of Israel" (pp. 53-78) is treated under such aspects as the being, names, presence, and uniqueness of God. A comparison of the section on the presence of God with S. Terrien's tome *The Elusive Presence* (1978), in which he argues for the centrality of the theology of divine presence, is both stimulating and rewarding, and in some sense demonstrates the divergency of methodology. The same is true, though in a different sense, of a comparison of Clements' chapter "The Old Testament as Promise" (pp. 131-154) with W. C. Kaiser's book *Toward an Old Testament Theology* (1978), in which it is argued that the central theme of the OT is the promise (and blessing) theme. Clements does not follow a centrist approach to the OT on the basis of which an OT theology can be structured and systematized. Thus for him the unity of the OT is not a single theme, dual theme, or a formula, but "it is the nature and being of God himself which establishes a unity in the Old Testament, . . ." (p. 23). This reviewer has also argued for the same direction ("The Problem of the Center in the OT Theology Debate," *ZAW* 86 [1974]:65-82). This position certainly places the resolution of the problem of organizing the OT materials elsewhere, because the OT itself does not order its ideas or concepts in a systematic fashion (cf. G. F. Hasel, "The Future of Biblical Theology," *Perspectives on Evangelical Theology*, eds. K. S. Kantzer and S. N. Gundry [Grand Rapids, Mich.: Baker, 1979], pp. 179-194).

The chapter "The People of God" (pp. 79-103) discusses the relationship of people and nation, the theology of election, and the theology of covenant. The chapter "The Old Testament as Law" (pp. 104-130) traces the meaning of *iōrah* as applicable to the Pentateuch and its use in the prophetic writings and compares it to that of "law."

In contrast to other approaches for OT theology, Clements not only emphasizes the significance of the canon but argues with force that the canon of the Hebrew Scriptures, i.e. the OT, in itself and by itself is the authoritative norm for OT theology. "There is a real connection between the ideas of 'canon' and 'theology,' for it is the status of these writings as a canon of sacred scripture that marks them out as

containing a word of God that is still believed to be authoritative" (p. 15). In a manner reminiscent of some concerns of the Yale University scholar B. S. Childs, we are reminded that "it is precisely the concept of canon that raises questions about the authority of the Old Testament and the ability to present us with a theology which can still be meaningful in the twentieth century" (p. 19). Clements thus refuses to conceive of OT theology as a purely descriptive exercise. The reason for rejecting such a "rigidly historicising approach" rests in the position that "the Old Testament does present us with a revelation of the eternal God" (p. 19).

The insistence upon the canon of the OT as the boundary of OT theology is on target in the contemporary discussion. The perennial question is one of dealing with the totality of the writings in the canon of the OT. A typical test for the adequacy of a methodology for OT theology is the matter of integrating the complete OT in all its variety and richness. Virtually all OT theologies have had difficulties in dealing with the wisdom writings (Prov., Job, Eccl., Cant.). Typical examples are the approaches of G. von Rad, W. Zimmerli, and C. Westermann, who consider the wisdom literature of the OT in terms of Israel's answer to God. But hardly will one find the kind of disregard of this part of the OT canon as is evident in Clements' approach. He disregards it completely. This means in effect that the canon of Clements consists of but the Law and the Prophets, with a sprinkling of the Psalms (see now the rich tome by H.-J. Kraus, *Theologie der Psalmen* [Neukirchen-Vluyn: Neukirchener Verlag, 1979]). Even if this book grew out of a series of lectures (see "Talking Points from Books," *ExpTim* 90 [1979]:194), it is a frustrating lacuna to have wisdom literature so completely neglected.

The "fresh approach" of Clements also includes a new look at "the Christian study of the Old Testament," which involves a "very full and careful attention . . . to the manner, method and presuppositions of the interpretation of the Old Testament in the New" (p. 185). Among other things this involves a rather welcome examination of "those key themes by which the unity is set out in the Bible itself" (p. 186). The significance of this "fresh approach" can be more fully appreciated if we keep in mind the fact that one recent OT theology was written "as if the New Testament did not exist" (J. L. McKenzie, *A Theology of the Old Testament* [Garden City: Doubleday & Co., 1974], p. 319) and argued that the relationship between the Testaments is not a major problem in OT theology. That it is such a problem need no longer be denied except as one hides his head in the sands of the desert of his own making, as the studies of J.A. Sanders, B.S. Childs, J. Blenkinsopp, H.-J. Kraus, etc., have amply demonstrated. In sharp contrast to historical-critical approaches to OT theology this "fresh approach" affirms a wider starting-point for the discipline of OT theology. OT theology is not to be conceived of as a historical and descriptive enterprise (so the Gabler-Wrede-Stendahl school), but "instead of treating it as a subordinate branch of the historical criticism of the Old Testament, it should be regarded properly as a branch of theology" (p. 191). Does this mean that it is a branch in the field of systematic theology where B. S. Childs would place biblical theology, or does it mean that it remains part of the field of OT studies, but with a post-critical, post-historicist methodology?

This review has highlighted some of the rich and provocative aspects of Clements' volume. It is stimulating throughout, and one cannot easily put aside the issues raised. Every perceptive reader will be richly rewarded by plowing through this "fresh approach" to OT theology, even though not all suggestions are novel. There is much in this volume for serious reflection by both teachers and preachers.