

theology. It has been an inspiring attempt. But it has been a failure.

Give up history and you can retain some things. You can retain belief in God. But philosophical theism has never been a powerful force in the world. You can retain a lofty ethical ideal. But be perfectly clear about one point -- you can never retain a gospel. For gospel means good news, tidings, information about something that has happened. In other words, it means history. A gospel independent of history is simply a contradiction in terms.²⁴

Praise be to God who has spoken and acted in history to provide for our redemption, and who has given us a trustworthy record of what he has done in the Scriptures of the Old and New Testament.

NOTES

¹ G. Vos, *Biblical Theology: Old and New Testaments* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1948, reset for ninth printing, 1975) 12.

² Ibid.

³ Ibid., p.6.

⁴ G. Vos, "The Idea of Biblical Theology as a Science and as a Theological Discipline," in *Redemptive History and Biblical Interpretation: The Shorter Writings of Geerhardus Vos* (ed. R. B. Gaffin, Jr., Phillipsburg: Presbyterian and Reformed, 1980) 9.

⁵ Vos, *Biblical Theology*, p.7.

⁶ Vos, "Idea of Biblical Theology", p.9.

⁷ Ibid.

⁸ Ibid.

⁹ Ibid., p.10.

¹⁰ See G. Hasel, *Old Testament Theology: Basic Issues in the Current Debate* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, revised and updated, 1982) 18, 19.

¹¹ Ibid., p.173.

¹² See W. Zimmerli, *The Law and the Prophets* (New York: Harper & Row, 1965) 22-23.

¹³ See H. Gunkel, *The Legends of Genesis* (New York: Schocken Books, 1964).

¹⁴ Gunkel says (*Legends of Genesis*, p.11): "The conclusion, then, that one of these narratives is legend is by no means intended to detract from the value of the narrative; it only means that the one who pronounces it has perceived somewhat of the poetic beauty of the narrative and thinks that he has thus arrived at an understanding of the story. Only ignorance can regard such a conclusion as irreverent, for it is the judgment of reverence and love."

¹⁵ H. Gunkel, *What Remains of the Old Testament* (New York: Macmillan: 1928) 20.

¹⁶ G. von Rad, *Old Testament Theology* (2 vols., New York: Harper, 1965).

¹⁷ G. von Rad, *Genesis: A Commentary* (Philadelphia: Westminster, 1961).

¹⁸ G. von Rad, *Deuteronomy: A Commentary* (Philadelphia: Westminster, 1960).

¹⁹ Words in parenthesis are my own.

²⁰ G. von Rad, *Old Testament Theology*, vol. 1., pp. 107, 108

²¹ F. Hesse, "Kerygma oder geschichtliche Wirklichkeit?" *ZThK* 57 (1960) 26.

²² G. Hasel, *Old Testament Theology: Basic Issues*, pp. 173, 174

²³ See, for example. H. M. Kuitert, *Do You Understand What You Read?* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1970). Kuitert is of the opinion that many of the narrative sections of the Bible are wrongly read if they are understood as historical accounts. He says, for example (p.104): "Is anything changed in the meaning and scope of the book of Jonah if we read it as a midrash instead of ordinary history? Are the remarkable stories about Elisha worthless if we discover there are legends among them? Can God make Himself understandable with the help of folktales? Or is that beneath His dignity? We could go on. Nothing is sliced away, nothing is tossed overboard. Many stories in the Old Testament have scarcely had the intention of imparting historically precise information. If we were to read them as historical reports, we would read them very wrongly."

²⁴ J. G. Machen. "History and Faith." *PTR* 13 (1915) 1-2.