Problems of Old Testament Theology in the Twentieth Century

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Early twentieth-century America provided unique opportunities for certain individuals to advance economically and socially while it simultaneously maintained racist and class divisions in lifestyle. American psychology, despite the near-hegemony of its theories and methods, nevertheless was becoming a heterogeneous discipline, one that was â€œgenerousâ€ (Rose. Another feature in the professional maturation of psychology was the development of clinical psychology, a subfield devoted to the diagnosis and treatment of mental illness. During the first two decades of the twentieth century, many psychologists who considered themselves experimentalists also engaged in the study and treatment of psychological problems. Hayes and Prussner, Old Testament Theology; Hasel, Old Testament Theology, 10-27; Hogenhaven, 13-27; Ollenburger, â€œFrom Timeless Ideas to the Essence of Religion,â€ 3-19; Reventlow, 1985; Smith, Old Testament Theology, 21-24). The purpose instead is to sketch the dynamic that accounts for the oscillation of this disciplineâ€™s fortunes, a dynamic inherent in the issues surrounding it. In the early decades of the twentieth century Otto Eissfeldt (20-29) questioned the legitimacy of biblical theology as a scientific discipline. At mid-century Brevard Childs wrote Biblical Theology in Crisis. Critics such as James Barr (1988), British scholar R. N. Whybray (1987), and other detractors have pronounced the enterprise misguided and floundering.