

De Theologie van Kronieken
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This is a dissertation offered for the degree of Doctor of Theology at the University of Groningen. The writer takes exception to the well-known view of Wellhausen and his school according to which Chronicles is essentially a history of the cultus, and the priests and Levites are the persons around whom the theocracy revolves, for whose sake even the kings exist, being no more than patrons and guardians of the cultus. Over against this Swart places the view that the Chronicler means to give a history of the theocracy in Israel since David. Not the priests, but the king stands in the center. The main structure of history is that the covenant with Abraham, confirmed at Horeb, is renewed with David. This implies that the essence of the covenant is grace, not legalism. It also means that the whole outlook of the Chronicler is broadly Messianic. The central position of the king even obscures somewhat the figure of the high priest. His relation to the temple goes beyond the priestly elements in the Messianic picture of the prophets. Hezekiah calls the priests and Levites "my sons." The function of the prophets in the theocracy is well brought out. Whilst Wellhausen deems it unnecessary to speak of them in characterizing the spirit of the book, Swart shows that they are to the Chronicler exceedingly important as the organs of God's personal interposition in the course of the theocracy, those through whom God's will becomes a living reality. This explains why their labors relate chiefly to the kingship. Instructive also is the chapter devoted to the piety of Chronicles. Here the author defends the book not merely from the charge of legalism, but also from the recent aspersion by Eerdmans, according to which the ethics of the Chronicler does not concern the disposition, but only the outward act. One of the theses at the end of the book has reference to this: "Chronicles' doctrine of retribution is not utilitarian but religious in principle." Also Smend's view, that piety and impiety are superficially treated as "cult-conceptions" is shown to be groundless. "Chronicles proves that cultus-piety and true prophetic piety go together in Israel and are found there not in two separate streams but actually flowing through one channel." In general there is much in this dissertation worth the attention of Old Testament scholars. What we have missed is a clear expression of opinion in regard to the historic truthfulness of the Chronicler's picture of the theocracy both as to its constitution and as to its historical development. Do his views in this twofold respect represent the true God-willed intent of O.T. history from the beginning, or are they his own peculiar construction? In a certain sense Chronicles more than any O.T. book gives us the philosophy of O.T. history and is the seat of the self-consciousness of the O.T. Hence the importance of the above question.