

Protestant Biblical Interpretation

A Textbook of Hermeneutics for Conservative Protestants

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CHAPTER IX

THE INTERPRETATION OF TYPES

The content of special hermeneutics is rather large. Terry (*Biblical Hermeneutics*, revised edition) has a large list of subjects comprising special hermeneutics, e.g., Hebrew poetry; figurative language such as tropes, metonym, personification, synecdoche, apostrophe, interrogation, hyperbole, irony, simile, metaphor, fables, riddles, and enigmas; parables; allegories, proverbs, and gnomic poetry; types; symbols (actions, numbers, names, colors); dreams; prophecy (general, Messianic, apocalyptic); Old Testament quotations in the New; accommodation; progress of doctrine and analogy of faith; and the doctrinal and practical use of the Bible. Out of this list there are three items in particular which need special attention due to their importance, namely, typology, prophecy, and parables.

A. JUSTIFICATION OF TYPOLOGY AS A BIBLICAL DISCIPLINE

It has been the contention of critics that typology is forced exegesis rather than an interpretation rising naturally out of the Scriptures. Some exegesis of the Old Testament in the name of typology is forced, to be sure. However such excesses--past and present--do not destroy the Christian contention that the typological method of interpretation is valid. The justification for typological interpretation is as follows:

(1). The general relationship which the Old Testament sustains to the New is the very basis for such a study. The strong *prophetic element* in the Old Testament establishes a real and vital nexus between the two Testaments. The fact of prophecy establishes the principle that the New is latent in the Old, and that the Old is patent in the New. The form of prophecy may be either verbally predictive or typically predictive. The former are those prophecies which in poetry or prose speak of the age to come (e.g., Psalm 22, Isaiah 53); the latter are those typical persons, things, or events which forecast the age to come. Thus a type is a species of prophecy and should be included under prophetic studies. Typological interpretation is thereby justified because it is part of prophecy, the very nature of which establishes the nexus between the two Testaments.

Torm makes it even stronger than this. Torm prefers to speak of the typological method of thinking (*Betrachtungweise*) rather than the typological method of interpretation (*Auslegung*). The reason for this is two-fold: typological interpretation is based on the unity of the Testaments. It shows that the divine revelation is of one piece.¹ We are thus able to relate part to part and understand their places in

1 "Die Bedeutung der typologischen Betrachtungsweise ist die, dass sie uns den Blick für die Einheit in der Offenbarung Gottes öffnet und gerade dadurch uns die bleibende Bedeutung, die jeder

the divine revelation. Torm claims, secondly, typological interpretation is really a philosophy of history! He writes: "Typological interpretation is not so much an interpretation as a historical consideration, a method and manner of judging historical events and relations--a sort of philosophy of history, if you please."² It is the special Christian perspective on a very special segment of human history.

(2). Our Lord's own use of the Old Testament is His invitation to us to find Him in the Old Testament. In Luke 24:25-44 Christ teaches the disciples about Himself, beginning at Moses and following through *all* the Scriptures. Luke 24:44 mentions the division of the Jewish canon (Moses, Prophets, Psalms) thus making the reference as wide as the Old Testament canon. In John 5:39-44 Christ invites men to search the Scriptures for *they testify to him* inasmuch as Moses wrote of Him. Paul uses the sacrificial language of the Old Testament in speaking of the death of Christ (Eph. 5:2) thus showing that Christ is in the offerings. Hebrews clearly teaches that the Tabernacle which was, is now realized in a present heavenly tabernacle of which Christ is the minister of the sanctuary (Hebrews 9:9-11, 23-24). Thus Christ is to be found in the Tabernacle. And certainly from Paul's reference in 1 Corinthians 10:4 Christ was in the wilderness wanderings. It is the conviction of many scholars that the Christian interpretation of the Old Testament stems directly from the teachings and example of our Lord.

(3). Even more specific is the vocabulary of the New Testament with reference to the nature of the Old.³ The following words are used in the New of the Old. *Hypodeigma* means a sign suggestive of anything, a representation, a figure, a copy, an example. *Typos* and *typikos* (from the verb, *typtō*, "to strike") mean the mark of a blow, the figure formed by a blow, an impression, a form, a letter, a doctrine, an example, a pattern, a type. *Skia* (from *skēnē*, a tent) means a shade, a sketch, an outline, an adumbration. *Parabolē* means a placing by the side, hence a comparison, a likeness, a similitude. *Eikon* means an image, a figure, a likeness. *Antitypon* means a repelling blow, an echoing, a reflecting, a thing formed after a pattern, a counterpart, an antitype. *Allegoreō* means to tell a truth in terms of a narrative.

These New Testament words referring to the nature of the Old Testament establish the typical character of the Old Testament. In addition to this is the weight of the entire book of Hebrews, for it is almost completely devoted to a study of the typical character of the Old Testament.⁴

The fact that the Old Testament prophecy includes the typical, the invitation of our Lord to find Him in all the Old Testament which includes the typical, and the vocabulary of the New Testament indicating the typical element of the Old, is adequate justification of the theological study of typology.

kleine Teil der Offenbarung für die Gesamtheit hat, erkennen lässt." F. Torm, *Das Hermeneutik des Neuen Testaments*, p. 224.

2 "Die 'typologische Auslegung' ist also nicht so sehr eine Auslegung als eine historische Betrachtung, eine Art and Weise, die geschichtlichen Ereignisse und Verhältnisse zu beurteilen,--eine Art Philosophie der Geschichte, wenn man will." *Ibid.*, p. 223.

3 Cf. H. S. Miller, *The Tabernacle*, p. 19 ff.

4 Note also 1 Cor. 10:6, and 10:11 for the typical character of some Old Testament history. Davidson (*Old Testament Prophecy*) has two excellent chapters on typology (XIII, XIV).

B. SCHOOLS OF TYPOLOGICAL INTERPRETATION

In the history of typological exegesis certain schools of interpretation are discovered.⁵ As a preparation for a discussion of the rules of typological interpretation we shall briefly note these schools.

(1). One group of interpreters *saw too much as typical*. The motivations of the various subgroups of this family are diverse. The apostolic Fathers and early apologists were apologetically motivated. Part of their proof for the divinity of Christianity was its antiquity, and its antiquity could be demonstrated by a typological interpretation of the Old Testament. Other fathers were motivated to see Greek philosophy taught in the Old Testament (Origen and Clement) and at this point the typological loses itself to the allegorical as Darbyshire observes.⁶ Others, following the rules of Philo, sought to obviate supposed difficulties in the literal interpretation of the text. The medievalists and other Catholic theologians realized that typical interpretation of the Old Testament could strengthen the Biblical evidence for many of the Church's doctrines. The Protestant schools of Cocceius and Hutchinson regarded the Old Testament as a larder richly stored with New Testament teachings. In the effort to find devotional and edifying truth in all Scripture, and to find Christ veritably in *all* scripture, some dispensationalists have pressed typological interpretation beyond its proper measure.

Although the motivation of these different subgroups is varied, and their emphases different, and even their procedures divergent, they yet agree to this one point: *the Old Testament is a rich mine of New Testament truth and the spiritual interpreter can dig it out*.

(2). Directly opposite to this group are those *rationalists and critics* who see the entire typological method of interpretation as a case of forced exegesis. These men have broken with the doctrine of special revelation, denied the doctrine of plenary inspiration, and accordingly renounced the supernatural world view of Biblical religion. In that prophecy as prediction is obviously a case of supernatural inspiration, it must be denied in either the form of didactic prediction or typical prediction. Thus to the rationalistic critics there are two types, and hence there can be no typological interpretation. Darbyshire's judgment is that "modern writers of the critical school have unduly ignored the importance of typology."⁷ It is really more than this. They have not only ignored it, they have denied it.

(3). Bishop Marsh proposed in his *Lectures on the Criticism and Interpretation of the Bible* his famous principle that a type is a type only if the New Testament specifically so designates it to be such. This is a very strict principle and was advocated to curtail much of the fanciful and imaginary in typological interpretation. Because it is a stern and precise formula it has exerted a great influence on theological thought. Many Protestant exegetes if not adhering to the very letter of Marsh's principle certainly follow it very closely.

(4). Salomon Glassius propounded in his *Philologia Sacra* (5 vols., 1623-36) that types were of two

5 The subject is treated historically in Fairbairn, *The Typology of Scripture*, I, pp. 1-40; and in Darbyshire, "Typology," *Hastings Encyclopedia of Religion and Ethics*, XII, 501 (Part 3, "History of Typology").

6 *Op. cit.*, 502.

7 *Ibid.*, p. 503.

sorts, *innate* and *inferred*. He has been followed in basic theory by such typologists as Cocceius, Keach, Horne, Fairbairn, and Terry. This school we may designate as the *moderate school*. The moderate school agrees with Marsh that the New Testament is the point of departure in typological studies, but insists that Marsh did not dig out the full teaching of the New Testament on the subject. An *innate* type is a type specifically declared to be such in the New Testament. An *inferred* type is one that, not specifically designated in the New Testament is justified for its existence by the nature of the New Testament materials on typology.

The most able defender of the moderate school has been Fairbairn and he is supported by Terry.⁸ Fairbairn's criticisms of Marsh are as follows: (i) The relationship in Marsh's system between type and antitype is too artificial. The Old Testament and New Testament contain the same basic system of theology. They run side by side like two parallel rivers. Their parallelism is indicated by occasional channels (types) which connect them. These channels (types) are possible only because the two rivers run parallel. The Marshian principle fails to realize that other channels may be cut through which are not specifically named in Scripture, otherwise the relationship of the two Testaments is rather mechanical. Terry criticizes this principle when he writes: "But we should guard against the extreme position of some writers who declare that nothing in the Old Testament is to be so regarded as typical but what the New Testament affirms to be so."⁹

(ii) In order to escape from the lawless aberrations of other schools, the System of Marsh limits itself to too meagre a field. (iii) As we do not wait for the fulfilment of prophecy to declare a passage to be a prophecy, so we do not need the New Testament to declare everything a type that is a type. (iv) The very implication of Hebrews itself is that only a fraction of the great parallels between the two Covenants is considered, and that it is left to our Christian maturity to draw the other parallels. (v) If the whole (e.g., the Tabernacle, the wilderness journey) is typical, then the parts are typical. (vi) The avoidance of extravagances in typology is not to be accomplished by narrowing typology mercilessly to a small field, but by establishing typology from an empirical investigation of Scriptures themselves.

At the present time typological interpretation is undergoing a revival. To be sure we still have the rationalists who deny the very existence of types, and to be sure we have extremists.¹⁰ Some scholars would adhere rather closely to Marsh, and more to Fairbairn. But due to the new interest in theology, Biblical theology, and exegesis we have a new interest in typical interpretation. The revival in Old Testament theology has produced a new interest in typological interpretation. It is through the typological interpretation of the Old Testament that these recent scholars preserve the Christian character and value of the Old Testament. It must also be noted that Catholic scholars have been thinking seriously of typological interpretation and they have tried to rescue the study from the excesses to which the Fathers seem to have committed it. This new sober spirit of typological exegesis among Catholics may be noted in such works as *A Catholic Commentary on the Holy Scriptures*; the articles on "Exegesis" and "Hermeneutics" in *The Catholic Encyclopedia* (by A. J. Maas); and in the writings of Dean Daniélou (e.g., *Origen*, Part II, Chap. II, "The Typological Interpretation of the Bible").

8 Terry, *Biblical Hermeneutics* (revised edition), pp. 255-56.

9 *Ibid.*, p. 248.

10 A very remarkable and blessed work is C. H. M., *Notes on the Pentateuch* (6 vols.). Although filled with much insight and spiritual truth, yet, from the strict hermeneutical standpoint, it abounds in allegorisms and excessive typological interpretations. Its redeeming worth is its emphasis on Christ, grace, salvation, and Christian living.

C. TYPOLOGICAL AND ALLEGORICAL INTERPRETATION

In the history of interpretation the question has been occasionally asked whether allegorical and typological interpretation are one method of interpretation mistakenly called by two different names, or actually two different methods of interpretation.¹¹ One group insists there is but one method of spiritual interpretation but that it passes under other names such as typological, allegorical, or mystical. Jewett's contention is that there is but one such method but that among evangelicals it is called typological if proper, and allegorical if improper. Those who insist that the typological and the allegorical are two different methods of interpretation maintain that the genius of each method is peculiar enough to separate it from the other.¹²

Although to some theologians the problem might be academic, to others it is vital. A dispensationalist is anxious to preserve the distinction, for one of his strongest charges against amillennialism is that it uses the improper method of allegorizing, yet the dispensationalist must retain the typological method as valid. The amillennialist finds it to his advantage to efface the difference. He would assert that there is a mystical or spiritual sense to Scripture, and such mystical interpretations are valid if they conform to New Testament truth and invalid if they do not.¹³

The issue should be settled apart from these vested theological interests, on purely hermeneutical considerations. Is there a genius peculiar to each of these methods calling for a valid distinction, or do we have two words describing essentially one method of interpretation? We believe it is possible to find a specific genius for each of these methods calling for their separation.

Allegorical interpretation is the interpretation of a document whereby something *foreign, peculiar, or hidden* is introduced into the meaning of the text giving it a proposed deeper or real meaning. Geffcken notes that in allegorical interpretation "an entirely foreign subjective meaning is read into the passage to be explained,"¹⁴ and Hoskyns and Davey note that the "allegory expresses the relationship between certain persons and things *by substituting a whole range of persons or things from an entirely different sphere of experience.*"¹⁵

Typological interpretation is specifically the interpretation of the Old Testament based on the fundamental theological unity of the two Testaments whereby something in the Old shadows,

11 Cf. the discussion by Darbyshire, *op. cit.*, p. 500; by Jewett, "Concerning the Allegorical Interpretation of Scripture," *The Westminster Theological Journal*, 17:1-20; by Torm, *Hermeneutik des Neuen Testaments*, p. 223 f.; by Horne, *Introduction*, I, 364; by Angus and Green, *Cyclopedic Handbook to the Bible*, p. 221; by Dana, *Searching the Scriptures*, p. 38; by Meyer, *Critical and Exegetical Handbook to the Epistle to the Galatians*, p. 201, fn. 7.

12 Thus the etymology of the two words would indicate their respective genius: "allegory"--one story in terms of another, and "type"--an impression made on a material by the master-copy.

13 Berkhof actually uses the word *hyponoia* for the mystical sense of Scripture which is the word used in the classics for allegorical interpretation. (*Principles of Interpretation*, p. 59.) Note this classical use of *hyponoia* in Geffcken, "Allegory, Allegorical Interpretation," *Hastings Encyclopedia of Religion and Ethics*, I, 328.

14 *Op. cit.*, I, 328.

15 *The Riddle of the New Testament*, p. 17. Italics are ours.

prefigures, adumbrates something in the New. Hence what is interpreted in the Old is not foreign or peculiar or hidden, but rises naturally out of the text due to the relationship of the two Testaments.

To find Christ or the atonement in the sacrificial system, or to find Christian salvation or experience in the Tabernacle follows from the character of the divine revelation. If the problem could be rested at this point, all would be well, but such is not the case. When Philo or Origen or Clement find Platonic philosophy in the Old Testament we might cite this as clearly allegorical interpretation; and when the writer to the Hebrews finds Christ in Old Testament institutions we may cite this as a clear example of typological interpretation. But what sort of interpretation is it when the Fathers find all sorts of adumbrations in the Old Testament with reference to the New? Each piece of wood is discovered to be a reference to the cross, and every pool of water speaks of baptismal regeneration! Here scholars admit that the typical and the allegorical methods are difficult to differentiate.¹⁶ Should this be called improper typological interpretation, or straight allegorical interpretation?

Jewett's case for the identity of the two methods is based on Wolfson's definition of the allegorical method: "The allegorical method essentially means the interpretation of a text in terms of something else, irrespective of what that something else is." The critical words in this definition are: "in terms of something else." Our impression of Wolfson's treatment of Philo and the allegorical method is that the *something else* means something foreign, secret, hidden, imported--which was the burden of our previous citation of Geffcken. But if typological interpretation rises *naturally out of the text* then it is not an interpretation of *something else* and is therefore a method of interpretation within its own rights. Or as Fairbairn puts it, the typical meaning "is not properly a different or higher sense [as allegorical interpretation demands], but a different or higher application of *the same sense*."¹⁷

The history of allegorical interpretation has brought to the surface the emphasis on the hidden, secret, and imported meaning. Further, the list of rules for the detection of an allegory (e.g., Philo and Origen) reveals that an entirely different spirit is at work in allegorical interpretation than in typological interpretation.

Attention to the literature on the subject reveals that many scholars do believe that a genuine distinction obtains between the two methods of interpretation. Dana states that the difference is that the typological method is based on the theological connectedness of the two Testaments, whereas allegorical interpretation is "assigning to Scripture an assumed meaning different from its plain literal meaning, derived deductively from some abstract or philosophical conception. It takes the events and ideas of Scripture as symbols beneath which are concealed profound or hidden meanings."¹⁸

Darbyshire reviews the attempts to define the two methods apart.¹⁹ Marsh finds the difference that in typology the facts and circumstances of one instance are *representative* of other facts and circumstances; whereas in allegorical interpretation they are emblematic. Mildert indicates that that which makes a type a type is *divine intention* (and presumably there is no divine intention in allegorical

16 Cf. Darbyshire, *op. cit.*, pp. 500-501. Darbyshire notes that in such instances it is arbitrary whether the interpretation is allegorical or typological. Jewett (*op. cit.*) is able to make one of his strongest points with this problem.

17 *Op. cit.*, I, 3. Italics are ours.

18 Dana, *Searching the Scriptures*, p. 38.

19 *Op. cit.*, I, 500-501.

interpretation). Wescott notes that typology presupposes a purpose of God being accomplished from age to age so that matters in one age may represent a subsequent age, whereas in allegorical interpretation the imagination of the interpreter supplies the connection between the two levels of meaning.

Torm also discusses this problem and finds a difference between the two. In allegorical interpretation the interpreter finds alongside the literal sense of the text a different and deeper meaning which may even completely exclude the literal meaning. ("Man versteht unter dieser Auslegung, die--auch wenn nach dem Textzusammenhang kein bildische Rede vorliegt--neben dem buchstäblichen Sinne des Textes ober bisweilen auch unter vollständigem Ausschluss deselben eine andere hiervon verschiedene und vermeintlich tiefere Bedeutung findet.")²⁰ And in speaking directly to the problem of their difference he states that the allegorical meaning goes alongside the literal meaning of the text, and that it is independent of the literal meaning, and may even exclude it; whereas the typological interpretation proceeds directly out of the literal explanation. ("Der Unterschied zwischen der typologischen Auslegung [oder Betrachtungsweise] und der allegorischen ist m. a. W. der: Die allegorische Auslegung geht neben der buchstäblichen Erklärung ihren Weg [ist von ihr unabhängig, ja kann sie sogar ausschliessen], während die typologische Auslegung [Betrachtungweise] gerade von der buchstäblichen Erklärung ausgeht.")²¹

It would seem that an investigation of Galatians 4:24 would settle the issue but it does not. The following interpretations have been put on this text: (i) that it is an *illustration* and therefore says nothing in justification of allegorical interpretation; (ii) that it is a page out of rabbinical exegesis and therefore improper and indefensible; (iii) that it is a page out of rabbinical exegesis, to be sure, but it is a proper form of interpretation which the rabbis abused; (iv) that it is an *argumentum ad hominem* and therefore does not constitute a justification for allegorical interpretation; (v) that it is one instance of an inspired allegorical interpretation; Paul definitely makes note that he is departing from usual methods of interpretation, and it therefore constitutes no grounds for allegorical interpretation in general; (vi) that it is an allegorical interpretation and thereby constitutes a justification of the allegorical method; and (vii) that it is in reality a typological interpretation, or similar to one, regardless of the use of the word allegory in the text.

Lightfoot²² says Paul uses the word *allēgoria* in much the same sense as he uses the word *typos* in 1 Cor. 10:11. Meyer²³ believes that by *allēgoroumena* Paul really means *typikōs legomena*. Findlay claims that "in principle the Pauline allegory does not differ from the type."²⁴ Lambert²⁵ thinks that Gal. 4:24 is part of the general typology of the New Testament and thinks that this particular example is a blending of the allegorical and typical. Vincent presses for a distinction of type and allegory while

20 Torm, *op. cit.*, p. 213.

21 *Ibid.*, p. 223, fn. 2.

22 J. B. Lightfoot, *The Epistle of Paul to the Galatians* (first edition), p. 180.

23 *Op. cit.*, p. 201, fn. 7.

24 Findlay, *The Epistle to the Galatians*, p. 289. He also speaks of "legitimate" and "illegitimate" allegories.

25 Lambert, "Type," *Dictionary of the Apostolic Church*, II, 623, 624.

commenting on Gal. 4:24;²⁶ whereas Robertson does not.²⁷ Lenski thinks that any connection between Paul's use of the word *allegory* in Gal. 4:24 and what is understood by the expression "allegorical interpretation" is purely verbal and not real. "What Paul presents is akin to type and antitype, but only akin," he writes. "Hence also he does not speak of a type. All types are prophetic; Paul is not presenting prophecy and fulfilment. Paul does not go a step beyond the Scriptural facts; what he does is to point out *the same nature* in both."²⁸

An appeal to Gal. 4:24 to settle the issue is inconclusive for it is evident that the expression Paul used is not capable of unequivocal interpretation. Interpreters evidently have settled their minds on the proposed difference or lack of difference between the allegorical and typological methods of interpretation on other grounds than Gal. 4:24.

D. NATURE AND INTERPRETATION OF TYPES

The interpretation of a type depends upon the nature of a type. Terry quoting Muenscher defines a type as: "In the science of theology it properly signifies the *preordained representative relation which certain persons, events and institutions of the Old Testament bear to corresponding persons, events, and institutions in the New.*"²⁹ Miller's definition is: "Typology is the doctrine of symbols and types; the doctrine that persons and things in the New Testament, especially the person and work of Christ, are symbolized, or prefigured, by persons and things in the Old Testament."³⁰ Moorehead says that types are "pictures, object lessons, by which God taught His people concerning His Grace and saving power."³¹

26 Vincent, *Word Studies in the New Testament*, IV, 149.

27 Robertson, *Word Pictures in the New Testament*, IV, 306.

28 Lenski, *The Interpretation of St. Paul's Epistle to the Galatians* (etc.), p. 237. Italics are his. It is also interesting to note that the outstanding French Biblical scholar, Daniélou thinks there is a difference between typological and allegorical interpretation (*Origen*, pp. 139 and 174). Burton (*A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on the Epistle to the Galatians*) believes that "which things are allegorical utterances" refers to Paul's interpretation of the passage, not to the original meaning intended by the writer of Genesis. He is not sure if the argument is *ad hominem* or if Paul is really giving us an example of spiritual exegesis. Pp. 253-56. Johnson (*The Quotations of the New Testament from the Old*) finds no objection in taking this as an allegory. Paul does not impugn the historicity of the passage. Allegorical interpretation is part and parcel of all great literature and the Biblical allegories are closer to the literary allegories of the classics than the allegories of the Jewish rabbis. P. 118 ff.

29 Terry, *op. cit.*, p. 246. Italics are his.

30 Miller, *The Tabernacle*, p. 15.

31 Moorehead, "Typology," *The International Standard Bible Encyclopedia*, V, 3029. Ludwig Koehler's definition of a type is: "Typus ist eine Gestalt, eine Begebenheit, ein Zusammenhang, der nicht um seiner selber willen Gewicht und Bedeutung hat, sondern dessen Zweck und Wert darin besteht, dass er eine andere Grösse auch sie eine Gestalt, eine Begebenheit, ein Zusammenhang, audeutet, vorbildet, weissagt." "Christus im Alter und im Neuen Testament," *Theologische Zeitschrift*, 4:252, July-August, 1953.

By analyzing these definitions the following *elements* of a type are manifest:

(i) In a type there must be a *genuine resemblance* in form or idea between the Old Testament reference and the New Testament counterpart. The connection between type and antitype must not be accidental nor superficial but real and substantial.

(ii) This resemblance must be *designated*. The problem of designation is the crux of the Marshian principle. In fanciful systems of typology designation springs from the imagination of the interpreter either on arbitrary or superficial grounds. Previously in this work we have defended the principle of Fairbairn that types are *innate* and *inferred*. A type is properly designated when either it is so stated to be one in the New Testament, or wherein the New Testament states a whole as typical (e.g., the Tabernacle, and the Wilderness Wanderings) and it is up to the exegetical ability of the interpreter to determine additional types in the parts of these wholes.

(iii) *Dissimilarity* is to be expected. There is no one-to-one correspondence between type and antitype. Great care must be taken to lift out of the Old Testament item precisely that which is typical and no more. There are points of pronounced similarity and equally so, points of pronounced dissimilarity between Christ and Aaron or Christ and Moses. The typical truth is at the point of similarity. One of the cardinal errors in typology is to make typical the elements of dissimilarity in a type.

The heart of typology is the similarity between the two Testaments. If the two covenants are made too dissimilar then the justification of typology is either weakened or broken. The Old Testament system is complex and care must be taken in treating it. The New Testament stresses the contrast of law in its legislative elements with the gospel, but sees marked similarities between the gospel and the ceremonial part of the law.

It is also apparent that there is a fundamental harmony between the Old Testament theology and the New ("Novum Testamentum in Vetere latet; Vetus in Novo patet"). It is shown by Paul that the act of faith is the same in both Testaments (Romans 4); that the process of justification is the same (Romans 4:22-24); that the same basic system of sacrifice underlies both Testaments (Hebrews 9, 10); that the life of faith in the Old Testament is the model for the New Testament saints (Hebrews 11); that the doctrine of sin is the same as Paul proves by his catena of Old Testament quotations in Romans 3; that the Messiah of the Old Testament is the Savior in the New (Hebrews 1). It is this profound similarity of the two Testaments which makes predictive prophecy and typology a possibility.

Returning to our central subject we note that *types are prophetic symbols*, or as Davidson puts it, "Typology is a species of prophecy."³² We suggest the following rules of interpretation:

(1). *Note the typology of the New Testament and see how it treats the subject*. This much immediately is apparent; *the New Testament* deals with the great facts of Christ and redemption; with the great moral and spiritual truths of Christian experience, when it touches on typology. It does not deal with minutiae, and with incidentals. We should then learn that in typology we should restrict our efforts to major doctrines, central truths, key spiritual lessons and major moral principles. A typology which becomes too fascinated with minutiae is already out of step with the spirit of New Testament typology.

32 A. B. Davidson, *Old Testament Prophecy*, p. 210.

(2). Note that the New Testament specifies the *Tabernacle* with its priesthood and offerings, and the *Wilderness Wanderings* as the two major areas of typical materials. This indicates the wholes which have typical parts. By no means is typology restricted to these areas, but these are the areas where most of the typical material is to be drawn.

It is of course a matter of convention to affirm whether some passages are types or predictions. Is the flood a type of coming judgment or a prediction? Is Jonah a type of Christ or a prediction? Are the children of Isaiah types of believers (Hebrews 2:13), or were they analogies of believers? Is the call of Israel out of Egypt a type of Christ, or an analogy of Christ, or a prediction of Christ? (Matt. 2:15).

It should go without saying that if an interpreter proposes a typical interpretation, he should search the New Testament to see if it has any reference at all to the Old Testament passage under consideration. Obviously anything so treated as a type in the New Testament is proper for us to treat likewise.

(3). *Locate in any given type the typical and the accidental.* What is typical must be judged from New Testament considerations and the general hermeneutical skill of the interpreter. Hence a good exegete will restrain his imagination when he discusses the Tabernacle. Much about the Tabernacle has no typical significance and this ought to be clearly apprehended. Not all the actions of the priests, nor all the elements of the sacrifices have precise New Testament counterparts. The interpreter who presses beyond the typical into the accessories of the text, then brings forth what is not there *by designation*.

Temptations to be novel, clever, original or shocking should be resisted. Typology is not always appreciated as it should be because some students of it have gone to extremes and thereby soured the subject to other students. Certainly a teacher of the Bible should not boast of finding more types than other teachers because he is more spiritual than they. To be spiritual minded is not a license to abuse the rules of hermeneutics.

(4). *Do not prove doctrine from types unless there is clear New Testament authority.* Hebrews plainly proves some theological points from typological considerations, but we may not do the same because we are not inspired. Types may be used to *illustrate* New Testament truth. The central rod of the construction of the Tabernacle wall cannot properly be used to prove the unity or security of believers, but it may be used to illustrate the same.

In general a humble spirit should characterize our interpretations of typology. What is clearly taught in the New Testament may be asserted with confidence; but beyond that, restraint should be the rule. Typology involves two layers of meaning and this allows for the intrusion of imagination. Therefore we must proceed with care and check the play of our imagination. To do otherwise is to obscure the word of God.

E. KINDS OF TYPES

We may note six kinds of types in Scripture:

(1). *Persons* may be typical. Adam is a type of Christ as the head of a race (Romans 5:14, "who is the figure of him that was to come"). Abraham is the father and type of all who believe by faith. Elijah is the prefigurement of John the Baptist. Joseph is the rejected kinsman, yet future Savior. David is the

type of the Great King. Solomon is the type of the Chosen Son. Zerubbabel is the type of the Head of a new society.

(2). *Institutions*: The sacrifices are types of the cross. Creation and the Promised Land are types of salvation rest. The Passover prefigures our redemption in Christ. The Old Testament theocracy looks forward to the coming kingdom.

(3). *Offices*: Moses, the prophet, was a type of Christ, as was Aaron the high priest and Melchisedec the priest of the most high God.

(4). *Events*: Paul writes that the things which happened in the Wilderness Wanderings were types for our benefit (1 Cor. 10:6, 11).

(5). *Actions*: The lifting up of the brazen serpent is a type of the crucifixion (John 3:14-16). The ministries of the high priest were typical of the ministries of our Lord.

(6). *Things*: The Tabernacle was a type of the Incarnation--the presence of God with his people. Incense is a type of prayer. The curtains of the Tabernacle express principles of access to God.

F. SYMBOLISM

Properly speaking, symbolism is a special study of its own. However, any discussion of typology suggests the study of symbolism. Types differ from symbols in that "while a symbol may represent a thing either past, present, or future, a type is essentially a prefiguring of something future from itself . . . A symbol has in itself no essential reference to time."³³ A type (as previously indicated) is a species of prophecy, but a symbol is a timeless figurative representation. A lion as a symbol of strength or of voracious hunger does not predict anything in the future.

Symbolization occurs early in written history and literature, and is deeply rooted in human nature which seeks to represent the abstract by the concrete and pictorial.³⁴ The presentation of the ideational in pictures and images is also more forceful than mere verbal explication. The Hebrew Scriptures are full of symbols because in addition to these general considerations it is known that the Semitic and Oriental mind of the Hebrews was much more given to symbolism than the Western analytic, philosophical, and scientific mind.

In any symbol there are two elements: (i) the idea which is mental and conceptual, and (ii) the image which represents it. In a given culture these ideas and images are kept close together through the familiarity of constant usage. But when a culture is gone leaving but a segment of its literature it is not

33 Terry, *op. cit.*, p. 336. For further studies of symbolism cf. Farbridge, *Studies in Biblical and Semitic Symbolism*; Wilson, *This Means That*; Pierson, *Knowing the Scriptures* (p. 341 ff.); Harwood, *Handbook of Bible Types and Symbols*; Angus and Green, *Cyclopedic Handbook to the Bible*, p. 221 ff.; Barrows, *Companion to the Bible*, p. 555 ff. All standard Bible dictionaries and encyclopedias contain articles on symbolism. Cf. also the elaborate discussion in Lange, *Revelation* by the American editor, Craven. Pp. 10-41.

34 Cf. Farbridge, *op. cit.*, pp. 3-4.

always easy to discover the ideas associated with symbols. To interpret the symbolism of a culture when that culture has not left us a convenient handbook to symbols is a difficult task, and for this reason there are some significant gaps in our knowledge of Biblical symbols.

For the interpretation of symbols we suggest the following:

(1). *Those symbols interpreted by the Scriptures are the foundation for all further studies in symbolism.* When the Scripture interprets a symbol then we are on sure ground. These interpretations may be used as *general guides* for all further studies in symbols. Ferocious beasts in the book of Daniel stand for wicked political leaders or nations, and we are not surprised to find them again in the book of Revelation bearing the same general idea. The lamb is a frequent symbol of either sacrifice or the waywardness of the human heart. The context readily decides which is meant in the passage. Incense stands as a symbol of prayer.

(2). If the symbol is not interpreted we suggest the following:

(i) Investigate the *context* thoroughly. It might be that in what is said before or after, the idea corresponding to the symbol is revealed. (ii) By means of a concordance check other passages which use the same symbol and see if such cross references will give the clue. (iii) Sometimes the nature of the symbol is a clue to its meaning (although the temptation to read the meanings of our culture into these symbols must be resisted). The preservative character of salt is common knowledge, as is the ferocity of lions, the docility of doves, the meekness of lambs, and the filthiness of pigs. (iv) Sometimes comparative studies of Semitic culture³⁵ reveal the meaning of the symbol. Perchance too in archeological materials the clue will be discovered. If we are not able to turn up any clues to symbols uninterpreted in the text it is wiser to be silent than to speculate.

(3). *Be aware of double imagery in symbols.* There is nothing in the symbolism of the Bible which demands that each symbol have one and only one meaning. This appears to be the presupposition of some works on symbolism, and it is a false presupposition. The lion is at the same time the symbol of Christ ("the Lion of the tribe of Judah") and of Satan (the lion seeking to devour Christians, I Peter 5:8). The lamb is a symbol of sacrifice and of lost sinners (1 Peter 2:25). Water means "the word" in Ephesians 5:26, the Spirit in 1 Corinthians 12:13, and regeneration in Titus 3:5. Oil may mean the Holy Spirit, repentance, or readiness. Further, one entity may be represented by several symbols, e.g., Christ by the lamb, the lion, the branch, and the Holy Spirit by water, oil, wind and the dove.

In general, care and good taste should govern one's interpretation of uninterpreted symbols. An uncritical association of cross references in determining the meaning of symbols may be more harmful than helpful.

There is no question that there is a basic symbolism of numbers in the Bible.³⁶ A study of the

35 Cf. Farbridge, *op. cit.*

36 Cf. Farbridge, *op. cit.* (Chapter IV, "Symbolism of Numbers"); Terry, *op. cit.*, pp. 288-98; Chafer, *The Science of Biblical Hermeneutics*, p. 23; Wilson, *op. cit.*, *im passim*; Rogers, *Things That Differ*, p. 23; Harwood, *op. cit.*, *im passim*; Craven, *loc. cit.*; Smith, "Number," *The International Standard Bible Encyclopedia*, IV, 2157-63; Philpott, "Number," *Smith's Bible Dictionary*, III, 2192-94; Zenos, "Numbers, Significance and Symbolic," *A New Standard Bible Dictionary*.

Tabernacle reveals a very even or regular proportion among the various dimensions, and in the articles of furniture themselves. Daniel and Revelation are especially rich in the symbolic use of numbers. Apart from a few basic agreements on some of the numbers, fancy characterizes most studies on the subject.

The parent of all excessive manipulation of Bible numbers is to be found in the Jewish Rabbinical method known as *Gematria*. Examples of such are as follows:³⁷ The numerical value of the word Branch in Zechariah 3:8 is 138. This has the same value as Consoler in Lamentations 1:16 so that it is one of the names of the Messiah. In Genesis 49:10 the Hebrew numerical value of "Shiloh come" is 358, which is in turn equivalent to Meshiach, and so Shiloh is identified with the Messiah. There are never less than 36 righteous in the world because the numerical value of "upon him" of Isaiah 30:18 is 36. Genesis 11:1 says that all the inhabitants of the world were of one language. Both "one" and "holy" equal 409 so Hebrew was the primeval tongue of humanity.

A certain minimum number of judgments may be made on the symbolism of number. For example, in the ancient Semitic world *three* stood for "some," a "few," i.e., a small total, although in some instances it stood for "many" or "enough." *Four* stood for completeness and was used repeatedly with the diffusion abroad of blessings and cursings. Some have thought *seven* represented the covenant of grace. *Ten* sometimes signifies an indefinite magnitude, and sometimes "perfection." *Forty* represented a generation.

Closely associated with symbolism is the symbolism of metals and colors. In the Tabernacle gold, silver, and brass were used. In Daniel 2 we have another symbolic usage of metals. The gold and silver of the Bible are apparently the same metals we know today, but modern brass is composed of copper and zinc whereas Biblical brass was a combination of copper and tin. It resulted in an alloy almost as hard as steel.

The symbolism of metals has been a matter of considerable debate. P. Fairbairn insists that their only symbolism is in their *value* indicating that God is to be worshipped by our very best. However most writers on symbolism and typology would press for more specific meanings. For example, silver was the universal medium of exchange in Old Testament days and the money for redemption was silver and was called atonement money.³⁸ Thus silver would stand for redemption.

It is urged that the use of brass in connection with the brazen altar, the blazing feet of Christ (Rev. 1:15), and the brazen serpent lifted up in the wilderness points toward judgment as the symbolic meaning of brass.³⁹ Gold stands for the highest and holiest ("Pure gold is the light and splendour of God . . . as he dwells in his holy temple").⁴⁰

The acacia wood of the Tabernacle was added to give frame and rigidity to the Tabernacle and its furniture. The wood is hard, close-grained, orange in color with a darker heart, and well-adapted to cabinet making. It is light, fragrant, sheds water, and is not attacked by insects. The Septuagint calls it "wood that does not rot." It was used in the Tabernacle for its lightness, durability, and resistance to

37 From Farrar, *History of Interpretation*, pp. 98 ff., and 445.

38 Cf. Miller, *The Tabernacle*, p. 52. "The kopher."

39 *Ibid.*, p. 53 for an excellent discussion.

40 Terry, *op. cit.*, p. 303.

insects. Symbolists uniformly identify it with human nature.

The symbolism of colors is far more difficult, for it was not until art was well-established that there was a strict and uniform association of one word with one color. Ancient literature simply does not make the fine color distinctions that are necessary in modern times. For example, the Latin word *purpureous* was used to describe snow, the swan, the foam of the sea, a rose, a beautiful human eye, and purple objects.⁴¹ "Both the Old Testament and the New Testament," writes Pratt, "illustrate the general fact that ancient literature knows little of the modern sensitiveness to color-effects and their subtle gradations."⁴²

Blue (Hebrew, *tekeleth*) is a difficult hue to determine. It sometimes means violet or purple. Gesenius derives it from the verb, "to peel, to shell," with reference to a shell-fish from which came a purple blue dye. Bevan advocates violet;⁴³ Barrows calls it bluish purple.⁴⁴ It is apparent that there is some red in the blue of the ancients giving it a violet tinge, but the bluish cast predominated. For practical purposes blue is an adequate translation.

Scarlet (Hebrew, *tola' ath shani*) is derived from the scarlet worm. The Greek and Latin versions mistook the "shani" for the similar word meaning *two*, and so translated it *twice-dipped*.

White (Hebrew, *shesh*) is identical with the word for white linen, and usually stands for holiness or purity or righteousness.

Like metals, the symbolism of colors has been a matter of debate. Some interpreters believe that colors represent only such a general notion that a king's presence is indicated by rich tapestry or drapery. Likewise the rich colors of the Tabernacle indicate that it is the dwelling place of God. Others attempt to give the colors specific symbolic meaning. With reference to blue, Terry writes that "blue, as the color of heaven, reflected in the sea, would naturally suggest what is heavenly, holy, divine."⁴⁵ Delitzsch calls blue "the majesty of God in condescension."⁴⁶ Purple is usually acknowledged as the color of royalty having been worn by kings, great officials, officers, the wealthy, and the highest in priestcraft. The meaning of scarlet is more difficult to determine though most commentators favor sacrifice as its idea. Interpretations vary from associating the word with red-earth and thus suggesting sacrificial humility, to those who take it to mean a full, free, joyous life. In such a case our interpretations must be tentative.

There is at least one general principle to guide in such matters of symbolism. Careful investigation must be made of the meaning of the terms in the original, of their derivations etymologically or culturally, and a close examination of their associations to see what the natural symbolism might be.

41 "Exodus" (*The Holy Bible Commentary*), p. 366.

42 Pratt, "Colors," *The New Standard Bible Dictionary*, p. 142.

43 Bevan, "Colors," *Smith Bible Dictionary*, I, 480.

44 *Sacred Geography and Antiquities*, p. 546.

45 *Op. cit.*, p. 301.

46 Delitzsch, "Colors," *Schaff-Herzog Encyclopedia of Religious Knowledge*, I, 514 (third edition).

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