

VI. The Interpretation of the Old Testament

A. Introductory Note

This is a giant subject for which I can only sketch a bit. The remarks made in this connexion are not full but an attempt to give a beginning point in the study.

B. Methods of Interpretation

1. Exemplary: The use of the Old Testament after the pattern suggested in 1 Cor. 10 and Romans 15 for determining patterns of conduct on an exampleship basis.
2. Didactic: As finding the particular teaching for life and the given expressions of particular truths especially in the law and the Psalms.
3. Salvational: Using the narrative history (et al) of the Old Testament to direct us into a fuller understanding of the redemptive program.

You will see that there are advantages and troubles to all of these and the advocates of each may well treat the advocates of others as *persona non grata*.

C. Means of Interpretation

1. Literal: this is what we push for. We think it is what the New Testament writers did and we have defined it more precisely under our analysis of the prophetic literature.
2. Allegorical: Many of the church fathers followed some sort of allegorical system but not all the same. It allowed them to see themselves more quickly in the unfolding pattern of the Old Testament and it enabled them to explain more easily the events of the New Testament age and its history.
3. Typological: Apart from the plainly spoken and identified types, some use this method almost exclusively. Many cautions are advised.
4. Symbolic: Merely using the Old Testament as symbolic representation of truth and allowing it neither form nor merit of its own. Some extreme dispensationalists do this rather easily.