

THE STUDY OF THE TYPES

BY

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CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTORY CHAPTER

THE consideration of the Old Testament types is one of the most interesting and helpful subjects for Bible study, and at the same time is absolutely necessary if we are rightly to understand the Word of GOD.

The Old Testament is often viewed merely as a collection of historical tales, giving the origin of the Jewish people, and illustrating Oriental manners and customs; useful in supplying Sunday stories for the children, but of very little practical importance as to spiritual teaching.

The Bible may be compared to those beautifully illustrated volumes so often published, with a number of engravings of choice pictures at the beginning, followed by chapters of letter-press describing them, giving their history, or telling something of the life of the artist. We can scarcely conceive of anyone trying to understand such descriptions without referring to the pictures themselves; yet this is how the Bible is often treated.

GOD has given to us a series of pictures in the early books of the Bible. The New Testament refers to and explains them; yet many people are satisfied to read the New Testament without any reference to the types of the Old. They do not believe with Augustine that:

"The New is in the Old contained; The Old is by the New explained."

"All Scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable, . . . that the man of God may be perfect, thoroughly furnished unto all good works;" and yet how many there are who are content to know little or nothing about parts of the Bible which have evidently been given to us by GOD for some purpose.

We are privileged to live in days of much Christian activity; but while there is so much energy and zeal, it is possible to engage in "**good works**" without being "**thoroughly furnished**" and thus the works themselves suffer.

Mary wrought a "**good work**" when she broke her alabaster box of ointment and anointed the Lord; but it was the result of the "**good part**" she had chosen when she "**sat at Jesus' feet, and heard His word.**" It was there that she probably learnt His purpose concerning His resurrection, and knew that if she did not anoint Him for His burial "**beforehand,**" she would have no other opportunity.

He would have His children still take that place, and in lowly dependence on Him learn what He would teach. He does not mean us to read the Old Testament as we should ancient

Roman or Grecian history; but by careful study under His direction to find out His reasons for bringing the events to pass, or for allowing them to happen, and for giving us the record of these events.

The development and success of Christian enterprises is one of the bright features of the days in which we live; but we cannot shut our eyes to the dark side of the picture. There are other things which are also growing, and amongst them there is a marked advance in the spread of unsound doctrine.

Many are giving up the simple truths of GOD's Word. The Inspiration of the Scriptures is attacked on all sides; the doctrine of Atonement by substitution is denied, or thought little of; whilst other things are preached which are contrary to the Word. This could not be so frequently the case if the Old Testament types were more carefully studied and more widely taught.

*"The typology of the Old Testament is the very alphabet of the language in which the doctrine of the New Testament is written; and as many of our great theologians are admittedly ignorant of the typology, we need not feel surprised if they are not always the safest exponents of the doctrines." **

Besides this, the personal loss is great to those who do not study for themselves this part of the Bible; and yet we often meet those who have been Christians for years, and those who would be Bible teachers, who have never given their attention to it.

Many reasons are given for this neglect. Some think the types difficult; others say the study is fanciful; others that it is uninteresting; and so from one cause or another they miss the rich treasure that they might otherwise obtain. The precious things of GOD's Word are not all upon the surface.

We must dig in order to find them. Like the first sinking of the shaft, the work may be laborious at the outset, and therefore needs diligence; but when we reach a rich vein of ore we are well rewarded, as we find that we have come upon a mine of inexhaustible wealth.

* *"The Literal Interpretation of Scripture,"* By Robert Anderson, C.B., LL. D.

It is very important to understand what is meant by a type

In I Corinthians 10, we are told concerning the various wilderness experiences of the children of Israel, that "**all these things happened unto them for ensamples [types]**"; and Paul explains that the record of these events is given to us in the Bible for a special purpose, viz., to teach us certain lessons.

This passage seems to cover all that befell GOD's redeemed people in their journey from the place of bondage to the land of promise; and we may also conclude from it that other portions of their history are given to us with a similar purpose. But although teaching spiritual lessons, the incidents really took place. Some who are giving up their belief in the inspiration of the Bible would try and make us believe that though there is spiritual meaning in these old stories they are only traditions and fables; not records of real events, but merely allegorical, and no more to be

taken literally than Bunyan's "*Pilgrim's Progress*." It is enough for us that the Lord Himself and the writers of the New Testament looked upon them as truthful records of actual events.

Certain Bible characters are clearly referred to in the New Testament as types. They were real living people, not mythical characters that never lived; and the record of their history is evidently given to teach us of Him whose coming they foreshadowed.

The story of Joseph is a striking example of this; and when we see in his life a picture of "**the sufferings of Christ and the glory that should follow**," and the deliverance He has wrought, we understand how it is that so large a portion of the Book of Genesis is devoted to Joseph's history. He is perhaps the most complete type of our Lord that we can find; and unlike so many heroes of the Old Testament, there seems no blot on the page of his life to mar the picture.

But besides typical incidents and characters, there is another very important class of types, viz., all those things which were expressly commanded by GOD in connection with the Tabernacle and Temple service, and which in every detail were clearly given as types, "**The Holy Ghost this signifying**" - some lessons about our Lord and His work. Some would try to make us believe that the Hebrew religion, as described in the Books of Moses, was only borrowed from the heathen nations around; but the careful study of the types leaves no room for doubting that the whole Levitical economy was divinely instituted to foreshadow the work and person of the Lord JESUS CHRIST Himself.

We cannot state with certainty that anything is a type unless we have some warrant for doing so. If we can turn to no New Testament passage for our authority, or if there be no expression or analogy which indicates the antitype, it is safer and more correct to call it an illustration.

While visiting Northfield, some of us were looking at the beautiful model of Solomon's Temple, designed by Mr. Newberry, which is in the library of Mr. Moody's Seminary; and a lady who had listened to our conversation, said she did not believe in any of the types as such - she thought it was all fanciful.

We tried to explain to her that a true type was something designed by GOD to teach us a lesson; and that if in the New Testament it was proved to be so, there was no fear of our being fanciful.

We asked her if there were no types which she could believe.

"No," she said, "none."

"Do you not think that when John the Baptist said, '**Behold the Lamb of God**,' he meant that all the lambs which had been offered in sacrifice before that time were types of the Lord Jesus?"

"Yes," she said, "I see that."

"Do you not think that as Peter speaks of believers as lively stones built up a spiritual house, and of a royal priesthood, we may take the stones of the temple and the Levitical priesthood as types of believers?"

"Yes, I can see that."

"Then, as we are told in Hebrews that the Lord JESUS CHRIST has consecrated for us a new and living way, '**through the veil, that is to say, His flesh,**' may we not say fearlessly that the veil was a type of His incarnation, and the rending of the veil, of His death?"

"Yes," she could see that.

And so after she had been obliged to acknowledge five or six very evident types, we recommended her thoroughly to work out these, and told her that we were sure she would want to go on with more. She was soon much interested in the study.

In these days of many conferences, why do we never hear of one for the Study of Types? There are evangelistic services for the preaching of the Gospel; there are conferences on Foundation Truths; upon the Inspiration of the Word; the Coming of our Lord and other prophetic subjects; the unity and privileges of the Church, and conventions for "the deepening of spiritual life."

All these subjects are included in the study of the types. Where can we find more beautiful Gospel subjects than in the Old Testament scenes, such as the lifting up of the brazen serpent, the slaying of the paschal lamb, and many others?

Foundation truths are clearly explained and illustrated; for such doctrines as the atonement, substitution, the value of the blood, are more plainly taught in the types than anywhere in Scripture - save in the accounts of Calvary itself, which they foreshadowed. Our belief in the Inspiration of the Bible cannot fail to be strengthened by the study. We shall find striking prophetic pictures in the Old Testament; for it is impossible to see the full beauty of many of the Levitical institutions apart from dispensational truth.

With regard to subjects relating to the privileges and the unity of the Church, these are again and again foreshadowed in the types. It is stated that the Church is not the subject of Old Testament prophecy; but even if this be so, it need not be excluded from the types.

As early as the second chapter in the Bible we find the Church foreshadowed; for there we have the account of the formation of Eve and of her union with Adam, which Paul tells us in Ephesians 5 is a type of our relationship to Christ. Quoting from Genesis 2:24, "**They two shall be one flesh,**" he adds, "**This is a great mystery: but I speak concerning Christ and the Church.**"

By far the largest number of conventions are those for "the deepening of spiritual life"; and beyond all others the subject of holiness seems to be emphasized in the types.

In the books of Moses we learn more clearly than anywhere else to have a right view of GOD's holiness and of our need.

Eye-witnesses of the sufferings of CHRIST have given us accounts in the Gospels of that great antitype, the Cross of Calvary; but we may fail to see all its varied aspects without the help of the types. The details which are brought before us in the minute directions respecting the offerings

and the institutions of the Tabernacle, teach us many lessons and emphasize many truths which we might otherwise miss. How can we fail to learn more and more of GOD's abhorrence of sin, and our constant need of cleansing, as we see the wondrous provision that He has made for every kind of defilement?

Thus we find prefigured in the types "**all the counsel of God.**"

Without the fuller revelations of truth in the Epistles they could not be wholly understood; but with this teaching we can see meanings which must have been hidden from those who lived in Old Testament times.

It has been remarked that the types are only one little piece of the Bible, and this is probably a general opinion; but is it correct? Do they not run through the entire Book, involving in their study a growing familiarity with the whole of GOD's Word? In the books of Moses and the historical books we have typical characters, events, and institutions; in the poetical books we have typical utterances by typical characters; in the prophecies we again have typical characters and events, and the fulfilment of the types is foretold; whilst throughout the New Testament they are constantly referred to and explained, and the great Antitype is presented.

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