ing His message to their minds? God certainly meets man in historical deeds, but we can be thankful that He does not leave him to his own devices in the understanding of these deeds, but provides him with an authoritative revelation of the meaning of them. Some of the manifestations of dialectical theology border upon the irrational, but biblical thought, although sometimes paradoxical, is never irrational.

(f) Its increasing tendency towards an anthropocentric outlook.

There can be no doubt that existentialism is the leading philosophical influence upon present-day theology. Since Kierkegaard’s day, existentialist philosophy has tended to become less and less Christian. Heidegger’s brand of it has considerably affected Bultmann and Tillich, and he speaks not of God but of ‘Being’. In his thought man is challenged to forsake ‘inauthentic existence’, in which he tries to hide from reality. It is when he turns round and faces the truth about himself ‘like a man’, that he comes into ‘authentic existence’. It is not easy to see how Heidegger’s man in authentic existence differs from a self-made man.

These tendencies towards a man-centred view of things (often linked with a subjectivist outlook in ethics) are being given their head by those who occupy the left of centre in theology at the moment. Barth and those who belong well to the right of his movement may well find themselves left high and dry by the tide of so-called ‘radi-calism’. Only a God-given revival of true biblical faith and truly biblical theology can stem this tide.

The Interpretation of the Old Testament by the New Testament

By the Rev. Klaas Runia, Th.D., Professor of Theology at the Reformed Theological College, Geelong, Australia.

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It is self-evident that this is an important aspect of the interpretation of the Bible. It concerns both the Old and the New Testament. On the one hand, we have to examine the New Testament to see how the inspired authors approached and read their Bible. And, on the other hand, we have to study the Old Testament for ourselves and try to answer the question: How shall we today read this part of the Bible?

Even a superficial reading of the New Testament shows us that all the authors make much use of the Old Testament and we immediately notice that they read it in a special way, viz., as a Christian book. Take for example the Gospel according to St Matthew. In the very first chapter we find the genealogy of Jesus Christ and we see that Matthew traces it back to Abraham, the founding father of Israel (1: 1). After that, he gives us a long list of names: three times fourteen (1: 17). In this list the whole Old Testament passes before our eyes. Many of the most important personalities are mentioned: the patriarchs, Abraham, Isaac and Jacob; then Judah; later on Boaz (who married Ruth), David (together with Bathsheba), Solomon, Hezekiah, etc. But this genealogy is only the beginning. In the remaining part of the book, too, the Old Testament is repeatedly quoted.

In chapter 1: 23 the well-known words of Is. 7: 14 — ‘Behold, a virgin shall conceive and bear a son, and his name shall be called Emmanuel’, are quoted and applied to Jesus. Of course, this quotation as such does not create much of a problem if we accept that the birth of the child Jesus was indeed a virgin birth. The next quotation in chapter 2: 6, however, (from Micah 5: 2 — Bethlehem as the birth-place of the Messiah), is more difficult, for Matthew quotes the Old Testament passage somewhat differently from the original. Chapter 2: 15 is more difficult again; Matthew quotes Hosea 11: 1 — ‘Out of Egypt have I called my Son’, and applies this to the return of the infant Jesus with his parents from Egypt after
the death of Herod, while in Hosea 11: 1 itself the reference is to the Exodus. This is the second Chapter and it is also rather hard. Matthew quotes Jer. 31: 15, where the prophet speaks of Rachel weeping for her children (a reference par excellence) and then adds: "When you shall heed the voice of the Lord your God." Thus Jesus quotes the fifth commandment in Matt., 15: 4, "Honour your father and your mother." This is again a clear "No!" The New Testament itself emphatically tells us that Jesus read the Old Testament in this way and also taught His disciples to do the same (cf. Luke 24: 27). If you hear that the New Testament writers have accepted this lead given by the Master, and creatively added to it when later they were writing their books, then you are in error. The Gospels in the Old Testament they found indications of Jesus as the Messiah. But again the question presents itself: Were they right in doing this? Or did they violate the Old Testament itself, by reading it as a ‘Christian’ book? The way forward is to study the quotations themselves. Of course, it is impossible to discuss them in one short article. But this is hardly necessary, as all the main quotations fall into three categories: A. Direct messianic prophecies or typological passages. B. General statements of the Old Testament, which are applied to Jesus. On each of these three groups we shall make some comments.

A. DIRECT MESSIANIC PROPHECIES

There are many passages in the Old Testament which speak directly of the messianic age. Here the Old Testament is looked at not only in the appearance, death and resurrection of Jesus, the rabbi of Nazareth. The ‘eschaton’ is not only the future event, but it is a present reality. Again and again we read how they take certain Old Testament passages, which are clearly eschatological in their own context, and apply them to Jesus of Nazareth. C. H. Dodd, in his book According to the Scriptures, has made a special study of these passages and discovered that there are certain ‘blocks’ of eschatological passages in the Old Testament, which are consistently applied to Jesus. He singles out especially: Dan. 7 and 12; Joel 2 and 3; Zechariah 12 and 1; 4: 7 We find these passages quoted throughout the whole New Testament. In other words, they show us that there was a very different method of reading the Old Testament among the New Testament writers. But where did they get this from? To account for the beginning of this most original and fruitful process of rethinking the Word of God, we must find need to postulate a creative mind. The Gospels offer us one: Are we compelled to reject this answer? The answer is a clear ‘No’. The New Testament itself emphatically tells us that Jesus read the Old Testament in this way and also

Some of them cause no difficulty at all. For example, there are the quots which see the whole of the New Testament as fulfilled in its inner contradiction, its miscarriage. 4 Although there is a drift towards a trans-
comes first) is applied by Jesus Himself in Matthew 11:10, 17f.; Mark 7:13-21; it is a typical or typological aspect... In other words, while the Old Testament writers saw only one dimension in these passages, namely, his own

B. TYPICAL OR TYPOLOGICAL PASSAGES

This group of passages is much more difficult, because it contains material of quite a different nature. The passages themselves are not clearly messianic. All depend on the question, whether Jesus is the Messiah. If this is so — and this is a matter of faith — then the New Testament writers were fully right in applying them to Jesus.

A type is always a historical person or event, which first has significance for the contemporary situation, and then points towards the future (the second dimension). And it is always an allegory.

A type and its antitype. There may be many differences between the two persons or events, yet at some point the type must be a true picture of the antitype. (2) The type may be described by divine appointment to bear a likeness to the antitype. It is not left to us to find out whether a first 'virgin birth' in the days of Isaiah, an idea which in our opinion is contrary to the tenor of the whole story. The emphasis in these passages, namely, his own

The second example is taken from the Old Testament, and concerns the brazen serpent. In the time of Moses, a brazen serpent was made and a warning was given to the Israelites: 'Whoever has been bitten by a serpent, may live if he looks at the brazen serpent' (Numbers 21:6). This is an example of the prophetic depiction of the Messiah as a 'son of man'. The New Testament writers fulminated against the serpent in Jesus Christ, in Acts 13:33 and Hebrews 2:5-21. Again, the first reference is temporary. The King of Israel is the 'son' of Yahweh. At first glance this seems to be a parallel of the common belief of the Israelites that their king was divine. But the similarity is only superficial. In Psalm 2 there is no hint of a divine nature of the king. His sonship is not 'natural', but it is the result of the psalmist's thought. In Isaiah, it is said of him: 'You are my son, today I have begotten you', but this 'begotten' is qualified by the 'decree' and therefore refers to his appointment by God. This is exactly the glory of the Messiah. The King of Israel is described as 'son of God', or 'son of man', or 'son of the living God'. But the Messiah is called 'Son of Man' only because God has so designed by God. This does not mean that it is always expressively applied to the Messiah.

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C. GENERAL STATEMENTS OF THE OLD TESTAMENT, WHICH ARE APPLIED TO JESUS CHRIST

This is the most difficult category of all. Here we have to deal with passages which the New Testament quotes as fulfilled in Jesus Christ, but which, as far as we can tell, the Old Testament itself had nothing to do with the Messiah. Usually the situation is as follows. In the New Testament a certain passage is mentioned. In itself, it is a local fact. But the New Testament applies it to Jesus Christ or to the Christ-event, and then bluntly declares: 'Now this Scripture has been fulfilled.' Especially here the modern reader often has a feeling of perplexity. Sauer frankly admits: 'In probability no contemporary of the original prophets would have grasped the application given to the text in the New Testament.' Does this then mean that, at least in these cases, we meet with arbitrariness? The best way of finding the answer is to study one of them.

We take as an example Hosea 11: 1, 'Out of Egypt I called my son.' As we have seen, Matthew applies this in chapter 2. He is not only the representative of Israel, but of all mankind. No doubt this is also the background of Hebrews 2: 6-8, where Psalm 8 is applied to Jesus. In the original, this psalm is a creation-hymn; it speaks of the human race, of every man. (cf. 2: 6-8.) But the author of the Hebrews, making full use of the Greek translation of the Septuagint ('a little child loosed the angels' [elohim] in verse 5), applies it to Christ in his humiliation, for Jesus Christ is man par excellence. By whose authority do the New Testament writers do this? The only answer possible is by the authority of Jesus Himself. In fact, Jesus Himself apparently anticipated this already in the prayer, 'My God, why hast Thou forsaken me?' which Jesus takes upon His lips on the cross. Also the complaint, 'I thirst' (Jn. 19: 28) is seen as a deliberate fulfilment of Scripture, viz. Psalm 69: 21. Another example is found in the words, 'they hate me' (Lk. 23: 35; 19), which Jesus declares are fulfilled in the hatred of the Jews against Him. (Jn. 15: 25;) while Ps. 41: 9 ('who have lifted up my head against me') is seen to be fulfilled in the action of the traitor Judas (Jn. 13: 18).

Summing up, it appears that so far we have found three main principles of interpretation. (a) In the case of the direct messianic prophecies it is the belief that Jesus Christ is the Messiah promised by God. Therefore all messianic prophecies can be applied to Him. (b) In the case of the typological passages the principle of prefiguration applies: the Old Testament history of Israel points forward to the coming Christ. (c) In the case of the general statements, we have the principle of representation as Israel's Messiah, Jesus is the last and ultimate representative of Israel.

When we have a closer look at these three principles, it appears that essentially (b) and (c) are only particular applications of (a). At the same time (b) is the reverse of (c) and vice versa. In the case of (a), we take our starting point in the Old Testament history of salvation, look back towards Israel's history and see it as a prefiguration of the events. In the case of (c) we take our starting point in the Old Testament people of God, look forward to the coming Messiah, and see Jesus as the representative of this people. But in both cases the real starting point is the belief that Jesus Christ is the Messiah, the man of Nazareth, is the God-Given Messiah.

This whole approach to the Old Testament is typology. The Old Testament people in general, the Jewish rabbis in the days of the New Testament (and also today) read the Old Testament differently. The reason was, and is, that for them the messianic eschaton is still fully future. There is no fulfilment yet: the Messiah has not come. For the Christian, the eschaton has, in principle, become a reality in the coming of Jesus Christ and the outpouring of the Holy Spirit. Hence such New Testament statements as 'in the last days' (Acts 2: 17) are based on the original prophecy of Joel: 'the end of the ages has come upon us' (1 Cor. 1: 5; cf. 1 Pet. 1: 20) 'in the last hour' (1 Jn. 2: 18). All these statements point to the one, common eschaton in which the Kingdom of God has appeared. The eschaton is a present reality (however much the Christian with his expectation also, and in its light the Old Testament becomes a 'new book' of the New Testament).

We must, however, return once more to the questions we asked at the beginning of this article, viz. the interpretation of the Old Testament by itself? Or does it involve a violation of the peculiar character of the Old Testament?

There is fairly general agreement in our day among Old Testament scholars that typological interpretation (for this is the main group and at this point the objections are usually voiced) is in no way a violation of the Old Testament. In the first place, there is the fact that the rabbis practised it already, although in a much lesser degree than the New Testament writers. Second place and of much greater importance — typology, in contrast to allegory, fully represents that the New Testament salvation is not purely a continuation of the events. It does not minimize or ignore the importance of history, but takes it fully seriously. Its characteristic is that it sees a 'prophetic plus' in this history. In doing this, it does not add anything to the history but points out that there was more in a particular event than the contemporaries had seen. L. Goppelt states it thus: 'The typological interpretation are statements about the New Testament salvation, not about the Old Testament. In other words, this principle allows the original authors to say exactly what they said, whereas the Old Testament characteristic is that it sees a prophetic plus.' In this history. In doing this, it does not add anything to the history but points out that there was more in a particular event than the contemporaries had seen. L. Goppelt states it thus: 'The typological interpretation are statements about the New Testament salvation, not about the Old Testament. In other words, this principle allows the original authors to say exactly what they said, whereas the Old Testament characteristic is that it sees a prophetic plus.'
ament is the movement from promise to fulfilment. W. Zimmerli writes: 'When we survey the entire Old Testament, we find ourselves involved in a great history of redemption: from promise to fulfilment. It flows like a brook here rushing swiftly, there apparently coming to rest in a quiet backwater, and yet moving forward as a whole toward a distant goal which lies beyond itself. He then points to the great promise of the Exodus, which is actually a shadowing the redemption in Christ. As those redeemed by the Lamb of God dwelt and where sacrifices for sin were offered, in the New Covenant, Christ and His God dwelt and where sacrifices for sin and Christ's Cross the altar of sacrifice. Nor do we find this Exodus-typology only in the New Testament, Rev. 15: 3 for example, links Moses and Jesus by picturing the saints as standing beside the sea of glass, by his type, Moses, the servant of God, and the song of the Lamb. All this indicates that both Old Testament and New Testament show us the following pattern:

A = B = C = D = D = E

A is the promise given to Abraham. B is the first fulfilment in the Exodus, a fulfilment which becomes a promise for further and greater fulfilment. C is the new fulfilment in the return from the Exile, but again there is more to come. D is the great fulfilment in the coming of Jesus Christ. Now the people of God have really been redeemed. But even now the final redemption is still outstanding, and so the people of the New Testament are eagerly looking forward to the occurrence of their Lord, an event which will be the last and final fulfilment. Then the promised land will become an immeasurable possession (cf. Heb. 4: 1, 11). There is, therefore, only one correct way of reading the Old Testament: in the light of Jesus Christ. Yet we must remain cautious. We should be aware of what Paul says in Galatians 4. Although the New Testament prophets, e.g., B. Westcott, The Gospel according to St John (V. with introduction and notes), 1958, p. 18; F. W. Grosheide, Johannes (Boitier ed.), 1950, p. 125; Sauer puts forwards the following: 'There is a cogent reason for this difference. John was merely the anonymous author of one of the New Testament Gospels, and he therefore needed to decrease, while his Lord in- increased. He, John, had to identify himself with his Lord, so that Elijah who was to come!'


B. Berkof, 'Kritizismus der Bibel Interpretation', 1957, p. 150.


There is a marked difference between this and, e.g., the Pauline allegory on Hagar-Sarah in Galatians 4. Although at first glance it may look rather similar, and also mentions the affinity with Philo's method, there is essentially no affinity between Pauline and Alexandrian allegory. The illustration of the Hagar story and the recognition of its historicity are in marked contrast to the way or another in the New Testament, and it is always the same theme, that the new or another in the New Testament, and it is always the same theme, that the new

14 As we have pointed out above, Moses slightly altered the literal expectation of the bodily return of Elijah, while John himself was Elijah in a spiritual sense. So, e.g., B. Westcott, The Gospel according to St John, (V. with introduction and notes), 1958, p. 18; F. W. Grosheide, Johannes (Boitier ed.), 1950, p. 125; Sauer puts forwards the following: 'There is a cogent reason for this difference. John was merely the anonymous author of one of the New Testament Gospels, and he therefore needed to decrease, while his Lord in- increased. He, John, had to identify himself with his Lord, so that Elijah who was to come!'


17 Quoted by James D. Wood, op. cit., pp. 37 and 38.

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19 According to many commentators this might be a reference to Isaiah 11: 1, where the Messiah is spoken of as a 'netzer' (shoot) out of the stem of Judah. Jeremey already tells us that he had learned this from Jewish Christians. Others have read that as saying Jesus was to be called 'Christ' (Christos, the Messiah), which is also a special dedication to the Lord by a vow. But this is a wrong etymology and, in addition, we nowhere read that Jesus was indeed called a Nazarite. Lenski offers another explanation; Jesus was after a Nazarite, because he was forsaking his enemies, indicating their contempt for him and this (viz. the contempt) was indeed 'what was spoken of the prophets'. (Note: the plural: apparently Matthew did not refer to one particular passage of the Old Testament, but rather to a number of places.) Cf. also John 1: 46 and Acts 24: 5.


21 Ibid., p. 55.

22 Ibid., p. 72ff.

23 Ibid., p. 75, Cf. also James D. Smart, The Interpretation of Scripture, 1961, pp. 69ff., who discusses a much earlier article of Buttmann, viz. 'Die Bedeutung des Alten Testamentes für den Christlichen Glauben', in Glauben und Verstehen, 1954.


26 Ibid., p. 110.


28 This distinction goes back to the 19th century German scholar A. Tholuck, and is quoted here from Alfred Von Rohr Sauer, Problems of Messianic Interpretation, in Concordia Theological Monthly, Vol. XXX, No. 9 (Oct. 1964), pp. 566-574. James D. Wood, The Principles of Biblical Interpretation, 1958, p. 2, also distinguishes three groups: (a) Simple; (b) Profound; (c) Perplexing. It is evident that these two divisions are parallel and that they can easily be combined as: A + a; B + b; C + c.

29 The remarkable fact is that the whole of Isaiah 52: 13 - 53: 12, with the exception of 52: 14, is referred to in one
symbolics of Philo, which often ignore anything apart from the purely allegorical (E. Earle Ellis, Paul's Use of the Old Testament, 1957, p. 53). In addition, we should not forget that Paul does not use this allegory to prove his point. The doctrine has already been established. The allegory serves rather as an illustration, in typically Jewish fashion.

18 H. Berkhof, op. cit., Vol. 23, No. 2, p. 27. Berkhof himself points out that the examples mentioned all belong to Christological typology. This is not surprising because this typology clearly dominates in the New Testament. But there are also types of the work of the Holy Spirit, of the church and the sacraments, and of the eschaton.

19 Sauer, op. cit., p. 571.


22 Sauer, op. cit., p. 572, rightly says: 'Thus it pleased the Spirit of God to recast the creation statement of Psalm 8: 5 and to clothe it with redemptive significance in Hebrews 2: 7.'

The Practice of Truth

By the Rev. Francis A. Schaeffer, BA, DD; an address given at the World Congress on Evangelism, Berlin, 1966.

The central problem of evangelism in the second half of the 20th century is the problem of the practice of principles, especially taking into account a spiritual and intellectual comprehension of that which is the dominant mentality of our century. If consistent Christian principles are not practised, 'success' in evangelism can, in the flow of history, only result in a weakened Christianity in the next generation. Any consideration of methods and programmes is secondary to a consideration of this central problem.

The mark of our century is the victory of the Hegelian concept of synthesis, instead of a recognition of truth in the sense of antithesis and absolutes. Prior to Hegel, non-Christians generally acted upon the classical concept of truth. While they had no sufficient foundation for their optimism in regard to absolutes, yet in general they acted upon the concept that if a thing was true, the opposite was false. In morals likewise, if a thought or action was viewed as right, the opposite was considered wrong. Thus if the church in that day, including the evangelist, said that Christianity was true, or that a thing was right, this had meaning and was understood. If one said, 'Be a good girl,' for example, the statement was meaningful to those who heard it.