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Typology, How the Old Testament Prefigures the New

Talk #4

Fittingness of Biblical Typology



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4. *Fittingness of Biblical Typology*

Why is it fitting that God reveal Himself to man not just through words but also through prophetic deeds or events? Why did God give Scripture spiritual senses in addition to the literal sense?

Order of Human Knowing: From the Sensible to the Spiritual

The fittingness of Biblical typology rests on human nature. God knows man infinitely better than man knows himself, and God therefore speaks to man in a way that corresponds with the human nature He created. As rational animals, all of our knowledge has its point of departure in sense knowledge, and we come to know spiritual truths by abstraction from sense knowledge. Even after we grasp spiritual truths, however, we still have to accompany all our knowledge with images of the imagination by which the spiritual truths are given concrete imaginative form.

For this reason, God does not simply reveal abstract propositions to man. On the contrary, He teaches man in the manner of a perfect teacher, using sensible objects to illustrate and embody the abstract truths. Hence, in the words of St. Thomas, “the Lord wills that we be led by the hand from sensible things unto intelligible and spiritual things.”¹ Thus it is out of respect for our nature that God reveals spiritual truths through sensible images and historical narratives. Typology realizes this divine pedagogy in a marvelous way, for the types are sensible and concrete events that make a powerful impression on their own level (as, for example, the Flood or the Exodus), but they also have the power to lead the mind to spiritual and transcendent things, of which they are signs. St. Thomas explains:

As Dionysius says (*Celestial Hierarchy* 1), the things of God cannot be manifested to men except by means of sensible similitudes. Now these similitudes move the soul more when they are not only expressed in words, but also offered to the senses. Wherefore the things of God are set forth in the Scriptures not only by similitudes expressed in words, as in the case of metaphorical expressions; but also by similitudes of things set before the eyes.²

Typology is similar to the sacraments in this regard. In both, sensible things or events are put forward as the signs of invisible spiritual realities. The *Catechism of the Council of Trent* develops this idea (in the context of the fittingness of the sacraments):

1 St. Thomas, *Commentary on the Epistle to the Hebrews*, ch. 8, lect. 1, §389, trans. Chrysostom Baer, (South Bend, IN: St. Augustine’s Press, 2006), 166.

2 *ST* I-II, q. 99, a. 3, ad 3. In the article St. Thomas is considering the typological meaning of the ceremonial precepts of the Mosaic Law.

We are so constituted by nature that we can understand nothing intellectually unless it is first perceived through the senses. Out of his goodness, the Creator of all things wisely decreed that the mysterious effect of his infinite power should be made intelligible to us by means of certain signs evident to our senses. If man were not clothed, as it were, in a material body, St. John Chrysostom tells us, goodness would have been presented to him in a manner likewise unclothed; but since his soul is in fact embodied, it is absolutely necessary that certain sensory signs be used if he is to have any understanding of what goodness is.³

With regard to the sacraments, St. Thomas explains that it is fitting for human nature that we come to partake in spiritual goods through sensible signs:

Divine wisdom provides for each thing according to its mode; hence it is written (Wisdom 8:1) that “she . . . ordereth all things sweetly”: wherefore also we are told (Matthew 25:15) that she “gave to everyone according to his proper ability.” Now it is part of man’s nature to acquire knowledge of the intelligible from the sensible. But a sign is that by means of which one attains to the knowledge of something else. Consequently, since the sacred things which are signified by the sacraments, are the spiritual and intelligible goods by means of which man is sanctified, it follows that the sacramental signs consist in sensible things: just as in the Divine Scriptures spiritual things are set before us under the guise of things sensible.⁴

Both the sacraments and Biblical typology are based on the principle that the natural human order of learning is to come to know spiritual realities through sensible images. Thus it is fitting that we be brought to spiritual truths and gifts through sensible signs.

Typology Shows Divine Preparation and Is a Motive of Credibility

Typology can serve as an important motive of credibility in the Christian faith, because it reveals mysteries worthy of the divine Wisdom hidden under the letter of the events of the Old Testament, and reveals a providential plan of

3 *The Roman Catechism*, part 2, intro., section 14, p. 151.

4 St. Thomas, *ST* III, q. 60, a. 4. See also *ST* III, q. 61, a. 1: “Sacraments are necessary unto man’s salvation for three reasons. The first is taken from the condition of human nature which is such that it has to be led by things corporeal and sensible to things spiritual and intelligible. Now it belongs to Divine providence to provide for each one according as its condition requires. Divine wisdom, therefore, fittingly provides man with means of salvation, in the shape of corporeal and sensible signs that are called sacraments.”

God hidden in the course of human history, pointing to Christ and the Church.

In this way, the revelation of Scriptural typology revived the faith of the disciples and Apostles who had fallen into despair, when Jesus “opened the Scriptures” for them on Easter Sunday. Typology enabled them to see the plan of God hidden under the apparently contradictory “accidents” of history, and how everything prepared for Christ’s Paschal mystery. For this hearts their hearts burned within them.

A very different example of the power of typology to reinforce faith is given in the life of St. Augustine. In his *Confessions*, he reveals that the discovery of Biblical typology in the sermons of St. Ambrose was one of the crucial steps in his coming back to faith. The Manichees had drawn him away from the Catholic faith in part because they ridiculed many of the events of the Old Testament as unedifying according to the literal sense. In the sixth book of the *Confessions*, he writes:

Thus, since we are too weak by unaided reason to find out truth, and since, because of this, we need the authority of the Holy Writings, I had now begun to believe that thou wouldst not, under any circumstances, have given such eminent authority to those Scriptures throughout all lands if it had not been that through them thy will may be believed in and that thou mightest be sought. For, as to those passages in the Scripture which had heretofore appeared incongruous and offensive to me, now that I had heard several of them expounded reasonably, I could see that they were to be resolved by the mysteries of spiritual interpretation. The authority of Scripture seemed to me all the more revered and worthy of devout belief because, although it was visible for all to read, it reserved the full majesty of its secret wisdom within its spiritual profundity. While it stooped to all in the great plainness of its language and simplicity of style, it yet required the closest attention of the most serious-minded—so that it might receive all into its common bosom.⁵

Coming to understand the typological or spiritual sense of Scripture enabled St. Augustine to have the proper reverence for the Word of God as containing immeasurable depths of meaning, although it speaks to all on the level of the literal sense.

Richness of Biblical Senses

As stated above, an objection to Biblical typology is that a multiplicity of levels of meaning in a text causes ambiguity and obscurity.⁶ Indeed, there is no doubt that many texts of Scripture have a difficulty that comes not from

poverty of expression and ideas, but from overabundance. The richness of different levels of meaning in the Bible is what makes it the most difficult book to understand fully. However, the very difficulty and richness adds greatly to the fascination of the Biblical text and makes it capable of speaking on many levels at the same time.

St. Augustine speaks in his *De doctrina christiana* on the fittingness of the richness of meaning in the Bible:

Some of the expressions are so obscure as to shroud the meaning in the thickest darkness. And I do not doubt that all this was divinely arranged for the purpose of subduing pride by toil, and of preventing a feeling of satiety in the intellect, which generally holds in small esteem what is discovered without difficulty. . . .

But why I view them with greater delight under that aspect than if no such figure were drawn from the sacred books, though the fact would remain the same and the knowledge the same, is another question, and one very difficult to answer. Nobody, however, has any doubt about the facts, both that it is pleasanter in some cases to have knowledge communicated through figures, and that what is attended with difficulty in the seeking gives greater pleasure in the finding.-- For those who seek but do not find suffer from hunger. Those, again, who do not seek at all because they have what they require just beside them often grow languid from satiety. Now weakness from either of these causes is to be avoided. Accordingly the Holy Spirit has, with admirable wisdom and care for our welfare, so arranged the Holy Scriptures as by the plainer passages to satisfy our hunger, and by the more obscure to stimulate our appetite. For almost nothing is dug out of those obscure passages which may not be found set forth in the plainest language elsewhere.⁷

Creation Has a Typological Aspect

Clement of Alexandria saw in creation itself a kind of typology. In creating the universe, God made physical realities symbols of spiritual realities. This aspect of the thought of Clement captivated Cardinal Newman while still an Anglican. He writes:

The broad philosophy of Clement and Origen carried me away; . . . Some portions of their teaching, magnificent in themselves, came like music to my inward ear, as if the response to ideas, which, with little external to encourage them, I had cherished so long. These were based on the mystical or sacramental principle, and spoke of the various Economies or Dispensations of the Eternal. I understood them to mean that the exterior world, physical and historical, was but the outward manifestation of realities greater than itself. Nature was a parable: Scripture was an allegory:

⁵ St. Augustine, *Confessions* 6.5.8, trans. Albert Outler, Library of Christian Classics, vol. 7 (Philadelphia: Westminster Press, 1955), 85.

⁶ See St. Thomas, *ST I*, q. 1, a. 10, obj. 1 and ad 1.

⁷ Augustine, *De doctrina christiana* 2.6.7–8, in NPNF, first series, 2:537.

pagan literature, philosophy, and mythology, properly understood, were but a preparation for the Gospel.⁸

The typology of creation is frequently mentioned in Scripture. Psalm 19:1–2 summarizes: “The heavens are telling the glory of God; and the firmament proclaims his handiwork. Day to day pours forth speech, and night to night declares knowledge.” God is manifested at times in the tempest and storm, in the clouds, the mountains, the sea, the dove, or in the gentle breeze. Nature also provides images of moral evil, as in the serpent or swarms of locusts. St. Ephraem gives a magnificent expression of the Christocentric nature of the typology of creation:

Wherever you look, His symbol is there;
Whatever you read, you find there His types;
For in Him were all creatures created
And He sealed all His possessions with His symbols
when He created the world.⁹

Biblical typology continues the kind of divine artistry manifested in creation, transferring it to the realm of history.

Typology: A Divine Bridge between the Old and New Testaments

Biblical typology provides a divine bridge between the Old and New Testaments. God Himself prepared the events and religious ceremonies of the Old Testament so as to make them figures, signs, or symbols of the New. We may ask why God wished to make this bridge between the Testaments, creating a subtle symbolism that most readers would never understand unless they were expressly taught. Why did God create these figures?

In reality, our question here is deeper. Why did God wish to create two covenants and frame two divine laws, the Law of Moses and the law of the New Testament? Why did the New Testament and the New Covenant sealed with the Blood of Christ need to be preceded by an Old Testament and an Old Covenant sealed with the blood of animals at Mt. Sinai?

The Chosen People was elected to receive the prophecies concerning the Messiah and His Church, and to prepare for His coming *also through the symbolism of their ceremonies and their history*. The Fathers of the Church, following the teaching of Jesus and of St. Paul, see the entire framework of the Old Testament—its history and ceremonial laws—as essentially a sensible figure of future spiritual realities that would be brought by Christ. The sensible figures prepared mankind to receive and understand the spiritual blessings that were represented under the sensible figures.

Biblical typology therefore plays a crucial role in grasping the veiled continuity of God’s salvific plan. It reveals that the liturgy of ancient Israel, which continu-

ally commemorated the Exodus, mystically foreshadows the Paschal mystery of Christ. The typological sense of Scripture binds the contents of the Old and New Testaments intimately together.¹⁰ It also helps us to understand the teaching of the Gospel, for knowledge of the types and figures allows the doctrines to take flesh, to live within us, to appeal to our imagination, to be more memorable, to show us the unity of God’s providence in history, to show us graphically that Christ and His Passion are the center and fulcrum of history around which everything else revolves, and to which all is oriented in the plan of God. Typology is admirably suited to show God’s power, while adapted to our sensible and corporeal nature. The Fathers and Doctors of the Church drew heavily on this way of understanding Scripture.

It is a great shame that present-day Christians have very little familiarity with Biblical typology. Scholars pride themselves on their knowledge of history and languages, but most of them do not concern themselves with the typological sense of the Bible, where the deepest and most important meaning of the texts is found. The generally illiterate populace of the Middle Ages was better versed in understanding Biblical typology, which fills the Gothic cathedrals and its stained glass windows, the glorious art of the Renaissance, and above all, completely permeates the liturgy of the Church. The typological sense of Scripture is beautiful and sublime precisely because it demonstrates the reality and power of God’s providence over history. It shows us the presence of the finger of God in events of this world. It is a divine work of art written within history itself. However, it can only be grasped by those who have the key to the Scriptures, which is Christ and the Church, since this is the principal content of the typological sense.

Importance of Typology for Contemplation

In his *Life of Moses*, St. Gregory of Nyssa uses the life of Moses as a model of spiritual growth and perfection. His treatment is divided into two parts, the first of which focuses on the literal or historical sense, and the second of which focuses on the spiritual or typological sense. St. Gregory refers to the latter sense with the term *theoria*, which means contemplation. The spiritual sense is particularly suited for contemplation on the mysteries of salvation history.

Christian contemplation involves a prolonged consideration of the mysteries of the faith under the guidance of the Holy Spirit. The mind reflects on the relationship of

⁸ *Apologia pro vita sua* (Modern Library edition, 1950), 55.

⁹ St. Ephraem, *Hymn on Virginity* 20.12; CSC) 223, Syr. 94, p. 70

¹⁰ Lev 23:14 proclaims observance of the Passover to be “a statute forever in all your dwellings throughout your generations”; Lev 23:31 proclaims Yom Kippur to be “a statute forever throughout your generations”; and Lev 23:41 proclaims that Sukkot shall be “a statute forever throughout your generations.” This perpetual celebration is realized (in a typological sense) insofar as these feasts are figures that are eternally fulfilled in the Sacrifice of Christ, perpetuated throughout the ages in the Holy Mass.

a particular mystery with one's own life as a member of Christ's Mystical Body, and with our final destiny. Contemplation thus naturally considers salvation history in a typological sense, in which the sensible dimension points to the spiritual, and in which all the events are brought together in Christ, the Church, life in Christ, and the fullness of that life in heaven.

Typology in the Liturgy

The Second Vatican Council stresses the importance of looking to the liturgy for a right understanding of Scripture, for it is "above all in the sacred Liturgy that the Church continuously takes the bread of life from the table of the word of God and offers it to the faithful."¹¹ The bringing together of readings from the Old and the New Testaments is based on a typological understanding of their relationship.

Scott Hahn gives an entertaining account of his discovery of typology in the Catholic liturgy. As a Protestant, he saw the connection between Isaiah 22:19-23¹² and Matthew 16:13-20 as something he had come upon through his own research. After becoming Catholic, he found that the Church put these texts together in the liturgy (21st Sunday of ordinary time), not by chance, but to show us the typology. He writes:

Sunday after Sunday, the Church gives us a pattern of biblical interpretation, showing us how the promises of the Old Testament are fulfilled in the New Testament. It's no wonder the Church does it this way. The Church learned this from the New Testament writers, who learned it from Jesus.¹³

Biblical typology is thus crucial for understanding the structure of the Church's liturgy, which springs organically from the prayer of ancient Israel, but is yet entirely centered on the mystery of the Messiah, which is the key of all of salvation history in which the prayer and yearning of Israel comes to fruition.

Typology not only regards the lectionary, but underlies the very structure of the liturgy. Using typology, the liturgy and the sacraments mysteriously bring together fundamental levels of time: the past of salvation history, the paschal mystery in which that history culminates, the present of the Church in which we celebrate the liturgy and live our Christian lives, and the future glory that we await, which

¹¹ *Dei Verbum* 21; see also *Dei Verbum* 23.

¹² Is 22:19-23: "Thus says the Lord to Shebna, master of the palace: 'I will thrust you from your office and pull you down from your station. On that day I will summon my servant Eliakim, son of Hilkiah; I will clothe him with your robe, and gird him with your sash, and give over to him your authority. He shall be a father to the inhabitants of Jerusalem, and to the house of Judah. I will place the key of the House of David on Eliakim's shoulder; when he opens, no one shall shut; when he shuts, no one shall open. I will fix him like a peg in a sure spot, to be a place of honor for his family.'"

¹³ Scott Hahn, *Spirit & Life: Essays on Interpreting the Bible in Ordinary Time* (Steubenville, OH: Emmaus Road Publishing, 2009), 114.

is mysteriously anticipated in the liturgy. The *Catechism of the Council of Trent* explains the threefold temporal dimension of the sacraments:

These mysterious, divinely instituted signs called sacraments properly signify, by the same divine ordinance, more than just one reality. Besides the reality already mentioned, viz., the divine grace and our sanctification, there are in each of the sacraments two other realities, both of which are most intimately connected with that grace and sanctification. These other realities are, first, the Passion of our Lord, and secondly, the life of the blessed in heaven. They are related to our sanctification as its source and as its culmination respectively. Thus each sacrament of its very nature, as the Doctors of the Church have taught us, has a threefold signification: it recalls something from the past, it indicates something in the present, and it anticipates something in the future.

This teaching is more than a mere opinion, for it is solidly based on the authority of the Sacred Scriptures. When St. Paul says, "All of us who have been baptized into Christ Jesus were baptized into his death" (Rm 6:3), he shows that Baptism is a sign in that it reminds us of the Passion and Death of our Lord. When he goes on to say, "We were buried therefore with him by baptism into death, so that as Christ was raised from the dead by the glory of the Father, we too might walk in newness of life" (Rm 6:4), he also shows that Baptism signifies the infusion of divine grace into the soul, by which we are enabled to renew our lives and fulfill what is expected of us. Finally, when he says, "If we have been united with him in a death like his, we shall certainly be united with him in a resurrection like his" (Rm 6:5), he shows that Baptism also signifies the eternal life itself—the life which through Baptism we shall one day attain.¹⁴

St. Thomas Aquinas explains these three temporal dimensions of the sacraments in *ST III*, q. 60, a. 3:

A sacrament properly speaking is that which is ordained to signify our sanctification. In which three things may be considered: the very cause of our sanctification, which is Christ's passion; the form of our sanctification, which is grace and the virtues; and the ultimate end of our sanctification, which is eternal life. And all these are signified by the sacraments. Consequently a sacrament is a sign that is both a reminder of the past, i.e. the passion of Christ; and an indication of that which is effected in us by Christ's passion, i.e. grace; and a prognostic, that is, a foretelling of future glory.

The sacraments have a marvelous capacity to bring together the past, present, and future in a way greater than any other human action. For the sacraments themselves are

¹⁴ *The Roman Catechism*, part 2, intro., section 12, pp.150–51.

efficacious types of grace and future glory, and antitypes with respect to the history of the Old Covenant and its sacramental rites.

The typological sense of Scripture mirrors and prepares for the typological richness of the sacramental action. This is one of the reasons why, in the wisdom of the Church, the liturgy of the Word precedes the Eucharistic liturgy.

The Eucharistic Prayer itself is very rich in typology. Consider the words of consecration: “For this is the cup of my blood, the blood of the new and eternal covenant, which will be poured out for you and for many for the forgiveness of sins.” The new and eternal covenant sealed by the sacramental pouring out of Christ’s blood in sacrifice are antitypes of the Old Covenant itself and of its many sacrifices. The Roman Canon then goes on to mention three great figures of the offering of the Eucharist: the sacrifice of Abel, Abraham, and Melchizedek:

Be pleased to look upon these offerings with a serene and kindly countenance, and to accept them, as you were pleased to accept the gifts of your servant Abel the just, the sacrifice of Abraham, our father in faith, and the offering of your high priest Melchizedek, a holy sacrifice, a spotless victim.

Although always present, typology is found in a spectacular way in the most solemn liturgy of the liturgical year: the Easter vigil with its long series of Old Testament readings that marvelously prefigure Baptism.

A magnificent exposition of typology is contained in the solemn hymn of the *Exsultet*:

These, then, are the feasts of Passover, in which is slain the Lamb, the one true Lamb, whose Blood anoints the doorposts of believers. This is the night, when once you led our forebears, Israel’s children, from slavery in Egypt and made them pass dry-shod through the Red Sea. This is the night that with a pillar of fire banished the darkness of sin. This is the night that even now, throughout the world, sets Christian believers apart from worldly vices and from the gloom of sin, leading them to grace and joining them to his holy ones. This is the night, when Christ broke the prison-bars of death and rose victorious from the underworld. . . . O truly necessary sin of Adam, destroyed completely by the Death of Christ! O happy fault that earned so great, so glorious a Redeemer!¹⁵

Relationship between the Structure of the Sacraments and Typology

Another parallel between the sacraments and Biblical typology is that both exhibit a threefold structure. In the Scholastic tradition the sacraments are distinguished into three parts: *sacramentum tantum* (sacramental sign alone), *res et sacramentum* (both sign and reality), and *res tantum*

(reality alone). The *sacramentum tantum* (sacramental sign alone) is the sacred sign that efficaciously produces what it signifies. The *res et sacramentum* is a reality signified by the sacramental sign, but itself also signifying an invisible grace. Finally, the *res tantum* (reality alone) is the effect of grace alone. These three levels can be seen most clearly in the Eucharist. The sacramental sign is the bread and wine and the words of the consecration; the intermediate level is the invisible reality of the Body and Blood of Christ; and the third level is the communication of an increase of sanctifying grace and charity.¹⁶ There is also a causal relation between the three levels. The realization of the sacramental sign causes the presence of the Body and Blood, and worthy reception of the Body causes spiritual nourishment in grace and charity.

The Word of God displays a similar structure. The Bible is composed of words which are signs that signify events or realities. These events or realities in turn signify other higher and more invisible events and realities. Thus we have the threefold progression: words @ events @ salvific realities in Christ and the Church. Thus the words of Scripture are analogous to the sacramental sign, for they are sacred signs of holy things. The words of Scripture directly signify events and realities in salvation history, which is their literal sense. These events or realities represented by the literal sense often signify other invisible sacred realities according to their typological sense. When this is the case, these mysterious events are like the *res et sacramentum* (or the Body and Blood of Christ). They are realities signified by the words, and simultaneously they are mysterious signs or figures of other salvific realities: Christ, the Church and her sacraments, the Christian life, and the Last Things. These mysteries represented by the events according to the typological sense, are like the *res tantum* (the communication of grace). These mysteries of Christ and the Church are signified both by words and by events, but they do not represent anything further beyond Christ and the Church (militant and triumphant).¹⁷ Thus the Scriptures as a whole can be spoken of as the “sacrament” of the Word, and the literal sense is the “sacrament” of the spiritual sense.¹⁸

Importance of Typology for Preaching

Just as typology is central to the liturgy, so it is profoundly important for preaching first because it is Christocentric. Typology interprets the events of the Old Testament in the light of Christ, the Church, the Christian life,

16 In Baptism the sacramental sign is the pouring of water and the words of the Baptismal formula; the *res et sacramentum* is the imprinting of the indelible Baptismal character; and the *res tantum* is the infusion of sanctifying grace and the theological virtues.

17 See M.-D. Mailhiot, O.P., “La pensée de S. Thomas sur la sens spirituelle,” *Revue thomiste* (1959): 630–633.

18 See De Margerie, *An Introduction to the History of Exegesis*, vol. 3, *Saint Augustine* (Petersham, MA: Saint Bede’s Publications, 1991), 17.

15 *Roman Missal*, 3rd edition.

and heaven. Secondly, the readings in the sacred liturgy are very frequently placed together to bring out typology. Homilies ought to explain this typological connection that is already there. Third, typology shows the relevance of the Biblical texts for the spiritual life and for contemplation.¹⁹ A purely historical-critical exposition of Scripture would fail to edify the faithful. Pope Benedict XVI has pointed to this danger in *Verbum Domini* 35: “If the work of exegesis is restricted to the first level alone [historical-critical analysis], Scripture ends up being *a text belonging only to the past.*”

Typology enables the preacher to show how a text belonging to the past in its literal and historical sense speaks to the present in Christ and the Church, and to the future of the heavenly Jerusalem that is the object of our hope. Typology thus enables the Word of God to burst open any reading that seeks to imprison it in the past.

Biblical Typology in the Fathers

Like the ancient liturgies, all the Fathers make very liberal use of typology in interpreting the Bible.²⁰ This is a sign that this mode of interpretation comes from the teaching of the Apostles. It has been rightly said that “without typology it is difficult to imagine patristic theology and the concept of Christian orthodoxy it defined and supported as existing at all.”²¹

The Fathers see Jesus Christ as the key to understanding the mysteries hidden in the Old Testament. They investigate the typological meaning of texts in the light of what Christ has revealed. This method, used by Our Lord Himself and by St. Paul and the other Apostles, is metaphorically signified in Revelation 5:4–5:

I wept much that no one was found worthy to open the scroll or to enter into it. Then one of the elders said to me, “Weep not; lo, the Lion of the tribe of Judah,

19 See also De Margerie, *History of Exegesis*, 1:15: “It is clear that many of the works produced by contemporary exegetes lead to a kind of atomization in the reading of Scripture. . . . We have today at our disposal more accurate and more numerous scientific tools for discovering the spiritual sense of the Scriptures, but many of our present works of exegesis are scarcely oriented, as were those of the Fathers, toward the disclosure of the analogical sense, toward man’s return to God, through the practice of the virtues and through the sacraments, through the reading of Scriptures. Whence the crisis in pastoral homiletics, and more radically, the crisis of faith, not of the Church, but within the Church.”

20 Jean Daniélou and Henri de Lubac have a great merit in studying the importance of Biblical typology in the theology of the Fathers of the Church. See de Lubac, *Medieval Exegesis*, vols. 1–2: *The Four Senses of Scripture*, trans. Mark Sebanc, (Grand Rapids, MI: William B. Eerdmans, 1998–2000); Daniélou, *The Bible and the Liturgy* (Notre Dame, IN: University of Notre Dame Press, 1956); *From Shadows to Reality: Studies in the Biblical Typology of the Fathers*, trans. Dom Wulstan Hibberd (Westminster, MD: The Newman Press, 1960).

21 John J. O’Keefe and R.R. Reno, *Sanctified Vision: An Introduction to Early Christian Interpretation of the Bible* (Baltimore/London: The John Hopkins University Press, 2005), 69.

the Root of David, has conquered, so that he can open the scroll and its seven seals.”

Christ, the lion of the tribe of Judah, alone can open the scroll of the Old Testament by revealing the fullness of meaning hidden in it, being the great Antitype of all its figures. St. Gregory the Great says of this text: “Our Redeemer alone opened the scroll, and having become man, dying, rising, ascending, He laid open all the mysteries that had been locked up in Scripture.”²² St. Irenaeus proclaims the same conviction: “Every part of Scripture is a treasure, hid indeed in a field, but brought to light by the cross of Christ.”²³

Typology was also crucial in the combat of the Fathers against the first heresies regarding the relationship between the two Testaments. For example, typology is the best refutation of the anti-Jewish heretics such as Gnostics like Marcion who rejected the Old Testament Revelation and the divine origin of the Law of Moses. At the same time, typology protects against the Judaizing error in which the newness of the Christian sacramental economy would be overlooked and the Mosaic ceremonial law would be regarded on the same level as Christian sacraments.

Biblical typology shows the subordinate place of the mysteries of the Old Testament compared to those of the New—for the former prefigure the latter—without thereby eliminating their value and beauty. Rather typological understanding enhances their beauty by revealing their intrinsic ordination to Christ and the Church, thus showing their transcendence and the beauty of God’s plan, which exceeds what any human mind could have conceived.

Biblical typology, as developed by the Fathers, thus shows the proper relationship between the Old and the New Testaments to be one of preparation and fulfillment. It shows that God’s intention was not simply to replace the Old with the New, as in some supersessionist models of understanding, but to *fulfill* the Old through the New. Thus it is perfectly in harmony with Jesus’s claim that He came not to abolish the Law and the prophets, but to fulfill them.²⁴ Typology is thus crucial for understanding the right relationship between Israel and the Church.

22 Gregory the Great, *Dialogue*, bk. 4, ch. 42 (PL 77:401A, my translation).

23 *Against Heresies* 4.26.1. See also 2.28.3: “[Christ] is indeed the treasure hidden in a field (for ‘a field’ is the world). Christ is truly the treasure hidden in the Scriptures, since he was signified by types and parables.”

24 See Mt 5:17.