

## Theological Interpretation

Many writers on Hermeneutics are of the opinion that the grammatical and historical interpretation meet all the requirements for the proper interpretation of the Bible. They have no eye for the special theological character of this discipline. There are others, whoever, who are conscious of the necessity of recognizing a third element in the interpretation of Scripture. Kuyper emphasizes the necessity of recognizing the *mystical* factor and interpretation of Scripture (*Theol. Enc.* III, p. 101 vv.), and Bavinck insists that the Bible be read *theologically* (*Dogm.* I, p. 471). Klausen and Landerer speaks of *theological*, and Cellerier and Sikkell, of a *scriptural interpretation*. They all agree in the desire to do justice to the special theological element of the Bible, and refuse to place it on a level with other books.

Scripture contains a great deal that does not find its explanation in history, nor in the secondary authors, but only in God as the *Auctor primarius*. Purely historical and psychological considerations will not account for the following facts: (1) that the Bible is the Word of God; (2) that it constitutes an organic whole, of which each individual book is an integral part; (3) that the Old the New Testament are related to each other as type and antitype, prophecy and fulfillment, germ and perfect development; and (4) that not only the explicit statements of the Bible, but also what may be deduced from it by good and necessary consequence, constitutes the Word of God. In view of all this, it is not only perfectly warranted, but absolutely necessary, to complement the usual grammatical and historical interpretation with a third.

The name "Theological Interpretation" deserves the preference, as expressive, at once, of the fact that its necessity follows from the divine authorship of the Bible, and of the equally important consideration that, in the last analysis, God is the proper Interpreter of His Word. The following subjects call for discussion: (1) The interpretation the Bible as a unity; (2) The mystical sense of Scripture; (3) The implications of the Bible; and (4) Helps for the theological interpretation.

(Principles of Biblical Interpretation (*Sacred Hermeneutics*) by Louis Berkhof, Grand Rapids, Michigan: Baker Book House, 1988 [1950], 133-134)