

St Irenaeus of Lyon, *Against Heresies*:

“It is as if someone destroyed the figure of a man in the authentic portrait of a king, carefully created by a skillful artist out of precious stones, and rearranged the stones to make the image of a dog or fox, declaring that this badly composed image is that good image of the king made by the skillful artist. He shows the stones arranged by the first artist for the image of the king but badly transferred by the later one into the image of a dog, and by the appearance of the stones deceives the simple, that is, those ignorant of the king’s image, and persuades them that this ugly image of a fox is the good image of a king. In the same way these people compile old wives’ tales and then, transferring sayings and words and parables, want to accommodate the words of God to their fables.”

St Cyril of Alexandria, *Commentary on the Twelve Prophets*:

“When a text is developed at a spiritual level, and its central character is selected and adopted as a representation of Christ the Savior of us all, a person of wisdom and understanding should judge which details are irrelevant to the purpose in question, and which in turn are relevant and applicable, and likely to be of particular benefit to the listeners ... Not everything in texts and types, therefore, is relevant to spiritual interpretations—only if a character is introduced who in himself prefigures Christ for us; then we properly pass over human elements and focus only on relevant details, in every case highlighting what is conducive to supporting the purpose of the text ... If we do not apply the whole story to the purpose of spiritual interpretation then, let no one find fault. Just as bees in traversing meadows and flowers always gather what is useful for making honey, so the skillful commentator studies the holy and inspired Scripture, ever gathering and compiling what contributes to the clarification of the mysteries of Christ and will produce a mature and irreproachable treatment.”