

Teaching Scriptures

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I teach Scripture within a Greek Orthodox situation; I am sure, however, that within all the Orthodox Churches the same questions and problems are faced by the Orthodox interpreter of Scriptures.

Certainly, from quite a number of such questions, I limit myself here to those related more to the theological curriculum, and I leave out important particular subjects like Formgeschichte, Pemythologizing, Linguistic or Structuralist interpretation. In subjects like the latter ones, the deviation of opinion should be greater. I, therefore, confine myself to remarks, very essential as I think, which may allow not only discussion but constructive conclusions as well.

The previous generation of biblical teachers in Greece worked very hard towards making acceptable the use of the modern literary and historical method in teaching the biblical texts. Greek theology had for centuries remained afar from Europe in developments in the biblical field, and it was natural for the time to come when our predecessors would get acquainted with the modern developments and made an evaluation of them, of course from our traditional point of view.

Our land became free from the Turkish yoke in 1821, and my country found itself within two spiritual streams, both quite strong: a traditional Byzantine legacy, stemming from very old springs and tied up with the whole fabric of Greek life; and another stream quite modern but powerful, connected with the bourgeois revolution in Europe, with the renovation of Arts and Sciences throughout the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries. This latter social and spiritual movement in Greece during the eighteenth century made possible the Greek Revolution and the liberation of the country. Spiritually, this current of thought had its roots in the Enlightenment and was accepted by most Greeks, not only for its power at the time, but also as being quite akin to essential positions of the ancient Greek legacy, lost during the Byzantine Empire and the Ottoman rule of the country.

The creation of a Greek bourgeois class, outside and inside Greece, was a natural, not an abortive, social development. Very soon, with the rise of this class into power, its ideology, that is to say, the Enlightenment, became the predominant one. The capitalistic process in the country brought a parallel infiltration of the people by the new ideas. In the field of science, the main influence was coming from Germany, in the wider spiritual, literary and artistic area from

France. It was because of these factors that the Faculty of Theology in Greece ought to proceed slowly but steadfastly towards certain new evolvments. The main task of the Faculty was to adapt the work of the Church to the new transformations, so as to keep the Church an influential spiritual power and in some contact with the spiritual leadership. This tremendous task was not taken over by the Church administration and clergy itself; this was entrusted to a Faculty of Theology within the precincts of a modern university, of the German style, immediately depending on the State, trying to keep pace with scientific developments on the one hand and to serve the pastoral needs of a Church, completely closed within its Byzantine legacy in every respect. This strange and unnatural situation brought about several new events affecting immediately not only theology but spiritual life as well. This is a wide and important subject, however, it is outside my present scope.

1. As far as the teaching of Scripture is concerned, Nikolas Damalas, Emmanuel Zolotas, and Basil Vellas were among the people who introduced and established the literary and historical method. The results, however, were very poor for the religious instruction in the Middle School and for the pulpit. Greece is a small country, still dependent not only technologically but also spiritually and politically on sources outside of the country. The Greek people are still searching for the features of their identity. Like in every other field, so in the biblical, both Theological Faculties of Athens and Thessaloniki teach the Scripture by import of what is going on with the Bible outside our precincts, either within Protestant or Roman Catholic circles. But all this business is not in direct relation with what is going on either within the Church or within the intelligentsia of the country.

This is a more general Greek social phenomenon: lie most teaching, also the teaching of the Bible remains unrelated to the real questions and issues of clergy and laity. It has an “academic” character. By this, I do not only mean that we produce quite a lot on biblical subjects, with the end that these books will be read by our colleagues and the hope that they will result to our promotion in the academic ladder, I mean more generally the whole approach to the Holy Writ in teaching the students and instructing the people, whenever there is such a chance. I spoke about producing quite a lot on the field of the Bible, as we have five biblical chairs in Athens and four in Thessaloniki, chaired not only by professors but equipped also with Docent-sometimes two or three in each chair- and at least with two or three assistants. For a small country like Greece, I am talking about luxurious intellectual resources dedicated to research and teaching of the Bible. Well educated people, as we most are, start our work not with questions and problems posed by the situation and the needs of the Church, or the intelligentsia or the spiritual currents created by the socio-political movements raging in the country, but rather we avoid contact and keep at a peaceful distance. This arises mainly because of our ties with the State and Church. It derives usually from a lack of spiritual freedom- a fear to disagree with either State or Church. On the other hand, everybody understands that a society requires a stable and mature spiritual development in order to allow and encounter the tensions, created by disputes, to allow spiritual debates that may also lead to mistakes. So, we avoid all these dangers and take refuge to neutral academic subjects, when we write on the Bible; and when we teach, either we stand in complete distance from our actual situation, or relate our text to so many confused things, “yes and no”, “so, but nevertheless”, that the student becomes more confused. I

am talking about something really tragic. What a pity for so many learning and so much labour, when we realize that our service to our Church and our people- if we can speak at all about service- is so minimal and totally at the margins of our society! Because of this dark picture, I am extremely happy to mention, in this context regarding the academic character of our teaching Scripture, that, under the support of the United Bible Societies, a group of six New Testament scholars, from Athens and Thessaloniki three years ago have started and soon are finishing a new translation of the New Testament in the demotic language, according to the rules of Dynamic Equivalence. This means we render the text not sentence by sentence, but meaning for meaning. There is another small group working, since the death of Professor Vellas, on the translation of the Old Testament. But we do not expect very soon the result of this work. I believe that for us, biblical theologians in Greece, this New Testament is the first direct service to the Greek people. Our work is based on sound results of the science of translation, which means an effort to bring the text as close to the reader as possible. Of course, the Dynamism of our translation is not full; we must even here- and this is what happens within the Protestant and the Roman Catholic Churches as well- take into consideration how much of our dynamic possibilities our Church can withstand. However, this translation with a glossary at the end brings us, academic theologians, closer to the people, to their needs and possibilities. It is not a people's total victory over academic professionalism; it is nevertheless a progress in teaching the Scripture to the people. Needless to say, this experience is extremely significant for each one of us, as we are struggling with the text having always the reader in front of us. There are many, many more things to be done, so that the message of the Bible takes a serious place in the mind of the people, particularly the intelligentsia. Much depends on the development of the country as a whole.

I think I have made clear our situation in our teaching of Scripture because of our academic approach to the sacred text. I am afraid that I am talking about the problem of our doing theology in Greece. Of course, somebody will ask a very simple question: what is the role of the patristic hermeneutical material, so imbued with theology and pastoral care, in our interpretation of Scripture today? The subject is quite old and has been faced by Orthodox theologians and by the speaker himself in other studies. Unfortunately, the practise of "catenae" and simple quoting from the Fathers is still going on and moreover, it is encouraged by eminent theologians as the right way of interpreting the Scripture. I relate this mentality which "academisms", as it keeps the teacher of Scriptures away from direct contact to the text and particularly away from the modern reader of the Bible.

This mentality, of course, comes from the whole understanding of the meaning of teaching patristics. In the last few decades, a lot of patristic literature has been published in Greece. This is something we all greet with praise. There are, however, two remarks I should make on this flourishing production as a whole: a.) Except for the edition of texts, on which I do not want to comment here, the patristic studies in Greece indicate a lack from the point of view of historical criticism. Students of patristics do not understand that historical situation- what actually happened with persons, events, and particularly doctrines. Subjects are presented in such a general way, that one at the end remains with the impression of imitation and immobility in Orthodox thinking. b.) People have been deaf to Fr. George Florovsky's "neo-patristic" message, moved by a kind of dark conservatism and ecclesiastical reactionarism, and are using today in

Greece patristic studies as a bulwark of orthodoxy in the worst sense of the word. There is a competition today who is more patristic in his theological contribution! The truth, however, is that the Fathers are not read in their own historical situation; so they cannot stir the contemporary reader involved in his situation. Therefore, no wonder that the hermeneutical patristic tradition, as a contribution to present day exegesis, is understood in an external, formal, typically Byzantine way. The result of this attitude is detrimental to Scriptural exegesis. It makes our work the business of a philological commentator, and finally it leads to attribute no value to the Scriptures as the direct word of God to His people. For many theologians in my country today, books written by various Fathers or Church authors find a deeper response in their souls than the Scriptures, the message of the Gospels or the preaching of St. Paul! People, reading such literature in this way, read of course something more related to their religiosity and, of course, are quite certain of reading something having the seal of Orthodoxy. It may sound strange, but it is real: this kind of patristic literature, instead of leading people back to the original sources of our faith, as the topics of the mentality are concerned, hide the world of the New Testament behind various schemes, theories and ideas about spiritual life.

2. I spoke about the introduction of the literary and historical method in the teaching of Scripture. I must note now that this took place with great caution and hesitance. This lack of thorough and serious historical criticism on the biblical texts has had a tremendous effect on almost all branches of theology. The Bible as the source of the Christian faith is understood in this way as one book, having one author, God Himself, and as teaching the same things everywhere. Any self-evident variations are nothing else but supplementary views of what is considered as standard Scriptural teaching. In this respect, I have to make two remarks:

(a) My first remark has reference to the “synthetic” method of patristic interpretation, the interest of which was centered mainly on the correctness of the teaching of the Church vis-à-vis the various heresies, as compared to the more “analytical” that have come to use today, since our interest today lies more in the richness and the variety in the presentation of the Gospel. This stems not out of any ecclesio-ecumenistic expediency; it is rather a natural result of scientific analysis and, perhaps, out of reaction to the spiritual boredom of uniform scholastic teaching of theology. However that might be, most Orthodox scholars, just as they have missed the ecclesiological background of Formgeschichte, are now missing the pluralism, the richness and variety that the Redaktionsgeschichte is discovering in the Bible. The standardized Orthodox teaching which, if I am not mistaken, was formed during the 17th and 18th centuries, has not yet found the way to be reconciled with plurality and variety in the New Testament, and by extension in theological thinking. It is a fact, however that in the New Testament we have a variety of theological presentations of the Gospel. And it is common place today that the study of any biblical subject is not conducted on the basis of a theoretical scheme that we would impose on it, but primarily by tracing the history of the subject as it comes down from the more ancient Scriptural sources down to the latest ones. We do this because we are interested in the variety of views expressed on a given subject throughout the long historical period the biblical books were written. This method widens our knowledge and enriches our spirit. We certainly have in the Bible not only different but even sometimes apparently contradictory views on several subjects.

However, this kind of analysis leads to a wider meaning of “synthesis” as the same God speaks to the same people “in many and various ways” [Hebr. 1: 1].

The Fathers of the Church recognized **also** variations in God’s message to His people; influenced, however, by the historical indifferences of Greek antiquity, put all the emphasis on the unity of the Bible seen as having the same author, God. So they could very easily alternate the various authors of Old and New Testament and interpret one with the help of the other. So they had a unity, but one which did not take as seriously as we are obliged to do nowadays, that the biblical God is the God of history, that He communicates with humankind each time within the fabric of concrete historical peculiarities, and that He does not simply repeat Himself. If, for any reason, scholars today will not enter into the peculiarities presented by the various authors of the books of the Scriptures, we cannot appreciate the richness of unity created by God. The fabulous patristic “synthesis” teaches us and reminds us constantly that God is the real author of the Bible, and that the Gospel message is one. Nevertheless, because of a more negative attitude towards history, this “synthesis” was achieved practically in a very artificial way and leaving out a wealth of ideas that historical and theological analysis today offer to us. I summarize my first remark by asking: How seriously do we Orthodox take history? Are we still to go in the footsteps of the ancient Greek philosophical tradition, or change attitude? The question is addressed not only to biblical theologians but generally to the way we do theology.

(b) My second remark illustrates the first one in the field of the New Testament. We pretend to use literary and historical criticism in our exegesis. However, the composite character of our Gospels has not yet been fully recognized.

We go on talking about the 14 letters of Paul and we think we are quite courageous when we express doubts about the author of the Epistle to the Hebrews. But today, it is a common place that we have pauline and deuteropauline Epistles in the New Testament, the latter written by disciples of Paul, who, to the best of their ability, under rapidly developing circumstances for Church life, continued the writing work of their master.

Many times I have asked myself why this indifference of ours for matters of literary and historical analysis, and I always cannot find any other answer than the one I have presented to you: we live in an eternal present and have an indifference to history. But this attitude is not without consequences. Change becomes almost impossible with us. Immobility is the eternal condemnation for refusing to see the importance of things which belong to history. We throw ourselves into a confusion as we try to interpret Paul for the life of the Church, when we mix up the Epistle to the Romans with the Epistle to the Ephesians, and the A’ and B’ Epistles to the Corinthians with the Pastoral Epistles. I once again stress: this is not a problem only for the biblical theologian; it is a problem for Orthodox theology in general. How do we look at Church history? What do the past, present, and future mean for us?

3. Another question that I want to bring forward to our consideration is the almost complete neglect of the close ties between Bible and Liturgy on the part of both teachers of the Bible and of Liturgics. A few years ago, during a conference in Thessaloniki, one of the participants protested against my using biblical language, while the language of Orthodoxy is, he

said, liturgical. This is a widespread idea, though there are excellent studies on this subject, unfortunately not written by Orthodox and most unfortunately not known to them. I am referring, just by passing, to the brilliant book of J. Danielou, “La Bible et la Liturgie”, the translation and publication of which in modern Greek I took care of last year. The truth is that we cannot understand Liturgy at all, and we may misunderstand it completely, without the Scriptures- Old and New Testament. The neglect of this reality has proved detrimental not only to Liturgics but also to the understanding of Scripture itself. Liturgics is an enactment of what the Scriptures teach. The departmentalisation and separation of the two caused condition of a kind of “abstraction”, generalization, and vagueness into which teaching Scripture or Liturgics easily were locked exposing various theories and ideas. Fortunately enough the separation has taken place not so much in the liturgical practise of the Church as in the theological thinking, in which the biblical background was blurred. The truth is, however, that not only the phrasing of hymns and prayers of the Church Services, but every act of visible sign as well, have usually their origin in the Bible. It is now a theological common place that the Sacraments of the Church represent a repetition of the acts of God and their interpretation as we have them within the Bible.

I can conclude these remarks by saying that we need a liturgical orientation in the teaching of Scripture and a good biblical background in teaching Liturgics.

4. One of the most serious problems the teaching of Scripture is facing today the way systematic theology is using the Bible as a foundation of dogmatic and moral teaching. We all know the manner in which the systematic theologian usually works whether teaching or writing. In each subject or chapter of his work (Theology, Christology, Soteriology, etc.), he starts with a bundle of Scriptural passages or text-proofs, related to the subject and illuminating various sides of the theme. Then, he usually proceeds to patristic tradition, quoting the Fathers by a series of passages usually explaining the Scriptural ones, cited before, or opposing a heretical doctrine and supporting the Orthodox one. Finally, the systematic theologian proceeds to various arguments in defence of the Orthodox position over and against the Protestant or Roman Catholic view. Some of them dare to step forward to a confrontation with modern philosophical or modern ideological views on the subject. This is the ordinary procedure of the Orthodox systematic theologian. The first stage of this systematic work, namely the way Scripture is understood and used, interests us here. On this very important subject, I want to make the following remarks: In the first place, the bundle of Scriptural passages of proof-texts are not always taken in their context. Since the 18th century, we have in these cases used a kind of “Testimonia”. Whatever dogmatic text one reads, one finds the same biblical text, as if each writer copies the other. Totally different is the way a new faculty in our biblical field, Biblical Theology, is working on subjects like God, man, sin, grace, etc. It gives the content of these subjects first by describing how it was understood from the most ancient witnesses of the biblical tradition down to the last ones. Then more general conclusions are drawn. In short, our systematic theology still works on the biblical texts the way scholasticism did in bygone days, and appears to be completely unaware of the treasure biblical theology has put to our disposal. This sounds incredible, but it is a fact.

Another remark: The collection of Scriptural passages or proof-texts in groups, according to subject, is of scholastic origin; today it is considered totally unscientific and deprives the life of the Church from a real spiritual wealth, one which grants to the soul and to the community a wider atmosphere for breathing, more room for moving and acting, more room for questioning and searching. This atmosphere is impossible in matters of dogma and ethics within the old scholastic rigid and stereotyped system. I will pick up by chance two examples showing the absurdity of the old way of collecting passages in dealing with a subject in systematic theology:

(a) In Chapters 8-10 of I Corinthians, Paul is writing about the eating of idolfoods, namely meat sacrificed to a God in a temple, and afterwards sent to the market for selling. Jews never ate such meat. Many Gentiles, however, because of having the true knowledge of God in Christ, had no problem in using such meat and even visiting the temple and partaking of a sacred meal, when a social obligation forced them to do so. But there were other gentile Christians whose conscience was not mature enough for such a behaviour. They felt that such contact contaminated the community with idolatry, and these Christians transferred their own psychological problem to their fellow Christians producing, of course, the necessary theological arguments for their case. This situation leads Paul to deal with the problem of Christian freedom and power. In Chapters 8-10 of I Corinthians, he is trying to find what is right and what is wrong in the use of freedom and power, setting as criteria the edification of the community as a whole, and the expression of the eschatological glory of God in the solidarity within the community.

In this example, we see that Paul deals with a very important subject, starting not with a biblical text but with a real situation in life. Also, we must notice that texts, like the one in I Corinthians, Chapters 8-10, because they are tied up with the everyday life of the early Christians, are usually considered as of no importance by systematic theologians. One does not find in systematic treatises even the suspicion of their importance.

(b) The second example I also take from I Corinthians. In Chapters 1-4, the subject of factions in Corinth, formation of rivalling groups, appealing to the authority of an Apostle or Teacher, depreciation of the Cross of Christ and exultation of human "wisdom" or "knowledge". The validity of the existence of various groups inside the Church is a very old and serious one. Also very old and important is the theme of the relationship between a charismatic way of Christian understanding and the philosophical or intuitional human knowledge. Again, Paul, in dealing with such serious subjects, starts with concrete Church problems with the real life in the Church. He fights against deviations in such important matters. His final goal, however, is to refute the tendency of various groups in the Church to glory in themselves, because of a supposedly superior interpretation of Christianity, creating thus a superior position of themselves within the community. At this point, Paul counters with the word of the Cross of Christ and of Christ crucified. Questions of order, dogma and morality are interacting with each other because of these factions in Corinth.

As far as I know, I have not come across any serious understanding and use of texts such as these in systematic treatises dealing with variety within Church life, and the moral dangers hidden behind the tendency for a superior interpretation of Christianity. Moreover, these texts are

considered as belonging to the early Church's life and therefore, having no interest to us. The old scholastic collections of Scriptural passages sought to gather material from the Scriptural discourse, by preference a discourse that could be easily abstracted from each context. They avoided those pericopes which were embedded in an evident historical situation, and so could not be easily abstracted.

I do not need to go further with regard to this point. I finish this section by reminding you, for example, what is the place of the Parables of Jesus in textbooks on ethics such as by Androutsos and (alas!) also by several recent Orthodox scholars.

5. The last point of this paper has to do with the principles of Orthodox hermeneutics. This is a very difficult and serious subject. Therefore, as you understand, I cannot here express but only some ideas, and these even not in a more or less full exposition, but in a telegraphic way so that I might mention them for the discussion which is to follow. I do not intend to touch at all on subjects like "the hermeneutical circle" of Rudolf Bultmann, or on faith as a "linguistic event", as Fuchs and Ebeling understand it, or on Structuralism. For us Orthodox, these hermeneutical approaches include very valuable elements, but they cannot be presented as principles for us. My purpose here is simpler. I should add that I deal with the subject at all only because I believe it touches on the theme of doing Orthodox theology in general.

(a) The starting point for the Orthodox interpreter is, I believe, the eucharistic community. The Holy Liturgy, in particular, forms for the Orthodox the proper climate of inspiration and the main guiding perspective in approaching the Scriptures. In this sense, the Scriptures initiate the faithful to understand the why and the how of the eucharistic community. The Biblical Books were written because of the needs of this community and, finally, for the same reason they formed the Canon. We all understand the relation of the Bible to salvation history. I must say something here about the relation of the Liturgy to salvation history, in order to make more evident the relation of Liturgy and the Bible. Many Christians understand the Liturgy today as an individual refuge and repose in sweet and glorious past; but the Liturgy is not a beautiful museum for archaistic exultations. Other Christians view the Liturgy as a devotional act initiated in the past and performed in the present as an outlet from spiritual and social pressures and for cultivating feelings of spiritual creativity, full of individual illusions. Liturgy, however, is something performed dynamically from the corporate personality which is the Body of Christ, the people of God. The liturgical act started with fundamental events in the past, is dynamically present now, and moves towards its fulfilment in the future. If Liturgy is not this, it is not Liturgy. Two particular characteristics are of importance: The corporate character of the Church (people of God, *ecclesia*), and the dynamic perspective of this new humanity towards the future. These simply mean that Liturgy is not just an individual affair but the dynamic presence of the eucharistic community within human life as a whole (spiritual, social, cultural, economic, etc.) Beyond that, on account of the precariousness of humanity in its historical existence, these characteristics mean the certainty of hope for authentic human society in the future.

(b) A second principle established by Church history, which determines the Orthodox hermeneutical task, is a “yes and no” attitude towards the cosmos and history, after the Second Coming of Jesus failed to appear soon. When the Church was established as an institution, the early eschatological expectancy became somehow manifest in a dialectical way (Augustine, Reformers, Karl Barth). In the East, however, this dialectic of nature and grace, present and future, Church and State was never driven to an extreme. We find the eschatological dimension surviving more in the individual or community life of the monk. As far as the subject of Church and History is concerned, under the influence of Greek philosophy, we find a rather mild attitude towards the understanding of cosmos and human structures. Eastern theology finds the Triune God present in the world and the spermata of the Logos in the human achievements. The God of the Bible and of the Liturgy came close and became almost the same God of human history and human structures, in a “yes and no” system. The right way of life is not the exclusive possession of the people of God; God gave witness of Himself to all peoples and all nations, and the Holy Spirit does not exist only inside the Church, but also outside in the world. So Church and World, originally in an apologetic and missionary spirit, but later on in a Christian-neoplatonic theological sense, found themselves vis-à-vis each other not as enemies but as close enough, and being able not only coexist but to cooperate as well. The revelation of God in history and in human structures became a factor in understanding the revelation of God to Abraham, the Prophets and Jesus. The Byzantine experience, in particular, became so-to-speak a model of human experience, coming out of history, but also very close to the experience of the Liturgy. Of course, the eucharistic community has therein always the priority and is the supreme criterion of everything; but also Byzantium became in the minds of most Eastern theologians what for the Kingdom of God was historically possible. Now the horizon of the Liturgy, the horizon of the Church Fathers of the period of creativity, and the horizon of the unified and stereotyped Byzantine experience have to meet with the contemporary horizon of the interpreter, in a more or less unified background, out of which light will be thrown on the text of the interpreter and the reader. Everybody understands how difficult is the meeting-point of three horizons in producing one line going through these various strata of historical tradition, so diversified and in some cases for some scholars contradictory to each other. The work of the interpreter, who tries to remain faithful to the original meaning of the text and to his tradition seems nearly hopeless.

Instead of the model of the horizons, other scholars have proposed the image of the various strata of tradition, within which each new stratum consists of a new interpretation of the older one. Thus, variety and unity, as well as the possibility of the contemporary interpreter through history in reaching the original foundation of the New Testament, seem to be safeguarded. However, a close scrutiny of all these efforts, based particularly on the study of language and culture, leave the very serious questions and doubts with the teacher of the Scripture.

How do I approach the problem? (1) Liturgy and the patristic tradition up to the end of the 5th century are of primary importance. (2) From the Byzantine tradition what remains faithful to the previous one is really valuable. (3) From the contemporary milieu of the interpreter, the critical literary and historical method of research, we consider very important, being conscious that the latter is not just a tool of working with ancient texts, but an expression

as well as a new understanding of the world and human life. Out of such modern research came out, I think very clearly the eschatological character, the preaching for a new world, on the model of Christ, of the Christian message as a whole. This dynamic movement of the Christian Gospel, incorporated in the Liturgy and in the highlights of our patristic and monastic tradition, represents for me a unifying line, starting from the New Testament and arriving to the present. And when I talk of the present of the interpreter from the eschatological point of view, everybody understands that I am talking of a central experience of the world and human history today.

(c) Last, but not least, another basic principle in interpreting the Bible is the “edification” of the Church. “Prophecy” in particular as well as “didaskalia” in the early Church were connected with the interpretation of the Old Testament and the Words of Jesus. And we know very well what Paul is trying to do with these groups of leaders in the Church. As a matter of fact, he himself was a prophet; the same is today considered true not only with the author of the Apocalypse but with the Gospel writers themselves. Well, what Paul considers as the main task of these prophets and teachers is the “edification” of the eschatological or temple of God. In other words, a principle driving the interpreter of the Scripture as he teaches the Bible is the situation in the Church: factions, misunderstandings, moral problems, social problems, all kinds of situations needing the light of the word of God for correction and guidance. The whole Bible is, from one respect, a body of literature purporting to some the edification of the people of God—the Church. The teacher of the Bible remains faithful to the original substance of the biblical text when he makes its analysis within the perspective of the Church going on in his own time. This makes the work of the teacher of the Bible truly “prophetic”.

As I pointed out at the beginning of this paper, my subject is too wide and, therefore, many questions and problems would be left out of consideration here. I am quite sure they will come up during the discussion. What is included in this paper derives from the particular Greek experience of the speaker. It will be very interesting to have other experiences arising out of other Orthodox situations in the world today.