

CHAPTER FOUR.

HOLY SCRIPTURE

Holy Scripture distinguishes itself from Divine Revelation but as a Book that contains Divine Revelation in conjunction with Apostolic Tradition, the unique Source from which we learnt of Divine Revelation, it is very important and necessary.

In the history of Salvation, God Himself instructed man to write down what He had revealed to him. He also had chosen His instruments (the Prophets and Apostles), who, inspired by the Grace of the Holy Spirit, wrote what God had revealed.

Holy Scripture, containing the Word of God, has with and within the Orthodox Church absolute Authority, whereas the Orthodox Church has to lead her Life and Teachings according to Holy Scripture.¹ The Orthodox Church bears witness to the authenticity of Holy Scripture and is its faithful Guardian and safe Interpreter, “*the Pillar and Ground of the Truth.*”² She cannot remove or change any word from the Holy text nor can she give to any man-written document the validity and authenticity equivalent to that of Holy Scripture. It is most important to stress that the Authority of the Orthodox Church as the authentic Witness and Interpreter of Holy Scripture cannot be ignored or put aside. “*For assuredly, I say to you, till*

¹ Kefalas, *Catechesis*, pp. 22-23. Frangopoulos, *Christian Faith*, pp. 17-21. Mitsopoulos, *Themata*, pp. 21-24.

² 1 Tim. 3:15.

Heaven and earth pass away, one jot or one tittle will by no means pass from the Law till all is fulfilled.”³

Holy Scripture’s God-given Inspiration is witnessed by the Holy Apostles and by Christ Himself. “*All Scripture is given by Inspiration of God.*”⁴ At the moment of Divine Inspiration, the Holy Spirit descended, Enlightened and Guided the holy men but at the same time they maintained their intellectual freedom and conscience. All the Books of Holy Scripture are God-inspired. In other words, we can assuredly say that they are the Work of the Holy Spirit.

1. The Importance of Holy Scripture.

Holy Scripture as mentioned above, distinguishes itself from Divine Revelation. We learn about the events of Divine Revelation after they had taken place and had been recorded in Holy Scripture, which is the authentic and God-inspired Source. We would have remained ignorant of Divine Revelation if we did not have Holy Scripture.

Although Holy Scripture is God-inspired, it is distinguishable from Divine Revelation in that it contains words of men that are in many ways hostile towards Divine Actions.⁵ It also contains words of demons,⁶ lists

³ Matth. 5:18.

⁴ 2 Tim. 3:16. 2 Pet. 1: 20-21.

⁵ John 7:20, 8:48. Matth. 9:18. Luk. 13:14.

of the genealogies of men,⁷ geographical and statistical information and many other details. These last facts, although we do not deny the Divine Inspiration of the authors, were not revealed to them directly by God.

Holy Scripture should not be identified as one with Divine Revelation but this does not mean that another source exists from which we could receive the Life-giving Water of Divine Revelation. We confess that everything concerning our Salvation is contained in Holy Scripture and Holy Apostolic Tradition, which are the unique and God-given Divine Sources that grant us the Light of Divine Revelation.

From the above therefore one can realize the importance of Holy Scripture as the Source of Divine Revelation. Without Holy Scripture Divine Revelation would not have been known to mankind. The Light of Divine Revelation would have remained as a temporary event and its Radiance would have been long forgotten. But God revealed Himself to His servants so that the Light of His Revelation might shine its Life-giving Radiance as a bright sun upon all mankind. Therefore God directly instructed His servants to write down whatever they had

⁶ Job 1:7, 9-10. Matth. 4:3, 6, 9; 8:29, 31. Mark 5:7, 9-10. Luk. 8:28, 30-31. Acts 16:16-17.

⁷ Gen. 4:17-26, 5:1-31, 10:1-32, 11:10-32. Matth. 1:1-16. Luk. 3:23-38.

seen or heard⁸ although in some cases He commanded them not to write what they had witnessed.⁹

Because of God's Providence and instructions, a sacred Literature was created from within the midst of a Semitic nation. The Jews were constantly inclined to accept paganism. God, at the proper time, chose His servants who would serve Him and write down His Will. It was by no means accidental that during the Lord's time Matthew, Mark, John, Luke and Paul were chosen because of their writing abilities. Nor can anyone give a rational explanation as to how the authors of the Books of the Old Testament, although they themselves did not plan to write any Book as part of the Bible regardless of their era, background and life, served the unique Divine Plan of God's Will in such a way with their writings that these could be adopted and united at the same time like very fine stones that are joined together to shape the Divine Construction, which is known today as the Holy Bible.¹⁰

The Orthodox Church confesses that the translation of the Old Testament from ancient Hebrew into Greek (the Septuagint; LXX), during the reign of Ptolemy Philadelphos II (285-246 B.C.), was not accidental but due to God's Divine Providence. Thus Holy Scripture is the God-given, God-inspired and God-authentic Book

⁸ Ex. 17:14; 34:1, 27. Nu. 5:23; 17:2-3. Is. 8:1; 30:8. Jer. 43:2. Ez. 24:2; 37:16. Hab. 2:2; Rev. 1:11, 19; 2:1, 8, 12, 18; 3:1, 7, 14; 14:13, 19:9, 21:5.

⁹ Rev. 10:5.

¹⁰ Trempelas, *Dogmatique*, v. I, p. 101.

wherein the priceless, Heavenly and Divine Gift of God's Revelation has been cherished.

The Orthodox Church is older than the New Testament itself, bearing in mind that the Church existed before the writing of the New Testament Books. People living in the East had very reliable memories and were capable of accurately passing down knowledge by word of mouth from one generation to the next. Thus were God's Revelations from the time of Noah until Moses faithfully passed on. An example of this is the Talmud, which before it had been written down, existed as an oral Teaching and Tradition.¹¹

2. The Authority of Holy Scripture.

As we have mentioned above, the God-given Truth has been treasured in Holy Scripture by the Guidance of the Holy Spirit. In the Holy Books God speaks and, because of this, it has the absolute Authority according to which the Orthodox Church is obliged to pursue her Life and Teachings. This absolute Authority of Holy Scripture is not drawn from the Authority of the Orthodox Church but directly from God Who speaks in and through her.

The Orthodox Church did not create Holy Scripture. Being the Guardian that received the valuable Covenant from God through His servants the Church keeps it safe. The Orthodox Church is the true witness to

¹¹ Hastoupis, *Introduction*, pp. 84-158.

the Divine Origin of the Sacred Books. She infallibly and authentically interprets, through the Guidance of the Holy Spirit and the living Apostolic Tradition, the God-inspired Revelation and Teachings of Holy Scripture.

Any ecclesiastical decision is valid only and when it is based on God-inspired Holy Scripture and Apostolic Tradition. Neither the Orthodox Church nor any of her members have any authority to alter, change or remove any word, phrase or verse from the original text of Holy Scripture. Nor can the Orthodox Church give to any man-written book the same authority as that of the God-inspired Books. Even the Decrees of the Ecumenical Councils that we accept as having interpreted Divine Truth infallibly and having received high ecclesiastic Authority, can under no circumstances be called Holy Scripture or be included in its text.¹²

The Authority of Holy Scripture was recognized and proclaimed by the Holy Fathers and the ecclesiastic writers of the Orthodox Church from the beginning. They interpreted the universal message of Holy Scripture that its words are spoken by “*the Holy Spirit*,” that they are “*holy words*,” that they are “*full of the Divine Spirit and spring up power*,” that they are “*the Words of the Lord Jesus*”¹³ and requests that “*with this Commandment and these precepts let us strengthen ourselves, that we may humbly walk in obedience to His Holy Words*.”¹⁴ For they are “*the*

¹² Trempelas, *Dogmatique*, v. I, p. 102-103.

¹³ St. Clement of Rome, *1st Corinthians*, XIII, 1, in Lightfoot, *Apostolic Fathers*, p. 35.

¹⁴ *Ibid*, *1st Corinthians*, XIII, 3, in Lightfoot, *Apostolic Fathers*, p. 35.

Holy Word”¹⁵ and “*the Voice of the Holy Spirit.*”¹⁶ We must also stress that one may find writings of holy men, which, although without any falseness included the revealed Divine Truth expressed by the Guidance and Inspiration of the Holy Spirit, cannot be called God-inspired Holy Scripture.¹⁷

3. The Authority of Holy Scripture in Relation to the Church’s Authority.

Parallel to the Authority of Holy Scripture, one must not underestimate the Authority of the Orthodox Church that bears witness and interprets its Teachings with authenticity. We must bear in mind that Holy Scripture does not contain all knowledge. Holy Scripture was not given to us in order for us to learn everything about the physical world surrounding us but to offer us the appropriate knowledge with which to achieve our Salvation in Jesus Christ, the Son of God.

This Christian Knowledge of the Truth must always be examined in the Light of Apostolic Tradition, which is alive within the Orthodox Church and which existed before the composition of the New Testament Books. For this reason Holy Scripture does not exclude the Church’s Authority as being the authentic and safe interpreter of its Teachings. We must always bear in mind

¹⁵ Ibid, *1st Corinthians*, XIII, 3 and LVI, 3, in Lightfoot, *Apostolic Fathers*, pp. 35 and 59.

¹⁶ St. Justin, the philosopher and martyr, *Dialogue*, 9,1 and 38,2.

¹⁷ Durand, *Inspiration*, v. 2, col. 900.

the words of St. Paul the Apostle that the Church is “*the Church of the Living God, the Pillar and Ground of the Truth.*”¹⁸ In the Orthodox Church, which is the original New Testament Church and the Mystical Body of Christ, the Holy Spirit lives, acts and guides “*into all Truth.*”¹⁹

Right from the beginning Life in Christ appeared to bear its fruit amongst the faithful. The Orthodox Church does not isolate its members from the world but unites them in Communion not only amongst themselves as members of one Body,²⁰ but in Communion with our Lord Jesus Christ from Whom they receive Eternal Life,²¹ as He Himself is the Source of Life²² and the Head of the Orthodox Church.

In general Teachings of Holy Scripture are quite clear but some parts are not only difficult to understand being obscure but can easily be misinterpreted and twisted “*by untaught and unstable people ... to their own destruction.*”²³ One must never forget that all heresies used Holy Scripture upon which to base their false teachings. Therefore one must study the Sacred Books with humbleness, prayer and the fear of God and refer to the Teachings of the Holy Fathers and Scholars of the Orthodox Church in order to be assured of being and remaining in the Truth.

¹⁸ 1 Tim. 3:15.

¹⁹ John 16:13.

²⁰ Ephes. 1:22-23, 5:23. Col. 1:18; 2:10, 19.

²¹ John 5:21, 24, 29; 3:15-16, 36

²² John 11:25-26.

²³ 2 Peter 3:16.

4. The Church's Testimony Concerning the Authenticity of the Books of the Holy Bible.

The Authority of the Orthodox Church bears witness to the authenticity of the Books of Holy Scripture and their inclusion amongst the Canonical Books of the Old and New Testament²⁴.

Internal Presumptions:

a. *The Internal Unity of the Holy Bible.* Although the Books of Holy Scripture were written during different periods of time, they are distinguished by their strict unity concerning the faith in the one true God and Moral Truths. It is as if they are different parts of one and the same Body.

b. *The "Spiritual Grace" of Each Book.* St. Amphilochius of Iconium used the term "*genuine Grace*,"²⁵ which constituted the Bible in the hearts and minds of all those who study it with good will.

c. *The Authors' Testimony.* More important internal presumption is that of the testimony of the sacred authors themselves, as by Christ and the Holy Apostles concerning the Law, the Prophets and the Psalms. This testimony then takes the form of external presumption such as the Prophecies and the Epistles of the New Testament.²⁶

²⁴ Cf. Romanides, *Dogmatique*, v. 1, pp. 157-172.

²⁵ St. Amphilochius of Iconium, in Migne, *P.G.*, 82, 696 and 37, 1597.

²⁶ Trempelas, *Dogmatique*, v. I, pp. 105-106.

External Presumption.

As with the above internal presumptions, it is necessary for the existence of an external presumption. This external presumption originates from the authenticity of the Orthodox Church not only because of the importance of its testimony but because the internal presumptions of the Books of the Holy Bible are not unassailable.

The importance of this external presumption is based on the fact that it incorporates the testimony of the first Christian Community concerning the origins of the Books of the New Testament written by the Holy Apostles and the collection of the Canon of the Old Testament. It represents the experience of the entire Body of the Orthodox Church, which refers to the God-given unity of the Bible and to its spiritual and genuine Grace.²⁷

One can understand how important the external presumption is by the fact that it is not difficult for anyone to be misled in his valuation of the internal presumptions of the Bible. The faithful, if not guided by a higher Authority, can be sidetracked and led into heresy. St. Peter in his 2nd Epistle teaches us: “*That no Prophecy of Scripture is of any private interpretation, for Prophecy never came by the will of man, but holy men of God spoke as they were moved by the Holy Spirit.*”²⁸

²⁷ Ibid, *Dogmatique*, v. I, p. 106.

²⁸ 2 Peter 1:20-21.

Dositheus, Patriarch of Jerusalem, stresses “*For we have seen that Scripture is God-inspired and beneficial, and thus it is necessary to have that and without her it is impossible for anyone to be in piety. It should not be read by all, but only by those who are deep in spirit and know the ways that the Divine Scripture is searched and taught and completely read. For those who are not well exercised and indifferent or only according to the letter or some other way alien to the piety which is considered by the Catholic Church.*”²⁹

5. The “God-inspiration” of Holy Scripture According to the New Testament.

God Commanded His servants to whom He revealed Himself, to write down whatsoever He had shown or spoken in order that these Divine Revelations are known by others. Through God’s Divine Grace, these holy men were Inspired and Guided by the Spirit of God. They became worthy of carrying out God’s instructions. Consequently the Holy Bible is characterized as being the “*Inspiration of God.*”³⁰ In Holy Scripture we find only two direct testimonies concerning the “*Inspiration of*

²⁹ Dositheus of Jerusalem, *Confession*, question 1, p. 102.

³⁰ St. Athanasius the Great, *Epistle to Marcellinus*, in Migne, *P.G.*, 27, 12. St. Gregory of Nyssa, in Migne, *Against Eunomius*, Homily VII, *P.G.*, 45, 744. St. John Chrysostom, *All Scripture is god-inspired*, Homily IX, in Migne, *P.G.*, 62, 649. Theophylactus of Bulgaria, *Exposition II to Timothy*, ch. III, in Migne, *P.G.*, 125, 125A. Didymus the Blind, *About the Holy Trinity*, book II, in Migne, *P.G.*, 39, 644A. Origen, *To the Song of Songs*, Homily II, in Migne, *P.G.*, 13, 56. Mitsopoulos, *Themata*, pp. 24-28.

God” of the Holy Bible: 2 Timothy 3:16 and 2 Peter 1: 19-21.

Indirect testimonies are found in: John 10:35; Matthew 5: 18; 15:3, 4; 22:31-43; Luke 16:17; 24:44; Acts 1:16; 2:17; 3:21; 15:28; Hebrews 1:5, 13; 4:7; 1 Corinthians 9: 1; 14:37; Galatians 1:7-8, 16; 1 Thessalonians 2:13.

6. The Nature and Meaning of the Term “*Inspiration of God*”.

In order to understand the true nature and meaning of the term “*Inspiration of God*,” we must realize that God’s servants were not used as simple instruments, as many in the past believed, they also used their own knowledge and ability to compose the Books that God had instructed them to write. In Holy Scripture we find indications that the Holy Spirit allowed the holy authors to use knowledge that they possessed naturally or had achieved through study. The Grace bestowed upon them did not release them from the need to gather extra information.³¹ St. Matthew and St. Luke used genealogies received from Jewish archives in their Gospels. In the beginning of his Gospel St. Luke especially refers to the Traditions of the “*eyewitnesses*,”³² although “*many have taken in hand to set in order a narrative of those things*

³¹ 2 Samuel 1:18 (see in Septuagint O’, Old Testament Greek): 2 Kings 1:18) and 2 Kings 12:9 (see in Septuagint O’, Old Testament Greek): 4 Kings 12:9).

³² Luke 1:2.

which have been fulfilled.”³³ The authors seem to speak of their own experiences,³⁴ as St. Luke refers to his while accompanying St. Paul on his Apostolic Journeys,³⁵ or as St. Mark refers to his during the night when Christ delivered Himself to the Jews.³⁶

Regardless of the various differences in language and narrations of events that do not contradict each other although they do not appear to be identical, it shows that the authors maintained their freedom of conscience and action.

The Holy Spirit had spoken through the Prophets and Apostles and the Word of God moved the Prophets to speak because the Word is God’s Spirit Who descended upon the Prophets through whom He spoke. Therefore Holy Scripture can be characterized as the Writings of the Holy Spirit because the Prophets and Apostles did not speak or write by their own authority. The Grace of God and the Holy Spirit moved them and thus they spoke or wrote.³⁷

³³ Luke 1:1.

³⁴ Jer. 35 (28). John 18:15-16; 19:27.

³⁵ Acts 16:10-17; 20:5-15; 21:1-18; 27:1-28. Galites, *Interpretations*, p. 198.

³⁶ Mark 14:51-52.

³⁷ Theodoretus of Cyrus, *To 2 Timothy*, in Migne, *P.G.*, 82, 849. St. Justin, the philosopher and martyr, *1 Apology*, in Migne, *P.G.*, 6, 386. Theophilus of Antioch, *To Autolycus*, II, in Migne, *P.G.*, 6, 1065. Origen, *To Song of Songs*, book II, in Migne, *P.G.*, 13, 121-122. St. Basil the Great, *To Psalm 1:1*. in Migne, *P.G.*, 29, 209A. St. Gregory of Nyssa, *Against Eunomius*, Homily VII, ch. 1, in Migne, *P.G.*, 45, 741. St. John Chrysostom, *To Genesis*, Migne, *P.G.*, 53, 65. Ibid, *To*

The Holy Fathers of the Orthodox Church, parallel to the “*Inspiration of God*” of the Prophets and the holy authors, emphasize that their souls were purified and their bodies became more virtuous. They put to death the carnal-minded flesh and lived according to the Spirit³⁸ and because their hearts were cleansed from sin, they received the Grace of the Holy Spirit. Consequently they became the worthy instruments of God and were able to speak His Words.³⁹

“*Inspiration of God*” is a special “*Charisma*” granted by the Holy Spirit Who fulfills the whole existence, wills, thoughts and lives of inspired men without abolishing either their conscience, free will, personalities, or themselves as people.⁴⁰ The Holy Spirit raises them up to a higher level of morality and virtue, transforming them into “*synergous*” (co-operators, co-workers) with God who are able to write down “*God-inspired*” Sacred Books. Therefore the Holy Scripture’s “*Inspiration of God*” is the result of the “*Inspiration of God*” upon the authors of the Holy Scripture, which was

Holy Week, Homily 3, in Migne, *P.G.*, 55, 520. Evdokimov, *Orthodoxia*, pp. 260-261.

³⁸ Rom. 8:1-10.

³⁹ Clement the Alexandrian, *Stromata*, article II, in Migne, *P.G.*, 9, 1425. St. John Chrysostom, *To Psalm*, in Migne, *P.G.*, 55, 183. St. Cyril of Alexandria, *Against Julianus*, in Migne, *P.G.*, 76, 913.

⁴⁰ St. John Chrysostom, *To John*, Homily 1, in Migne, *P.G.*, 59, 25-26. *Ibid*, *To I Corinthians*, Homily 29, in Migne, *P.G.*, 61, 241. St. Cyril of Jerusalem, *Catechesis*, XVI, in Migne, *P.G.*, 33, 941. St. Cyril of Alexandria, *To Romans*, in Migne, *P.G.*, 74, 813, 817. Theodoretus of Cyrus, *To Ezekiel 3:22*, book II, in Migne, *P.G.*, 81, 852.

expressed not only in their writings but also in their speech and holy lives.⁴¹ Each sacred author spoke his own language and expressed himself according to his own capability and knowledge. One can say that the Holy Spirit used the Prophets and Apostles like a pen that does not write by its own power but by the hand that moves it.⁴²

7. The Orthodox Term of “*Epistasia*” (= “*supervision*”).

The Bible is history. It is the Revelation of our Salvation in the form of history. In the Bible all the Truths have been sealed under the cover of historical events, which lead altogether to the historical Person of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ, the Incarnated Word and Son of God. The events of Christian history are related to one another like the relationship between the body and its soul: if one of these is removed, then the other will die⁴³.

We must never forget that the history of Salvation has its own Mysteries in which Divine Providence prepares the way for the Eternal Kingdom of God. Consequently, that which the Holy Spirit produced either

⁴¹ Trempeles, *Dogmatique*, v. I, p. 112.

⁴² St. John Chrysostom, *To Holy Week*, Homily 3, Migne, *P.G.*, 55, 520. Theodoretus of Cyrus, *To Psalms*, in Migne, *P.G.*, 80, 1188. Ibid, *To the prophet Abdiou*, IV, in Migne, *P.G.*, 81, 1712. St. Augustine, *De consensu evangelistarum*, I, 35, in Migne, *P.L.*, 34.

⁴³ Oosterzee, *Dogmatics*, p. 185.

in the Old or New Testament, is the understanding of its history and not its knowledge.⁴⁴

The Light of Divine Inspiration is poured out from the same Source and with the same clarity and purity, but it is given to some with less strength, whereas others receive more. This difference occurs because of God's pedagogic way of revealing His Divine Revelation gradually and progressively. God's Revelation enlightened the Patriarchs less, and made Moses and the Prophets stronger, and reached its climax with the "*Epiphany*" (= "*Manifestation*") of the Messiah, our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ, the Son of God. This progress of the Divine Revelation did not move from lies to Truth, but from the lesser to the complete, as in the natural growth of the body. The difference of the level of the "*Inspiration of God*" is the result of the difference of level of the outpouring and Energy of the Holy Spirit in the Old and New Testament. St. John the Apostle and Evangelist said that before the Glorification of Christ "*the Holy Spirit was not yet given.*"⁴⁵

The Holy Spirit since the Day of Pentecost lives within the Holy Apostles because it does not overshadow them externally as with the Prophets in the Old Testament, but rests within the Body of the Orthodox Church granting Life to all its members. Also the difference of the level of the "*Inspiration of God*" depended on the instruments'

⁴⁴ Trempelas, *Dogmatique*, v. I, p. 114.

⁴⁵ John 7:39.

ability to receive the Holy Spirit's Divine Inspiring Grace.⁴⁶

8. The Extent of the “*Inspiration of God*”.

The “*Inspiration of God*” extends throughout Holy Scripture. According to the Teachings of St. Paul “*all Scripture is given by Inspiration of God.*”⁴⁷ We confess that the Wisdom of God is throughout all Holy Scripture including even the less important letters.⁴⁸ The words of Holy Scripture are not simple words of men, but Words of the Holy Spirit. It is unacceptable to say that part of the Word of God lacks “*Inspiration of God*” because the majesty of the Holy Spirit shines upon all the text of the sacred Books.⁴⁹ Anything from the texts of the Holy Bible is Divine and full of Truth.⁵⁰ Therefore, one who reads Holy Scripture yet considers parts of it as being unimportant, should be characterized as crude.⁵¹ It is also

⁴⁶ St. Athanasius the Great, *Epistle to Marcellinus*, in Migne P.G., 27, 17.

⁴⁷ 2 Tim. 3:16.

⁴⁸ Cf.: St. John Chrysostom, *To Genesis*, XV, in Migne P.G., 53, 119. St. Basil the Great, *About faith*, in Migne P.G., 31, 692. Ibid, *To Exahemerus*, VIII, in Migne P.G., 29, 184. Socrates, *De vita et Scriptis*, in Migne P.G., 67, 17 and St. Makarius of Egypt, Homily 5, in Migne P.G., 35, 504.

⁴⁹ St. Jeronymus, *Epist. 27 ad Marcellam*, 1, in Migne, P.L., 22, 431.

⁵⁰ St. Augustine, *De utilitate credenti*, VI, 13, in Migne, P.L., 42, 74.

⁵¹ St. John Chrysostom, *To Isaiah*, Homily 2, in Migne P.G., 56, 110.

stressed that whatever the Holy Apostles have said is God-inspired.⁵²

Although in Holy Scripture we may find mistakes caused by human expressions, under no circumstances can we accept that in its texts one can find errors and parts that are not God-inspired. We must never forget that Holy Scripture was written by men, for men and according to the human manner of writing⁵³ in such a way that the Divine and human aspects are inseparable conjoined. The Divine aspect is that the Truth, which has been revealed by God, rules throughout the Sacred Books. The human aspect is the literary form according to which the Heavenly Treasure has been recorded.⁵⁴

According to the above concept, it is acceptable to say that a parallel relationship exists between Holy Scripture and the human being by whom the Divine Truth is witnessed. Just as with Christ there are two natures, Divine and human, united in the one Person, likewise in Holy Scripture there is the Divine Revelation and God's

⁵² 1st Corinth. 7: 25, 40. St. Ambrosius, *De viduis*, I, 2. in migne *P.L.*, 16, 235. St. Augustine, *De conjugis adulterinis*, c. 18, in migne, *P.L.*, 40, 463. Ibid, *De opere monachorum*, c. XVII in migne, *P.L.*, 40, 564. St. Hieronymus, *Epist. ad Galat.*, in migne, *P.L.*, 26, 394, 403. Ibid, *Epist. 48*, c. 8, in migne, *P.L.*, 25, 499. Ibid, *Epist. ad Philemonem praefatio*, in migne *P.L.*, 26, 599-602. Plato of Moscow, *Orthodox Teaching*, pp. 70-73.

⁵³ St. Augustine, *De civitate Dei*, XVII, 6, in migne, *P.L.*, 61, 537.

⁵⁴ St. Gregory of Nyssa, *Against Eunomius*, XII, in Migne, *P.G.*, 45, 976. Didymus the Blind, *To Psalms*, in Migne, *P.G.*, 39, 1293. Theodoretus of Cyrus, *To Ezekiel*, book II, in Migne, *P.G.*, 81, 853. Origen, *To Ezekiel*, in Migne, *P.G.*, 13, 801.

Promises, whereas on the other hand we also have the invaluable human participation.⁵⁵ For this reason, he who with piety and faith studies the Sacred Books cries out: How Divine and yet, how human it is!⁵⁶

Human mistakes in literature do not affect either the “*Inspiration of God*” or the ideas that are expressed. The anthropomorphic expressions found in Holy Scripture concerning God “*if taken literally ...lead us to blasphemy,*”⁵⁷ yet they express a deeper meaning which is clothed with some Divine Majesty and cannot be expressed any other way but in human terms only.⁵⁸

Similar to the above, we must consider those verses in which the Truth of the Divine Revelation is expressed, as the “*Inspiration of God.*” For the period of time when they were expressed it was acceptable but do not agree with contemporary teachings of science. Holy Scripture is not a science book. Its purpose is to teach men about Divine Truth in the form of ideas according to human understanding. It aims to glorify God and to praise His Perfection.⁵⁹ The same applies to those truths that are clothed with the literature taken from paganism, for example words from Epimenides, Menandrus, etc.⁶⁰

⁵⁵ Trempelas, *Dogmatique*, v. I, p. 117.

⁵⁶ Oosterzee, *Dogmatics*, p. 70.

⁵⁷ St. Athanasius the Great, *To Matthew*, in Migne, *P.G.*, 27, 1384.

⁵⁸ St. Gregory of Nyssa, *Against Eunomius*, XII, in Migne, *P.G.*, 45, 976.

⁵⁹ Trempelas, *Dogmatique*, v. I, p. 118.

⁶⁰ Titus 1:12. 1 Corinth. 15:33. Cf.: St. Gregory of Nyssa, *Homily 9*, in Migne, *P.G.*, 44, 973. Theodorus of Mopsuestia, *To Job*, in Migne, *P.G.*, 66, 697-698. Theodoretus of Cyrus, *To Titus 1:12*, Homily 12,

Concerning the greetings and personal recommendations as found in 1 Timothy 5:23 or 2 Timothy 4:13, we must accept that the Holy Apostles were enlightened by the Holy Spirit daily even for the less important things.⁶¹

In conclusion, all Holy Scripture is “*God-inspired*” and none of its parts can be separated from the “*Inspiration of God.*” We notice that there is a verbal “*Inspiration of God*” in the words. Although the Holy Spirit did not dictate them word by word, the holy men used their freedom by expressing the Divine Truths using the most appropriate words from their own vocabulary, always under the enlightenment of the Charisma of the “*Inspiration of God.*”⁶²

9. The “*Inspiration of God*” in Relation to the Criticism of Text of Holy Scripture.

Within the Orthodox Church, from the first centuries, efforts were made to correct the literary errors in the different manuscripts of the Holy Bible. It is evident from the work of Origen, Hesychius and Lucianus on the translation of the Greek Old Testament (Septuagint), as well as on the text of the New Testament, that the ancient

in Migne, *P.G.*, 82, 861. St. John Chrysostom, *Homily 3*, in Montfaucon, v. 11, p. 807. St. Ecumenius, in Migne, *P.G.*, 119, 249.

⁶¹ Oosterzee, *Dogmatics*, pp. 202-203.

⁶² Trempelas, *Dogmatique*, v. I, p. 119. Oosterzee, *Dogmatics*, p. 179. Cf. St. John Chrysostom, *To Genesis*, Homily 15, in Migne, *P.G.*, 53, 119. Origen, *To Psalms*, in Migne, *P.G.*, 12, 1081. St. Basil the Great, *To Eunomius about the Son*, in Migne, *P.G.*, 29, 601.

Orthodox Church did not hesitate to allow such criticism. The Orthodox Church never forbade even the philological and historical criticism that deals with the problems of authenticity, the origin, the unity and the integrity of the Sacred Books.⁶³

We do not confront major and unsolved problems concerning the many manuscripts of the New Testament because the existing differences are more to do with spelling or transfer of words, which do not falsify the meaning of the text. Concerning the Old Testament, we find many differences between the Hebrew text and that of the translation of the Greek Old Testament (Septuagint, LXX). The cross-examination of the two texts is of great importance. One may choose either the Hebrew text or that of the Greek Old Testament (Septuagint, LXX).

But it is most important to emphasize that the scholar must never change or add or subtract from the original text according to his own opinion because this will be considered blasphemy! For in such a case the scholar claims for himself the Charisma of the “*Inspiration of God*” and considers his words as of the same importance and authenticity as those of the Word of God, which are inscribed in the Holy Scripture.⁶⁴

⁶³ Trempeles, *Dogmatique*, v. I, p. 120.

⁶⁴ *Ibid*, *Dogmatique*, v. I, p. 121.