

JOHN CHRYSOSTOM'S VIEW ON READING AND INTERPRETING THE SCRIPTURE. A CRITICAL ASSESSMENT

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Abstract. In this article I have tried to analyse the place of Scripture in the kerygmatic activity of St. John Chrysostom, especially his thoughts regarding the inspiration of Scripture, the meanings of the text of Scripture and the place that it has to occupy in the common life of the Christians. According to St. John Chrysostom's view, the Scriptures including both Old and New Testament writings were given by God only because of the weakness of man who was not able to stay near Him through the natural moral law alone. As for the authority of Bible, St. John Chrysostom understands it as being reflected in the act of divine inspiration. He does not exclude the human contribution to the process of writing the Scripture, although it seems not being enough emphasised in his work. A good understanding of Scripture presupposes a constant reading of it, regardless of place where we find ourselves. As far as the method of interpretation is concerned, I tried to point out that St. John Chrysostom does not fully reject the allegorical interpretation which is specific to the School of Alexandria, but it is true that he comments the holy text according to the literary meaning of the words. However, besides the literary meaning, St. John Chrysostom also accepts the existence of other meanings as well, so-called anagogic and typical, which do not suppress the literary-historical one. The permanent contact with the inspired Scriptures means – as Chrysostom many times emphasised - the unconditioned access to the revelation and to the moral teachings.

Keywords: Inspiration, Scripture, Old Testament, New Testament, anagogic, typical meaning, revelation, allegory, homily, exegesis, *theoria*, kerygmatic, Chrysostom.

1. Preliminaries

Towards the end of the third Christian century Dorotheos and Lucian, two priests from the capital city of Syria, had initiated an intense missionary and catechetical activity which aimed at safeguarding the Christians' faith against the heresies, improving their moral life, as well as systematising and spreading the Gospel of Jesus Christ. They were thus creating the famous theological School of Antioch, whose mainly biblical theology would profoundly influence the Christian thinking of the centuries to follow.