



THE INSPIRED BIBLICAL AWARENESS OF THE EARLY CHURCH FATHERS PRESERVED SOUND INTERPRETATION

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The great fathers of the Church drew inspiration from the Holy Bible in all their works, their asceticism, and the way they lived. That is why their lives were enlightened and evangelical. Their interpretation of the Holy Bible was not solely scientific or intellectual, but practical aiming at their salvation and the growth and guidance of their spiritual life.

Thus St. Anthony said, “*The Holy Books are sufficient for our edification.*” It is said that the epistles of St. Pakhomios seem to be “a summary of the Holy Bible.” His disciple, St. Tadros, used to extract chapters from the Holy Bible for his children that were applicable to their circumstances. St. Amoun recounts that his children used to come to him asking him to reveal their shortcomings to them and he would recall for each of them a chapter of the Holy Bible and read it to them, so that each of his sons would return with a repentant heart and tearful eyes.

They loved the Holy Bible; they lived it and read it regularly until they learned it. Thus, their lives became shining Gospels. History quotes St. Anthony: “*If I want to read, I read God’s Book.*” St. Sisoy said, “*I read the Old Books and then*

turn to the New Books.” Hence we realize that the early Fathers held both the Old and New Testaments to be equally holy, in contrast to some claims nowadays.

The Fathers did not limit themselves to the interpretation of the Holy Bible from a spiritual and earthly life angle only, but some of them specialized in the interpretation of the Holy Books in a scientific and intellectual way also. Thus, many of the Fathers wrote exegeses of most of the Books, such as St. Clement of Alexandria and Origen, in the third century, Eusebius of Cesarea, Cyril of Jerusalem, Athanasius the Apostolic, St. Basil and St. Gregory of Nizanze and Nicea in the fourth century, and St. John Chrysostom, Cyril of Alexandria, Jerome, and St. Augustine in the fifth century.

Although a few commenter, influenced by Greek philosophy, attempted to deprive Christianity of its simplicity and make of it a philosophy (like Origen), the Church was alert to this and preserved its Christian teaching from any distortion or spuriousness, even if it should be unintentional. Furthermore the resolutions of the Councils were the best protection of the integrity of Christian teaching and of the accuracy of exegesis.