

CHAPTER TWO

THE THEORY AND PRACTICE OF HISTORY: METHODOLOGICAL STRATEGY

2.1 General Remarks

Since the study of the Bible is a multi-faceted discipline, it embodies the whole complex of tasks in order to proceed toward a precise meaning of the biblical texts. Here all contemporary resources of knowledge that can contribute to this process ought to be used. The history of antecedent biblical interpretation, then, is a vital reservoir of knowledge for the field of biblical studies. For the better results of learning, the historical trends in understanding and interpretation of the Bible have to be established as accurate as possible.

To achieve a historical exactness in reconstructing the history of bible interpretation in the Russian Orthodox Church requires a fixed methodology in both research and formulation of a historical account. The purpose of this chapter is to indicate the point of view that this dissertation is maintaining in the realm of general ideas of historiography and to define the position we occupy in the conflict of the leading opinions that move a discipline of historical research. We will start out with a few remarks about the scientific conceptions of historiography and then specify the methodological approach applied to the treatment of the subject in this dissertation.

Excursus: Different Orientations in Historical Thought. The contemporary ideas about history and historiography have undergone a weighty transformation since they originated with the ancient Greeks.¹ Nevertheless, the standards and interests of the great historians of Classical Greek antiquity dominated historical study and writing for centuries. In the 5th century BC Herodotus, who has been called the father of history, and later Thucydides (circa 460-c. 400 BC) Xenophon (430?-355? BC), Theopompus of Chios (born about 378 BC), Ephorus (4th century BC), Polybius (in the 2nd century BC) recorded contemporary or near-contemporary events in prose narratives of striking style, depending as much as possible on eyewitness or other reliable testimony for evidence. These and later ancient historiographers stressed the distinction between myth and truth. In addition: (1) individual lives were regarded as illustrations of public life; (2) the political analysis

¹ Cf. G. G. Iggers, *Historiography in the Twentieth Century: From Scientific Objectivity to the Postmodern Challenge* (Hanover, NH: Wesleyan University Press of New England, 1997), 2. For an understanding of development of historiography over time see wide-ranging and up-to date collections of essays in Michael Bentley, ed., *Companion to Historiography* (London: Routledge, 1997); and Daniel Woolf, ed., *A Global Encyclopedia of Historical Writing* (1998).

was based on human motivations; and (3) speculation on human destiny and moral questions was considered the proper work of philosophers, not historians.²

Later, Josephus Flavius Josephus (AD 37?-101?) and the Early Christian historians mingled secular and religious history. A religion had significant implications for the interpretation of human history.³ This was further developed in the Middle Ages.⁴

The intensified study of Greek and Roman literature and the renewal of rhetorical education that characterized intellectual life in 15th-century Italy had an effect on historical study; it encouraged a secular and realistic approach to political history, both ancient and modern. During the era of Renaissance the historians wrote works that set political history in a world bounded by human laws and human ambitions. It brought the separation of ecclesiastical from secular materials of history.⁵

From the 16th century onward, many scholars throughout Europe devoted their lives to the laborious, systematic collection of the sources for their national and religious histories. The classical traditions of history writing had emphasized literary skill and the reinterpretation of history at the expense of basic research.⁶

In the 19th century⁷, with the work and influence of German historian and educator Leopold von Ranke (1795-1886), history achieved its identity as an independent academic discipline with its own critical method and approach, requiring rigorous preparation.⁸ Von Ranke insisted on dispassionate objectivity as the historian's proper point of view and made consultation of contemporary sources a law of historical construction. He substantially advanced the criticism of sources beyond the achievements of the antiquarians by making consideration of the historical circumstances of the writer the key to the evaluation of documents. According to van Ranke, history gives significance to the phenomenal world. "It

² See Paul Cartledge, Garnsey, P. and Gruen, E.S. (eds.) *Hellenistic Constructs: Culture, History and Historiography* (Berkeley, 1997).

³ Esp. St. Augustine (354-430), in his great Christian apologia *City of God* (413-26), formulated a theological philosophy of history by conceiving of far more complex and subtle relations between Christian and secular history.

⁴ For example, St. Bede the Venerable (673?-735), English Benedictine monk and scholar, in his *Historia Ecclesiastica Gentis Anglorum* (Ecclesiastical History of the English People) (dated 731) achieved the integration of secular and ecclesiastical history, natural and supernatural events, in a forceful and intelligent narrative. For an introduction to historiography during the Middle Ages see the essays collected in *Part II: The Medieval Ages* in Michael Bentley, (ed.) *Companion to Historiography* (London: Routledge, 1997), 103-246.

⁵ Cf. D. R. Woolf, "The Writing of Early Modern European Intellectual History," in Michael Bentley, (ed.) *Companion to Historiography* (London: Routledge, 1997), 314-315. For the article that attempt to survey historiography in the Greco-Roman world see Donald Lateiner, "Greco-Roman Historiography," in D. Freedman, ed., *The Anchor Bible Dictionary* (New York: Doubleday, 1992-1997).

⁶ Edward Gibbon (1737-1794), in his *The History of the Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire* (1776-88), set a standard for historical writing. See G.A. Aylmer, "Introductory Survey: From the Renaissance to the Eighteenth Century," *Ages* in Michael Bentley, (ed.) *Companion to Historiography* (London: Routledge, 1997), 249-280.

⁷ For a comprehensive overview of historical thought and historical writing in the 19th century se George P. Gooch, *History and Historians in the Nineteenth Century* (London, 1913).

⁸ See L. von Ranke, *The Theory and Practice of History*, G. Iggers/ K. van Maltke (eds.), (New York: The Boobs-Merril Company, 1973).

devotes its efforts to the concrete.⁹ For von Ranke, the efforts of history demand: (1) a broad universal interest in all aspects of social and intellectual life that will reveal, in their interconnectedness, a plausible cognition of the past; (2) a documentary, penetrating and profound study of the object under observation; and (3) as a penetration in the causal nexus of the connection among the various events.¹⁰ Von Ranke sees the meaning of the history in the multiplicity of the developments. The scientific orientations since Leopold von Ranke shared the basic assumptions connected with the tradition of older forms of historical writings. Iggers specifies three assumptions: (1) history portrays people who really existed and actions that really took place; (2) human actions mirror the intentions of the actors and it is a task of historian to comprehend these intentions in order to construct a coherent historical story; and (3) the events operate in diachronical conception of time, in which later events follow earlier in a coherent sequence.¹¹

By the 20th century, history was firmly established in European and American universities as a professional field, resting on exact methods and making productive use of archival collections and new sources of evidence. Iggers, in his *Historiography in the Twentieth century: From Scientific Objectivity to the Postmodern Challenge*, outlines the current trends of the increasing specialized historiography. He points out that the earlier optimism that promised imminent recovery of the truth of the past has been replaced by the belief that no accumulation of facts constitutes history as an intelligible structure, and no historian, however free from crude bias, can be a totally neutral, impersonal recorder of an objective reality. Furthermore, the scope of history has expanded immeasurably, in time, as archaeology and anthropology have provided knowledge of earlier ages, and in breadth, as fields of inquiry entirely unknown in the past (such as economic history, psychohistory, history of ideas, of family structures, and of peasant societies) have emerged and refined their methods and goals. To many scholars, national history has come to seem an outmoded, culture-bound approach, although history written on thoroughly international assumptions is extremely difficult to achieve.

Historians have looked more and more to the social sciences—sociology¹², psychology, anthropology¹³, and economics—for new methods and forms of explanation; the sophisticated use of quantitative data has become the accepted approach to economic and demographic studies. The influence of Marxist theories of economic and social development remains vital and contentious.¹⁴ At the same time,

⁹ See L. von Ranke, *The Theory and Practice of History*, G. Iggers/ K. van Maltke (eds.), (New York: The Boobs-Merril Company, 1973), 39.

¹⁰ *Ibid.*, 39-42.

¹¹ Cf. G. G. Iggers, *Historiography in the Twentieth Century: From Scientific Objectivity to the Postmodern Challenge* (Hanover, NH: Wesleyan University Press of New England, 1997), 3.

¹² For example, Max Weber clearly advocated social science approach in history. See M. Weber, *The Methodology of the Social Science*, E.A. Shils and H.A. Finch eds., (New York: The Free Press, 1949).

¹³ By focusing on small social unities consisting of individuals, Clifford Geertz, for example, interrelated the emphasis on the culture with history. In doing so he brought history in contact with anthropology. See C. Geerts, *An Interpretation of Cultures* (London: Fontana Press, 1973, repr., 1993).

¹⁴ The influence of Marxism upon historiography is well examined in G. McLennan, *Marxism and the Methodologies in History* (London, 1981). S. H. Rigby, "Marxist Historiography," in Michael Bentley ed., *Companion to Historiography* (London: Routledge, 1997) also provides a very useful learned discussion of the Marxist historiography and bibliography on this topic.

many scholars have turned with sharpened interest to the theoretical foundations of historical knowledge and are reconsidering the relation between imaginative literature and history, with the possibility emerging that history may after all be the literary art that works upon scholarly material.¹⁵

Each particular model of historiography offers something valuable, yet each loses much of its value when it claims to be the only way of interpretation of the past.

2.2 History and Historiography

History, in its broadest sense, is the totality of all past events, although a more realistic definition would limit it to the known past. Historiography is the written record of what is known of human lives and societies in the past and how historians have attempted to understand them. Of all the fields of serious study and literary effort, history may be the hardest to define precisely, because the attempt to uncover past events and formulate an intelligible account of them necessarily involves the use and influence of many auxiliary disciplines and literary forms.

Although the historical research is to collect and record facts about the human past and often to discover new facts, the historical discourse does not, however, produce new information about the past and does not provide new knowledge about the past. The historical research produces the interpretations of whatever information about and knowledge of the past the historian commands.¹⁶ “History is a science of collecting finding, penetrating; it is an art because it recreates and portrays that which it has found and recognized.”¹⁷ The investigation of the records of the past must be scientific; the exposition of the findings in writing becomes literature and hence is an art.

We deal with a real past and not an imagined past. However, this past is “accessible only through the medium of the historian’s mind.”¹⁸ This calls for methods and approaches that follow logic of historical inquiry, because the relation between evidence and fact,

¹⁵ For the polemical discussions of the current trends see, for example, Keith Windshuttle, *The Killing of History: How a Discipline is Murdered by Literary Critics and Social Theorists* (Sydney, 1994). A superior study of the modern historiography is Michael Bentley, *Modern Historiography: An Introduction* (1999).

¹⁶ Cf. Hayden White, *Figural Realism* (Baltimore: John Hopkins University Press, 1999), 2.

¹⁷ L. von Ranke, *The Theory and Practice of History*, G. Iggers/ K. van Maltke (eds.), (New York: The Boobs-Merril Company, 1973), 33.

¹⁸ G. G. Iggers, *Historiography in the Twentieth Century: From Scientific Objectivity to the Postmodern Challenge* (Hanover, NH: Wesleyan University Press of New England, 1997), 15.

however, is rarely simple and direct. The evidence may be biased or mistaken, fragmentary, or nearly unintelligible after long periods of cultural or linguistic change. The historian task, therefore, is to assess the evidences with a critical eye.

On the whole, history does not recreate the past but it can pass judgement upon the documentation. The available information about the past is incomplete, partly incorrect, or biased and requires our careful attention.

The task of the historian, as we see it, is to try to get to the kernel of the story and see its relevance in its won context and its contribution to the ongoing tide of life.

2.3 Objectivity and Truth in History

Until modern times, history was regarded primarily as a special kind of literature that shared many techniques and effects with fictional narrative. Historians were committed to factual materials and personal truthfulness, but like writers of fiction they wrote detailed narratives of events and vivid character sketches with great attention to language and style. In recent decades an increased number of historians arrived at the conviction that “objectivity in historical research is not possible because there is no object of history.”¹⁹ It is in this context some scholars stress the literary character of historical text and the fictional elements. It is even proposed that the historical works are mainly the literary works, which do not refer to an actual historical past (i.e. they are not “objective”) but as such do not differ from fiction.²⁰

Indeed, the representation of the past is a problematic enterprise. Yet, we regard objectivity, properly understood, to be a worthy goal of our historical inquiry. Can history be objective? It is common to reply to this question, “it all depends on what one means by ‘objective’”. Following Thomas Haskell, we understand “objectivity” as the attempt “to sustain that minimal respect for self-overcoming, for detachment, honesty, and fairness that makes intellectual community possible.”²¹ Our assumption is that history is “objective” insofar as it can be written as accepted (or verified) by rational scientific standards.²² Only

¹⁹ G. G. Iggers, *Historiography in the Twentieth Century: From Scientific Objectivity to the Postmodern Challenge* (Hanover, NH: Wesleyan University Press of New England, 1997), 9.

²⁰ See Ronald Barthes, “Discourse of History,” *Comparative Criticism: A Yearbook*, vol. 3 (1981): 3-28; Hayden White, *Figural Realism* (Baltimore: John Hopkins University Press, 1999).

²¹ Thomas Haskell, “Objectivity is not Neutrality,” in *History and Theory: Contemporary Readings*, Brain Fay, Philip Pomper and Richard T. Vann eds., (Malden: Blackwell, 1998), 306.

²² Cf. Christopher Blake, “Can History be Objective,” *Mind* 64 (1955): 61.

in this sense, the historical “objectivity” is obtainable. On the one hand, a high degree of objectivity is possible as we work on the level of simple description, for it is possible to establish beyond measurable doubt that a person existed and acted in a specific way. On the other hand, however, history cannot be conceived as recovering the past “as it actually was”. Therefore, ‘objectivity’, as Bradley and Muller rightly argue, “becomes more difficult when we move from the realm of description to that of explanation.”²³

We recognize that history is both a science and an art.²⁴ It is a science of collecting and finding the evidence of the past which provide information on when, how, why and through whom something happened. It is an art because it recreates and interprets that which has been found and established. The product of these two is the documentary version of “objective” historical experience.

Furthermore, our assumption is that it is possible to reach “truth” (“truth” of the object is its valid interpretation) through a dynamical process of the historical learning in which our task is to integrate “history as an objective given in present life relations, and history as a subjective construction to orient oneself toward one’s interest and practical [or ideological] life.”²⁵ Following Handlin we say that “[n]o one can relive the past; but everyone can seek truth in the record.”²⁶

2.4 Facts, Interpretation and Form

Mere sifting of evidence for facts never fulfils the purpose of history as a serious endeavour to understand human life. Fact-finding is only the foundation for the selection, arrangement, and explanation that constitute historical interpretation. The process of interpretation informs all aspects of historical inquiry, beginning with the selection of a subject for investigation, because the very choice of a particular event or society or institution is itself an act of judgment that asserts the importance of the subject. Once chosen, the subject itself suggests a provisional model or hypothesis that guides research and helps the historian to assess and classify the available evidence and to present a detailed and coherent account of the subject. It is true that every historical account is a construct

²³James E. Bradley and Richard A. Muller, *Church History: An Introduction to Research, Reference Works and Methods* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1995), 52.

²⁴Cf. L. von Ranke, *The Theory and Practice of History*, G. Iggers/ K. van Maltke (eds.), (New York: The Boobs-Merril Company, 1973), 33.

²⁵J. Rüsen, *Studies in Metahistory* (Pretoria: HSRC, 1993), 92.

²⁶Oscar Handlin, *Truth in History* (London: Belknap Press, 1979), 406.

arising from a dialogue between the historian and the past. It “does not occur in a vacuum but within a community of inquiring minds who share criteria of plausibility.”²⁷ Therefore, our task, in this dissertation, will be to respect the facts, avoid ignorance and error as far as possible, and create a convincing, intellectually satisfying interpretation of the history of bible interpretation within the Russian Orthodox Church.

Clearly, we are not in the position to record events we ourselves have witnessed. Our task is to distillate the evidences surviving from the past, because “[w]here there is no evidence there is no history.”²⁸ The historical facts can only be known through intermediary written sources, such as previous histories and other written information. All these, and many more sources of information provide the evidence from which the historical facts can be deciphered. Yet, this dissertation is not meant to treat the problem exhaustively, but rather it should be understood as an initial plunge into an ocean of the Russian Orthodox published materials. The path to a comprehensive study of the Russian orthodox hermeneutics lies through the monographic studies and research of vast published materials. In addition to printed works, the subject of this dissertation might be discussed on the basis of iconographic and more tangible religious materials. However, the discussion of these goes beyond the scope of this dissertation.

2.5 Method in History

Our topic, the history of bible interpretation will be investigated from a specific threefold perspective: (1) from within a particular historical-dogmatic tradition of the Russian Orthodox Church; (2) with an eye toward the historical evolution and development of the issues being debated throughout the period of time; and (3) with a special reference to select individuals, mainly concentrating on their contribution to hermeneutics. This selection of perspectives will be reflected in the scope of research.

The historical study of bible interpretation within the Russian Orthodox Church is an integral part of the historical identity of the Church. It contributes to the formulation of self-understanding of the Church. Therefore, linked to the church history, the presentation of the history of bible interpretation in the Russian Orthodox Church is necessarily diachronic. This already required a pure chronological approach to the method of study [for example, in the history of the Russian Orthodox Church, from the *Kiev period* of its history (X-XIII cc.)

²⁷ G.G. Iggers, *Historiography in the Twentieth Century: From Scientific Objectivity to the Postmodern Challenge* (Hanover, NH: Wesleyan University Press of New England, 1997), 145.

²⁸ Oscar Handlin, *Truth in History* (London: Belknap Press, 1979), 405-406.

till the *Synodal period* (1721-1917)]. It will be impossible to avoid the sections on the genesis and development of the orthodox bible interpretation.

Furthermore, for the presentation of the history of bible interpretation in the Russian Orthodox Church several basic methods will be used: (1) *the general/specific*; (3) *the synchronic*; and (2) *the great thinker method*.²⁹

By employing *the general/specific method* we will, first, break the history of biblical interpretation down into periods for the sake of identifying historical development (according to the principle of commonly accepted periods of the Russian Church and nation). Then within each period we will provide a general survey of the selected authors, their ideas and the forces that impinged on the history of interpretation. Secondly, while offering a general outline of thought, we will concentrate on a particular issue – the Russian Orthodox biblical hermeneutics. This method will help us to note the contributions of the various writers into to the development of the orthodox hermeneutics.

The synchronic method provides a complex view of history because it focuses on a broader dialogue between the ecclesiastical, social and political concerns and the subject of biblical interpretation. This method will allow us to look at the history of interpretation from the whole complexity of the past (i.e. to understand the subject on a broader scale of the interrelated events).

The great thinker method will be employed in the examination of the individual scholar - Dmitrii Bogdashevskii as representative of the Russian Orthodox biblical scholarship. We are aware that this method tends to locate the meaning in individual persons. This dissertation does not discount the fact that Bogdashevskii is living out the results of a long tradition and might have used the same theoretical concepts (but in a somewhat different way) as the other Russian Orthodox scholars. We do not suggest that the Russian Orthodox hermeneutics can be reduced to Bogdashevskii. *The great thinker method* was chosen for the study of Bogdashevskii's hermeneutics only in order to stabilize the larger body of the materials and sources. The focus on Bogdashevskii will help us understand how the Russian Orthodox hermeneutics cohere in one person's thoughts. Our assumptions are: (1) the particular individual is only contributory to the larger development and that the location of meaning lies in the interaction of ideas of many; and (2) any case study must say something of wider importance and be located in a more ecclesiastic historiography. In addition, I will approach Bogdashevskii being governed by the idea that each individual human being is a complex collection of motives, some good, some less than

²⁹ With orientation on the study of doctrine, these and other methods are outlined in James E. Bradley and Richard A. Muller, *Church History: An Introduction to Research, Reference Works and Methods* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1995), 26-38.

good. The only thing we know for certain about history is the fact that we cannot know the full motivation of the people at any time. We can only observe their external behaviour, and judge according to that. To claim more is to allocate power to ourselves, which does not belong to us.

Several further comments are still required. *Firstly*, in the presentation of the subject matter the ecumenical environment is favourable. It is desirable to write a history of the Russian Orthodox biblical interpretation by consulting what Roman Catholic Roman Catholic and Protestant biblical scholars have done. Thus, on the one hand, the systematic discernment and appreciation to the Orthodox Biblical scholarship cannot be achieved without reference to the critical hermeneutic questions within Western biblical scholarship. On the other hand, the focus of this dissertation will be limited primarily to the Russian Orthodox scholars.

Secondly, since our aim is to trace the history of bible interpretation in the Russian Orthodox from the *Kiev period* of its history (X-XIII cc.) till the *Synodal period* (1721-1917), a comprehensive study of all the scholars and all their writings would require more than one dissertation. The number of labourers in the field of biblical study is numerous. Therefore a judicious process of selectivity will be employed in order to present the main contributors in terms of their most important works. In a selection of facts and in reconstruction of the past our main focus will be the attempts to survey the landscape of the Orthodox religious thought relevant to biblical hermeneutics.

Thirdly, in order to analyse the development and essence of biblical scholarship in the Russian Orthodox Church, this study will be particularly focused on the academic inquiries accomplished by the lecturers of four Orthodox Academies (in Moscow, St. Petersburg, Kiev and Kazan') who contributed to the field of Biblical studies (esp. in the New Testament). The use of periodical press, especially theological-scholarly journals, will serve as the main source of materials (but not be limited to). It is important to note, that the journals have been at the centre of Russian cultural, intellectual and academic life (esp. throughout the Imperial period).³⁰ For the purpose of this dissertation, the most prominent journals will be considered: (1) *Khristianskoe Chtenie* (*Christian Reading*) of St. Petersburg Academy (from 1821-; and during 1875-1913 it became a supplement to a weekly journal

³⁰ The importance of the Orthodox periodical literature in Pre-revolutionary Russia has been accredited by several recent studies. See esp., Mienard Dindorf and Edward Kasines, "Russian Pre-Revolutionary Religious-theological Serials in the St. Vladimir Seminary Library," *SVTQ*, 14 (1970): 100-107; Edward, Kasinec, "A Bibliographical Essay on the Documentation of Russian Orthodoxy during the Imperial Era," in Robert Nichols and Theofanis George Stavrou, *Russian Orthodoxy under the Old Regime* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota, 1978), 205-228; Robert Whittaker, "Two New York Collections for the Study of Eastern Christianity," *SVTQ* 35 (1990): 221-236; Robert Davis, "19th Century Russian Religious-Theological Journals: Structure and Access" *SVTQ* 33 (1989): 235-259; B. Geffert, "Lisovskii's List: Pre-1900 Russian Theological and Religious Periodicals," *SVTQ* 40 (1996): 181-206.

Tserkovnii Vestnik); (2) *Pribavleniia k Tvoreniiam Otsov* (from 1843-1864, 1871-72; 1880-1891, but after 1892 is known as *Bogoslovskii Vestnik* (*Theological Messenger of Moscow Ecclesiastic Academy*)); (3) *Proceedings of the Kiev Ecclesiastical Academy* (from 1837 it was a weekly journal *Voskresnoe Chtenie*, and later -from 1860 *Trudy Kievskoi Dukhovnoi Academy*; and (4) *Pravoslavnyi Sobesiednik* (*Orthodox Interlocutor*) published by the Kazan' Ecclesiastical Academy.³¹ The publication of these journals was designed to satisfy the requirements of the academically serious readers. Considering the fact that in the pre-revolutionary Russia there was no well-organized theological publishing and that the main studies and dissertations in Bible interpretation and theology were published only in a journal version, the above named journals are mandatory for a study in Russian Orthodoxy (although often abandoned).

Heaviest reliance for evidence in the proposed study will be placed on primary sources found in major Orthodox collections in Russia and abroad (esp. Georges Florovsky Library of St. Vladimir's Orthodox Theological Seminary/New York, USA). The internal and external critical techniques will be employed in the assessment of documents.

Excursion: The Use of the Russian Orthodox Academic Periodicals in Scholarly Research. The religious-theological serials, esp. academic periodicals, produced by the four theological academies have been ignored by the majority studies of the Russian Orthodoxy. Cf. Robert H. Davis, "19th Century Russian Religious-Theological Journals: Structure and Access," *SVTQ* 33 (1989): 235. An incredible ignorance of theological journals and unacceptable unfamiliarity with theological literature in Russian is shown in several recent studies from the western Orthodox scholars. A notable example, among others, is Michael Prokurat's essay "Orthodox Interpretation of Scripture" published in *The Bible in the Churches: How Various Christians Interpret the Scriptures*. Ed. by Kenneth Hagen. (Milwaukee: Marquette University Press, 1994), 59-99. Due to overlooking all the primary sources in Russian and relying entirely on the secondary sources (predominantly in English) that treat the subject discursively, Prokurat's essay does not achieve its objective - to investigate "the Bible and its interpretation in Eastern Orthodox Church" by treating both Greek/Byzantine and Slavic/Russian Orthodox traditions. Moreover, Prokurat shows a considerable misconception of the topic. Rather than to show how the Orthodox Christians interpret the Scriptures (note the book's subtitle), Prokurat predominantly concentrates on a historical overview of Bible translations into Greek and Russian languages.³²

³¹ A detailed and chronological list of all the Russian Orthodox theological and religious periodicals can be found in specialized surveys. See: N. M. Lisovskii, *Bibliografiia Russkoi Pereodicheskoi Pechati: 1703-1900 gg.* (Petrograd, 1915); *Pravoslavnaia Bogoslovskaia Entsiklopediia ili bogoslovskii Entsiklopedicheskii Slovar'* 12 vols. Vols. 1-5 ed. by Prof. A. P. Lopukhin. [from *Alfa* - to *Ifika*] and vols. 6-12 ed. by Prof. N. N. Glubukovskii [from *Iavan* to *Konstan-tinopol*] (Petrograd, 1900-11); *Entsiklopedicheskii Slovar'* (M.: 1900- ["Reprintnoe vosproizvodnoe izdanie F. A. Brokgauza /I. A. Efrona, 1890]).

³² This misconception is also noted in the Russian Orthodox literature. For example Prof. Sol'skii's study of the history of Bible interpretation in Russia concerns mainly the history of Bible translation into Old-Slavonic/Russian. Only indirectly he regards the topic of interpretation. See S.

2.6 Modes of Expression

In this dissertation, for the purpose of expressing the historical past, two distinct modes will be used. A *mode of exposition* will be used to explain and analyse causes of events, the significance of decisions, the motives of participants, the ideology, and the meaning of an event or idea.³³ It is in this mode that the study of the influence of the circumstances on a historical process of biblical interpretation in the Russian Orthodox Church will be presented.

The *mode of argument* will be used to build a proposition, to create a dialogue between the views or positions on the subject, and to elucidate what happened and why.³⁴ In unfolding the history of biblical interpretation, the study will always be in dialogue, not only with the primary sources of the events we write about but also with other historians who write about some of those events. This engages in argument.

Needless to say, the modes of exposition and argument overlap. Mainly the method of investigation of the topic will be descriptive, although critical evaluation in terms of textual criteria will also be selectively employed for the purpose service of more precise understanding.

2.7 Historiographical Representation of Continuity

The methodological approach of this dissertation is derived from the point of view that “continuity is the leading idea of a history connecting the experience of the past with the expectations of the future.”³⁵ Therefore, in our study of the history of Russian Orthodox bible interpretation, the peculiar mixture of failures and achievements in interpretation will be shown by giving attention to the most prominent scholars, for in the development of

Sol'skii, “Kratkii Oчерk istorii sviashchenoi bibliologii i ekzegetiki,” [“A brief outline of the history of sacred bibliology and exegesis,”] *TKDA* (1866) 10:157-190; 11:305-342; 12: 466-506; also his “The Use and Study of the Bible in Russia,” *PO* 27/10 (1868): 145-180; 11:251-270; I (1869) 2:190-221; 4:38-577; 6: 797-822. The same approach is found in *Mikhail (Luzin)*.

³³ See Richard Marius, *A Short Guide to Writing about History* 3rd ed. (New York: Longman, 1999), 61-62.

³⁴ See *Ibid.*, 65-66.

³⁵ J. Rüsen, *Studies in Metahistory* (Pretoria: HSRC, 1993), 13. On the point of chronology Handlin well states, that “[n]o abstraction, no general interpretation, no wish or preference can challenge chronology dominion, unless among those people who, lacking a sense of time, lack also a sense of history.” “No abstraction, no general interpretation, no wish or preference can challenge chronology dominion, unless among those people who, lacking a sense of time, lack also a sense of history.” Oscar Handlin, *Truth in History* (London: Belknap Press, 1979), 406.

biblical interpretation, scholars usually stand on the shoulders of their predecessors, and new research is made possible by earlier results. In study of this kind, when the aim is to trace the development of biblical scholarship, a comprehensive study of all the scholars and all their writings is impossible. Therefore, again, in order to present the main contributors in terms of their most important works, a judicious process of selection has also been employed. The chronicle of the bible research will not spell out what a particular scholar says about a particular passage, or even about a particular issue. For our purpose, the examples of the exegetical and critical results will be shown selectively. The main purpose, however, is to report the larger historical development of biblical interpretation.

There is another glance at the historiographical representation of continuity of the Orthodox bible interpretation. The range of happening in the field proportionally preconditions the extent of our presentation of the stream of events and developments of the history of bible interpretation. Since the most extensive form of biblical scholarship is identifiable during the *Synodal period* (1721-1917), the narration concerning this period will be more wide-ranging than of the earlier periods of the Church history.

In addition, in historiography, the presentation of the temporal chain of events, caused by intentional activities, is usually interpreted not only by using the intentions of the actors in order to understand what was going on, but also by searching for structural conditions, circumstances and relationships of human life which determine human activity.³⁶ It is not to suggest that the work of the historian can be explained primarily in terms of social factors or that it has primarily an ideological function but it means that the historical inquiry performed in this dissertation “must be seen in the sociocultural and political framework in which it is practised.”³⁷ Thus, in the unfolding of the history of bible interpretation in the Russian Orthodox Church, deepens to various dimensions such as ecclesiastic condition, political structure, cultural factors like mentality, social relations, etc., comes into view.

³⁶ Cf. J. Rüsen, *Studies in Metahistory* (Pretoria: HSRC, 1993), 205.

³⁷ G.G. Iggers, *Historiography in the Twentieth Century: From Scientific Objectivity to the Postmodern Challenge* (Hanover, NH: Wesleyan University Press of New England, 1997), 18.