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| ✠ |  | *Catholic* |
| *Interpretation* |
| *of Scripture* |
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# The Inspiration and Inerrancy of Scripture

## Inspiration

introduction

In “the normal Catholic understanding of biblical inspiration . . . [God is] the principal author of Scripture and the inspired human writer as its secondary author.” (Fitzmyer *Interpretation* 96)

Vatican II (*Dei Verbum* §24; trans. Béchard, Dean P., SJ, ed. and trans. *The Scripture Documents*. Collegeville: Liturgical, 2002. 29): “The Sacred Scriptures contain the Word of God, and, because they are inspired, they are truly the Word of God.” (Qtd. in Fitzmyer *Interpretation* 11)

Believers “find inspiration for their lives in both the OT and the NT.” (Fitzmyer *Interpretation* 14)

Clearly not the technical use of the word “inspiration.”—Hahn

author’s intention

Vatican II (*Dei Verbum* §12): “the interpreter . . . should carefully search out what the sacred writers truly intended to express and what God thought well to manifest by their words . . .” (Qtd. in Fitzmyer *Interpretation* 13)

revelation and inspiration

“Inspiration is not a charism that makes the writing a revelation.” (Fitzmyer *Interpretation* 8)

revelation

*Dei Verbum* ch. 1 says revelation is “the self-manifestation of a personal God and the making known of the mystery of his will for the salvation of humanity.” (Fitzmyer *Interpretation* 8)

Vatican II (*Dei Verbum* §21): “in the sacred Books, the Father who is in heaven comes lovingly to meet his children and speaks with them . . .” (Qtd. in Fitzmyer *Interpretation* 13)

inspiration

Inspiration is “the charism by which human beings were moved by God (or by the Spirit of God) to record aspects or details of that divine revelation.” (Fitzmyer *Interpretation* 8)

“The Word of God encapsulated in the words of the ancient human author revealed to him thoughts and words . . .” (Fitzmyer *Interpretation* 14)

“The two ideas are not . . . coterminous.” (Fitzmyer *Interpretation* 8)

“It is conceivable that a whole biblical book is inspired, from the first word to the last, and yet not contain revelation.” (Fitzmyer *Interpretation* 8)

“Many of the aphorisms or maxims in Ecclesiastes or in the Book of Proverbs are nuggets of human wisdom, inspired indeed, but saying nothing about the self-revealing God, his will, or his designs for human salvation.” (Fitzmyer *Interpretation* 8)

“For instance, Prov 21:9 reads, “It is better to live in a corner of the housetop than in a house shared with a contentious wife”; that is repeated in 25:24.” (Fitzmyer *Interpretation* 8)

“Such a saying passes on inspired wisdom, but it is not revelation; it tells us nothing about God or his will.” (Fitzmyer *Interpretation* 8)

## Inerrancy

introduction

“The consequence of inspiration is inerrancy, i.e., immunity from formal error in what is affirmed or asserted. The opposite of error is . . . truth.” (Fitzmyer *Interpretation* 50)

PBC (*Instruction* §XI): “the apostles, filled with the Holy Spirit, preached the good news, and . . . the Gospels were written under the inspiration of the Holy Spirit, who preserved their authors from all error.” (Qtd. in Fitzmyer *Interpretation* 55)

PBC (*Instruction* §XI): quoting Irenaeus (*Adversus haereses* 3.1.1. Harvey 2.2): “those through whom the gospel has come to us . . . had acquired perfect knowledge . . . as the Holy Spirit came upon them, they were filled with all (his) gifts and had perfect knowledge.” (Qtd. in Fitzmyer *Interpretation* 55)

Vatican II on inerrancy

*Dei Verbum* ch. 3 “stresses the venerable and traditional teaching about the inspiration of Scripture, echoing the doctrine of the Council of Trent and the First Vatican Council, but it relates to that traditional teaching an important assertion about inerrancy.” (Fitzmyer *Interpretation* 7)

Vatican II (*Dei Verbum* §11. Béchard, Dean P., SJ, ed. and trans. *The Scripture Documents* 24): “Since everything asserted by the inspired authors or sacred writers should be regarded as asserted by the Holy Spirit, it follows that we must acknowledge the Books of Scripture as teaching firmly, faithfully, and without error the truth that God wished to be recorded in the sacred writings for the sake of our salvation” (Qtd. in Fitzmyer *Interpretation* 8)

“. . . the verb “asserted” . . . is used twice . . .” (Fitzmyer *Interpretation* 8)

Inerrancy is “a consequence of inspiration, but one that is not coterminous with it. It is restricted to inspired statements in the Bible, and not to its questions, exclamations, or prayers.” (Fitzmyer *Interpretation* 8)

“recorded . . . for the sake of our salvation”

“. . . inerrancy is the quality of all assertions in the Bible that pertain to human salvation.” (Fitzmyer *Interpretation* 8)

“For the sake of our salvation” “means that the charism of inerrancy does not necessarily grace every statement made with a past tense verb as if it were historically true.” (Fitzmyer *Interpretation* 8)

literary forms

Augustin Cardinal Bea, SJ (*De Scripturae Sacrae Inspiratione*. 2nd ed. Rome: Biblical Institute, 1935. 106 §90): “Each individual genre has its own truth.” (“Sua cuique generi literario est veritas.”) (Fitzmyer *Interpretation* 35)

Vatican II (*Dei Verbum* §12): “Truth is differently presented and expressed in various types of historical writings, in prophetic or poetic texts, or in other modes of speech. Furthermore, the interpreter must search for what meaning the sacred writer, in his own historical situation and in accordance with the condition [8] of his time and culture, intended to express and did in fact express with the help of literary forms that were in use during that time.” (Qtd. in Fitzmyer *Interpretation* 8-9)

“. . . the Constitution was reiterating merely what Pius XII had said less directly in *Divino afflante Spiritu* §§20-21.” (Béchard, Dean P., SJ, ed. and trans. *The Scripture Documents* 128-30) (Fitzmyer *Interpretation* 9)

Methods of Biblical Interpretation

The Historical-Critical Method

### Introduction

bibliography

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Hahn, H.F. *Old Testament in Modern Research*. Philadelphia: Muhlenberg, 1954.

Kraus, H.-J. *Geschichte der historisch-kritischen Erforschung des Alten Testaments*. 3rd ed. Neukirchen: Neukirchener, 1982.

Kümmel, W.G. *The New Testament*: *The History of the Investigation of Its Problems*. Nashville: Abingdon, 1972.

“historical” and “critical”

Brown, Raymond E., SS. “‘And the Lord Said’? Biblical Reflections on Scripture as the Word of God.” *Theological Studies* 42 (1981) 3-19.

Brown, Raymond E., SS. “Communicating the Divine and Human in Scripture.” *Origins* 22.1 (14 May I 992) 1-9.

Krentz, E. *The Historical-Critical Method*. Guides to Biblical Scholarship. Philadelphia: Fortress, 1975.

Levie, Jean, SJ. *The Bible*, *Word of God in Words of Men*. London: Chapman; New York: Kenedy, 1961.

“This method of biblical interpretation is called “historical-critical” because it borrows its techniques from both historical and literary criticism.” (Fitzmyer *Scripture*, *the Soul* 19)

“. . . the inspired written Word of God . . . is an ancient record, composed by many human authors . . . [So] it has to be read, studied, and analyzed as other ancient records of human history.” (Fitzmyer *Scripture*, *the Soul* 19)

In the Bible, human language was “subject to time-conditioned formulations and its original message had at times become less clear with the passing of the centuries.” (Fitzmyer *Scripture*, *the Soul* 5)

The historical-critical method “applies to the Bible all the critical techniques of classical philology . . .” (Fitzmyer *Scripture*, *the Soul* 19)

“. . . it refuses a priori to exclude any critical analysis in its quest for the meaning . . .” (Fitzmyer *Scripture*, *the Soul* 19)

Because the Word of God “has been preserved in various literary genres and forms, it called in time for interpretation.” (Fitzmyer *Scripture*, *the Soul* 6)

Interpretation is inevitable.

Scripture is “invariably linked to the living culture, spirituality, and piety of God’s [6] people . . .” (Fitzmyer *Scripture*, *the Soul* 6-7)

Old Testament writers interpreted earlier texts. (Fitzmyer *Scripture*, *the Soul* 6)

example: “events of the Exodus were reread in Deutero-Isaiah in terms of the return from the Babylonian Captivity.” (Fitzmyer *Scripture*, *the Soul* 6)

example: “A psalm ascribed to David, commemorating deliverance from the hands of his enemies (2 Sam 22:2-51), eventually became part of Israel’s prayer book as Psalm 18 and thereby took on new meaning.” (Fitzmyer *Scripture*, *the Soul* 6)

“Prophetic utterances of Jeremiah (25:11-12; 29: 10) were later interpreted in Dan 9:1-27.” (Fitzmyer *Scripture*, *the Soul* 6)

Interpretation occurred “when the Hebrew Scriptures were translated at first into Greek, and then into Aramaic, Latin, Syriac, and other local languages, for each translation became an interpretation.” (Fitzmyer *Scripture*, *the Soul* 6)

New Testament writers interpreted earlier texts “in the light of the Christ-event.” (Fitzmyer *Scripture*, *the Soul* 6)

the “historical” in the historical-critical method

“Since much of the Bible presents a narrative account of events that affected the lives of ancient Jews and early Christians, the various accounts have to be analyzed against their proper human and historical backgrounds, in their contemporary contexts, and in their original languages.” (Fitzmyer *Interpretation* 63)

the “critical” in the historical-critical method

It is not “critical” “because it criticizes the Bible or seeks to evoke skepticism about the historical record of the ancient [19] text . . .” (Fitzmyer *Scripture*, *the Soul* 19-20)

Rather, it is critical because “it uses the techniques of different forms of literary and historical criticism.” (Fitzmyer *Interpretation* 63)

It is “critical” “because it [tries] to arrive at a historical and literary judgment about it.” (Fitzmyer *Scripture*, *the Soul* 20)

why the historical-critical method is crucial

PBC (“Interpretation of the Bible in the Church” 1993 34): the historical-critical method is “the indispensable method for the scientific study of the meaning of ancient texts. Holy Scripture, inasmuch as it is the “Word of God in human language,” has been composed by human authors in all its various parts and in all the sources that lie behind them. Because of this, its proper understanding not only admits the use of this method, but actually requires it.” (Qtd. in Fitzmyer *Interpretation* 77)

“In saying this, the Commission recognized, in effect, that the Bible was composed during the course of a millennium and comes to us [77] today from an ancient period more than two thousand years ago. It was not written in twentieth-century English, but rather in Hebrew, Greek, and Aramaic by human beings of diverse cultures in the ancient eastern Mediterranean world. That is why the adjective “historical” is so important in the name of this method, which is particularly attentive to the ancient meaning of the biblical text and its underlying sources and traditions.” (Fitzmyer *Interpretation* 77-78)

“What ultimately lies behind this critical approach to the study of the Bible in the Church is the conviction that God’s revelation in Christ took place in the past, and the ancient record of that self-manifestation of God in him is disclosed to the Church above all in the Bible, in the Word of God couched in ancient human wording. This is the fundamental reason why historical criticism of it plays an important role in the life of the Church itself.” (Fitzmyer *Interpretation* 72)

“. . . that God’s revelation to His people took place *in the past* [30] . . . is the basic reason why historical criticism of the Bible has played and still has to play an important role in the life of the Church itself.” (Fitzmyer *Scripture*, *the Soul* 30-31)

### Description of the Basic Historical-Critical Method

introduction

The Bible contains the Word of God, but it was “composed by a multitude of authors over a long period of time.” (Fitzmyer *Interpretation* 63)

“Being an ancient composition, it has to be studied and analyzed as are other ancient historical records.” (Fitzmyer *Interpretation* 63)

“exegesis”

“Exegesis” is “the term by which the interpretation of Scripture according to this [historical-critical] method is often known.” (Fitzmyer *Scripture*, *the Soul* 29)

in Alexandrian philology

Brown, Shuyler. “Philology.” In Epp, E.J., and G.W. MacRae, eds. *The New Testament and Its Modern Interpreters*. Atlanta: Scholars, 1989. 127-47.

Greek *exēgēsis* is from *exēgeisthai*, “to draw out”: “to draw out from a book or text the meaning of its words and phrases, and to explain its text as a whole.” (Fitzmyer *Scripture*, *the Soul* 29)

Henri-Irénée Marrou (*A History of Education in Antiquity*. London: Sheed and Ward, 1956. 165-169. Here 165): in Alexandrian philology, “the grammarian’s treatment of an author had four stages: criticism of the text [*diorthōsis*, text criticism], reading [*anagnōsis*], exposition [*exēgēsis*] and judgment [*krisis*, criticism] . . .”

current definitions

“The Greek noun *exēgēsis* is derived from the verb *exēgeomai*, “draw out.” The aim of “exegesis” is to draw out from a text the meaning of its words, phrases, and paragraphs. . . . [It] seeks to draw out the meaning of the passage intended by the inspired writer.” (Fitzmyer *Interpretation* 68)

“Exegesis” is the “critical interpretation of a text . . .” (Webster’s *Third New International Dictionary*) (Qtd. in Fitzmyer *Scripture*, *the Soul* 29)

In “English and some other modern languages [“exegesis” is] the critical interpretation of the Bible.” (Fitzmyer *Scripture*, *the Soul* 29)

textual, contextual, and relational meanings

“Exegesis is concerned in the long run with the sense of the biblical passage in its final form: it seeks to draw out the meaning of the passage expressed by the inspired writer.” (Fitzmyer *Scripture*, *the Soul* 29)

Exegesis seeks:

“the *textual meaning* (the sense of its words and phrases—what the medievals meant by the “literal” sense) . . .” (Fitzmyer *Scripture*, *the Soul* 29)

“its *contextual meaning* (the sense of the words or phrases in a given passage or episode, a unit of the text) . . .” (Fitzmyer *Scripture*, *the Soul* 29)

“its *relational meaning* (their sense in relation to the book or the corpus of works as a whole)” (Fitzmyer *Scripture*, *the Soul* 29)

“The relational meaning is called at times its biblical-theological meaning, because it seeks to interpret the words and phrases according to the synthesis of ideas of the biblical writer.” (Fitzmyer *Interpretation* 69)

“This combination of the textual, contextual, and relational meanings of a [29] passage amounts to its theological or religious meaning, to its meaning as the Word of God couched in ancient human language, and to the inspired message that accosts the reader of today.” (Fitzmyer *Scripture*, *the Soul* 29-30)

authorial intention

The literal sense of the Bible is what the writer intended to convey. (Fitzmyer *Interpretation* 69)

The historical-critical method is “geared to one end: to determine the meaning of the sacred text as it was intended by the human author . . . and to ascertain what it is saying to us today.” (Fitzmyer *Scripture*, *the Soul* 23)

“. . . the properly-oriented use of the historical-critical method of interpreting Scripture is aimed at ascertaining the meaning of the Word of God as it was originally expressed by the inspired human author.” (Fitzmyer *Scripture*, *the Soul* 56)

literal sense

“The historical-critical method, when used in biblical interpretation, has as its goal the ascertaining of the literal sense of the written Word of God.” (Fitzmyer *Interpretation* 78)

1943 (Sept. 30): Pius XII’s *Divino afflante Spiritu*

Pius XII (*Divino afflante Spiritu* §23): interpreters’ “greatest endeavor should be to discern and define clearly that sense of the biblical words which is called literal. Aided by the context and comparison with similar passages, let them therefore by means of their knowledge of languages search out with all diligence the literal meaning of the words; all these helps indeed are wont to be pressed into service in the explanation [17] also of profane writers, so that the mind of the author may be made abundantly clear.” (Qtd. in Fitzmyer *Scripture*, *the Soul* 17-18)

1965: Vatican II (*Dei verbum* §12): without mentioning the literal sense, it “set as the goal of the interpreter the investigation of “what the sacred writers really intended to convey and what God wanted to manifest by means of their words.”” (Qtd. in Fitzmyer *Scripture*, *the Soul* 63 n 12)

“The literal sense . . . is directly [56] the effect of the movement of the Spirit. In the literal sense one finds the expression of God revealing Himself to humanity.” (Fitzmyer *Scripture*, *the Soul* 56-57)

preliminary steps

“The method utilizes two preliminary steps, borrowed from classical philology:” textual criticism and introductory questions. (Fitzmyer *Scripture*, *the Soul* 20)

textual criticism

Textual criticism “deals with the transmission of the biblical text in its original language and in ancient versions . . .” (Fitzmyer *Scripture*, *the Soul* 20)

“In what manuscripts does one find the best form of the transmitted text? What are the best families of manuscripts?” (Fitzmyer *Interpretation* 64)

“Does an ancient version reflect a better reading, one possibly superior to the transmitted Hebrew, Aramaic, or Greek text?” (Fitzmyer *Scripture*, *the Soul* 20)

Textual criticism is preliminary but fundamental. (Fitzmyer *Interpretation* 64)

introductory questions (Fitzmyer *Scripture*, *the Soul* 20)

author

authenticity (“Did David compose the psalm? Did Paul write the Epistle to the Ephesians?”) (Fitzmyer *Scripture*, *the Soul* 20)

integrity (“Did Paul write all of it, or has the text suffered secondary interpolation?”) (Fitzmyer *Interpretation* 64)

date

provenance

content

structure (outline)

style

genre (literary form)

examples: is the text a letter, a parable, a prayer? Poetry, rhetoric, historical narrative, fiction? (Fitzmyer *Interpretation* 64)

examples: is it apocalyptic? Wisdom literature? What kind of psalm?

examples: is it a parable, a miracle story, a pronouncement story?

These “content” questions are called “literary criticism.”

Literary criticism “analyzes the literary and stylistic character of the biblical text.” (Fitzmyer *Scripture*, *the Soul* 21)

But at this stage, it is preliminary literary criticism. Complete literary criticism is a refinement of the historical-critical method (see below).

Literary criticism “can curb the historical judgment about a given text. When one sees that an ancient writer has written poetry of a definite kind or has employed rhetorical devices (modes of persuasive argumentation, *inclusio*, *chiasmus*, catchword bonding), or has argued from cause to effect, or from effect to cause, one may realize that the historical aspect of the writing may not have been the principal or primary concern of its author.” (Fitzmyer *Scripture*, *the Soul* 21)

occasion and purpose (“the author’s intention in composing it”) (Fitzmyer *Scripture*, *the Soul* 20)

background

literary background (“Has the OT author been influenced by Assyrian, Babylonian, Egyptian, or Canaanite ideas?”) (Fitzmyer *Scripture*, *the Soul* 20)

cultural background (“Has the NT writer been influenced by Palestinian Jewish, Hellenistic, or eastern Mediterranean ideas?”) (Fitzmyer *Scripture*, *the Soul* 20)

The “preliminary questions help much in the comprehension of the biblical writings as something coming to us from a definite literary context, time, and place in antiquity.” (Fitzmyer *Interpretation* 64)

historical criticism

Historical criticism allows one “to judge how much [20] of biblical text truly reflects ancient reality.” (Fitzmyer *Scripture*, *the Soul* 20-21)

“. . . not everything narrated in the past tense necessarily corresponds to ancient reality . . .” (Fitzmyer *Interpretation* 66)

“. . . not everything put on the lips of Jesus of Nazareth by evangelists was necessarily so uttered by him.” (Fitzmyer *Interpretation* 66)

example: the Our Father

Fitzmyer, Joseph A., SJ. *The Gospel according to Luke*. Anchor Bible 28, 28A. Garden City: Doubleday, 1981, 1985. 896-901.

“. . . since the “Our Father” is . . . in two different forms (Matt 6:9-13 and Luke 11:2-4), historical criticism would seek to determine which form is more likely the words used by Jesus himself.” (Fitzmyer *Scripture*, *the Soul* 21)

But the evangelists give us “the honest truth about Jesus” (*Dei verbum* §19). (Fitzmyer *Scripture*, *the Soul* 23)

*Dei verbum* §19 “ita semper ut vera et sincera de Iesu nobis communicarent.” (Qtd. in Fitzmyer *Scripture*, *the Soul* 23 n 30)

“One should consult the Acta of Vatican Council II for the details [23] of the debate that ensued apropos of the composition of this clause . . .” (Vorgrimler, H., ed. *Commentary on the Documents of Vatican II*. 5 vols. London: Burns and Oates, 1967-69. 3.256-59.) (Fitzmyer *Scripture*, *the Soul* 23-24 n 30)

basic refinements of historical criticism

“During the course of the twentieth century, the method was developed further with the refinements of source criticism, form criticism, and redaction criticism. [63] . . . Though they are not per se historical criticism, they are forms of criticism that in the long run affect the historical judgment about an ancient text.” (Fitzmyer *Interpretation* 64)

source criticism

Source criticism “seeks to determine the prehistory of a biblical text. What sources did the biblical writer use in composing his text?” (Fitzmyer *Interpretation* 65)

One clue is a text’s “parallel accounts or doublet narratives of the same event . . .” (Fitzmyer *Scripture*, *the Soul* 21)

Another clue is a text’s “stereotyped phraseology . . .” (Fitzmyer *Scripture*, *the Soul* 21)

example: the Yahwist, Elohist, Deuteronomist, and Priestly writings in the pentateuch

example: Mark, Q, M, and L in the synoptics

Sources are “an important aspect of the interpretation of the passage.” (Fitzmyer *Interpretation* 65)

“Source criticism is not an end in itself, and the interpreter’s task is far from finished once the source of the passage has been determined.” (Fitzmyer *Interpretation* 65)

“. . . difference in the parallels or doublets, analyzed as derived from difference sources, often affects the historical judgment about a text and usually aids in the final understanding of its literary and religious message.” (Fitzmyer *Scripture*, *the Soul* 21-22)

form criticism

Muilenburg, J. “Form Criticism and Beyond.” *JBL* 88 (1969) 1-18. Rpt. in Maier, J., and V. Toilers, eds. *The Bible in Its Literary Milieu*. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1979. 362-80.

Taylor, Vincent. *The Formation of the Gospel Tradition*. London: Macmillan, 1949.

Form criticism first “seeks to specify the literary form [genre] or subform” of a passage. (Fitzmyer *Scripture*, *the Soul* 22)

This is part of the “introductory questions” mentioned above.

It then tries to discern the history of the form.

Form criticism “derived from non-Catholic interpreters . . .” (Fitzmyer *Interpretation* 71)

It “was applied first to the Old Testament by H. Gunkel as *Gattungsgeschichte*.” (Fitzmyer *Scripture*, *the Soul* 22)

Now: *Formgeschichte*, “the history of the form.” (Fitzmyer *Scripture*, *the Soul* 22)

early 1900s: “It was further developed in the interpretation of the Synoptic Gospels by K.L. Schmidt, M. Dibelius, and R. Bultmann at the beginning of the twentieth century.” (Fitzmyer *Scripture*, *the Soul* 22)

“. . . one also learns much about the history of the form and how it has developed in the tradition.” (Fitzmyer *Interpretation* 65)

redaction criticism

Redaction criticism “seeks to determine how certain biblical writers, using traditional materials, have modified, edited, or redacted the sources . . . in the interest of their own literary goal or purpose.” (Fitzmyer *Interpretation* 65)

Redaction “is often evident in the language and style of a given biblical writer.” (Fitzmyer *Interpretation* 66)

Redaction “has a bearing on the historical judgment of a passage.” (Fitzmyer *Interpretation* 66)

redaction criticism of the gospels: three stages of gospel tradition (Fitzmyer *Interpretation* 66)

c. 1-c. 33: “what Jesus of Nazareth did and said”

c. 33-c. 65: “what apostles of Jesus preached about him”

c. 65-c. 95: “what evangelists wrote about him, having culled, synthesized, and explicated the tradition that preceded them, each in his own way”

“The relationship of Stage III to Stages I and II is *the* problem for modern readers of these Gospels, and therein lies the crucial need of the historical-critical method of Gospel interpretation.” (Fitzmyer *Interpretation* 66)

Hartlich, C. “Is Historical Criticism out of Date?” In Küng, Hans, and Jürgen Moltmann, eds. *Conflicting Ways of Interpreting the Bible*. Concilium 138. New York: Seabury, 1980. 3-8.

literary criticism

“*Literary criticism* is concerned with the literary and stylistic character and content of the text.” (Fitzmyer *Interpretation* 64)

“Part of such criticism has already been mentioned under the introductory questions . . .” (Fitzmyer *Interpretation* 64)

content: structure (outline), style, genre (Fitzmyer *Interpretation* 64)

“. . . this sort of criticism has long been associated with historical criticism . . .” (Fitzmyer *Interpretation* 64)

But some literary critics “give the impression that such study . . . has been overlooked [and is] superior to historical criticism and of greater importance.” (Fitzmyer *Interpretation* 64)

D. Robertson (“Literature, the Bible as.” In Crim, K., ed. *The Interpreter*’*s Dictionary of the Bible*, *Supplementary Volume*. Nashville: Abingdon, 1976. 547-51. 547): “These scholars, who come from diverse philosophical and theological traditions, are united in considering the Bible primarily and fundamentally as a literary document (as opposed, e.g., to considering it as a historical or theological document).” (Qtd. in Fitzmyer *Interpretation* 64)

Literary criticism “is important . . . because it curbs the historical judgment about a text.” (Fitzmyer *Interpretation* 64)

“When one realizes that the ancient author has written poetry (and poetry of a definite kind), or has employed rhetorical [64] devices (*inclusio*, chiasmus, catchword bonds), or has argued in a definite way (from cause to effect, from effect to cause), one then realizes that the historical aspect of his writing may not be his primary concern.” (Fitzmyer *Interpretation* 64-65)

### Other Approaches to Supplement the Historical-Critical Method

introduction

Other approaches to scripture than the historical-critical method (including its refinements of source, form, and redaction criticism) arose primarily in the second half of the twentieth century.

“Numerous approaches to the reading and interpretation of the Bible have been advocated in recent decades.” (Fitzmyer *Scripture*, *the Soul* 39)

the PBC’s *The Interpretation of the Bible in the Church* (1993)

on other approaches in general

In the PBC “considered the historical-critical method not only “indispensable,” but “actually required” for the proper interpretation of Scripture . . .” (Fitzmyer *Interpretation* 81)

But the PBC “granted that that basic method could be refined and even in some respects corrected by other approaches . . .” (Fitzmyer *Interpretation* 81)

“Because the method is neutral, it can still undergo refinements in either its historical or literary features.” (Fitzmyer *Interpretation* 69)

“New approaches to interpretation are proposed from time to time, and some of them serve to correct the basic method (such as rhetorical criticism, narrative criticism, canonical criticism, etc.) . . .” (Fitzmyer *Interpretation* 69)

They can be “valuable refinements of that basic method, even offering at times useful correctives.” (Fitzmyer *Interpretation* 83)

But none of “the newer approaches . . . is valid as a substitute for the historical-critical method itself.” (Fitzmyer *Interpretation* 82)

Farkasfalvy, Denis, OCSO. “In Search of a ‘Post-critical’ Method of Biblical Interpretation for Catholic Theology.” *International Catholic Review/Communio* 13 (1986) 288-307.

“. . . beware of what D. Farkasfalvy calls a “‘post-critical’ method” . . . Some of the approaches he singles out are found among those mentioned above as refinements or correctives of the basic method.” (Fitzmyer *Interpretation* 70 n 27)

list of new approaches

In *The Interpretation of the Bible in the Church*, the PBC discusses several new approaches. “In each case, the Commission has evaluated the advantages and disadvantages of the approach.” (Fitzmyer *Interpretation* 83)

Fitzmyer mentions these, plus a couple more. (Fitzmyer *Scripture*, *the Soul* 81-82)

new literary criticism (not in the PBC but in Fitzmyer *Scripture*, *the Soul* 39)

structuralist criticism (not in the PBC but in Fitzmyer *Scripture*, *the Soul* 39) (Fitzmyer does not discuss this.)

narrative criticism (in the PBC)

rhetorical criticism (in the PBC)

semiotic criticism (in the PBC) (Fitzmyer does not discuss this.)

reader-response criticism (not in the PBC; Fitzmyer does not use the term)

approaches “based on tradition” (Fitzmyer *Interpretation* 82)

Jewish methods of interpretation (in the PBC)

reception history (in the PBC)

canonical criticism (in the PBC)

social-scientific approaches

These “make use of human sciences . . .” (Fitzmyer *Interpretation* 82)

(sociology, cultural anthropology, and psychology) (in the PBC)

“advocacy approaches” (such as liberation theology and feminism) (in the PBC)

“Obviously, not all of them are of equal value.” (Fitzmyer *Scripture*, *the Soul* 39)

“I refer to them as approaches, because none of them is a method of interpretation complete in itself . . .” (Fitzmyer *Scripture*, *the Soul* 39)

None can “rival or be substituted for the basic historical-critical method.” (Fitzmyer *Scripture*, *the Soul* 39)

“Calls are heard today to replace it [the historical-critical method] . . .” (Fitzmyer *Scripture*, *the Soul* 7)

Some want “allegedly more adequate modes of interpretation: a post-critical approach to Scripture, a more literary interpretation, a rhetorical approach, a narrative approach, a structuralist approach, or a feminist approach.” (Fitzmyer *Scripture*, *the Soul* 7)

But they “may correct certain tendencies of the basic method or refine it in specific directions.” (Fitzmyer *Scripture*, *the Soul* 39)

new literary criticism

Alonso Schökel, Luis, SJ. “Hermeneutical Problems of a Literary Study of the Bible.” *Congress Volume*, *Edinburgh 1974*. Vetus Testamentum Supplement 28. Leiden: Brill, 1975. 1-15.

Alonso Schökel, Luis, SJ. *The Inspired Word*: *Scripture in the Light of Language and Literature*. New York: Herder and Herder, 1965.

Alter, Robert, and Frank Kermode, eds. *The Literary Guide to the Bible* (Cambridge: Harvard UP, 1987.

Note “the amount of material in it that has been borrowed from standard introductions to the Bible written according to the historical-critical method. Even such a literary guide to the Bible has had to depend on the sure results of that method.” (Fitzmyer *Scripture*, *the Soul* 40 n 1)

Barr, James. “Reading the Bible as Literature.” *Bulletin of the John Rylands Library* 56 (1973-74) 10-33.

Barr, James. “Story and History in Biblical Theology.” *Journal of Religion* 56 (1976) 1-17. Rpt. *The Scope and Authority of the Bible*. Philadelphia: Westminster, 1980. 1-17.

Frye, Northrop. *Anatomy of Criticism*. Princeton: Princeton UP, 1957.

Frye, Northrop. *The Great Code*: *The Bible and Literature*. New York: Harcourt Brace Jovanovich, 1982.

Neirynck, F. “Literary Criticism, Old and New.” In Focant, C., ed. *The Synoptic Gospels*: *Source Criticism and the New Literary Criticism*. Bibliotheca Ephemeridum Theologicarum Lovaniensium 110. Louvain: Leuven University/Peeters, 1993. 11-38.

The new literary criticism makes “readers aware that [the Bible is] one of the great masterpieces of world literature.” (Fitzmyer *Scripture*, *the Soul* 39)

“This does not mean, of course, that every part of the Bible would be so regarded . . .” (Fitzmyer *Scripture*, *the Soul* 40)

But “certain parts have always been acknowledged as outstanding in literary quality, and as a whole it is rightly so recognized.” (Fitzmyer *Scripture*, *the Soul* 40)

Some “give the impression that literary analysis of the Bible has been overlooked.” (Fitzmyer *Scripture*, *the Soul* 41)

“. . . perhaps some of the refined techniques of this new criticism have not been used to the extent that they might and can be adopted in a sound interpretation of the Bible . . .” (Fitzmyer *Scripture*, *the Soul* 41)

But “a literary approach to the Bible has always been part of the historical-critical method itself.” (Pp. 20-21 *supra*.) (Fitzmyer *Scripture*, *the Soul* 41)

“. . . the biblical text, once consigned to writing, is said to take on a life of its own, independent of the historical setting from which it emerged. Then it is analyzed according to its literary techniques.” (Fitzmyer *Scripture*, *the Soul* 40)

“What might have been the original intention of the human author becomes unimportant, and the biblical text is sometimes regarded as conveying meaning scarcely envisaged by the author.” (Fitzmyer *Scripture*, *the Soul* 40)

“What is important is the world of the text, a perception of reality which the text takes on in its continued existence, and its assumption into the canon.” (Fitzmyer *Scripture*, *the Soul* 40)

“Parallels to biblical forms and genres are often sought in other world literature, shedding light on the function of Old and New Testament [genres].” (Fitzmyer *Scripture*, *the Soul* 40)

“Another difficulty perceived in this approach is its tendency to regard the biblical text as autonomous, that it can take on a meaning of its own independent of that of the author’s intention. Although one can understand how a secular poem (for instance, a Shakespearean sonnet) might assume such autonomy and can be shown to have taken on a meaning that its author never dreamed of, a meaning that is also quite important, that explanation is hardly applicable to the written Word of God without further ado. Given the inspiration of the Bible, it is rather of supreme importance that the meaning of the Bible in the twentieth century have a homogeneity with that originally intended by the human author inspired by God to record His Word. The biblical text cannot take on such an autonomous character or meaning as this new critical approach to the Bible may assume. But more on this later on.” (Fitzmyer *Scripture*, *the Soul* 42)

Barr, James. “Reading the Bible as Literature.” *Bulletin of the John Rylands Library* 56 (1973-74) 10-33.

Barr, James. “Story and History in Biblical Theology: The Third Nuveen Lecture.” *Journal of Religion* 56 (1976) 1-17. Rpt. *The Scope and Authority of the Bible*. Philadelphia: Westminster, 1980. 1-17.

Neirynck, F. “Literary Criticism, Old and New.” In Focant, C., ed. *The Synoptic Gospels*: *Source Criticism and the New Literary Criticism*. Bibliotheca Ephemeridum Theologicarum Lovaniensium 110. Louvain: Leuven University/Peeters, 1993. 11-38.

Some say literary criticism is “of greater importance than the historical or the theological approach to the Bible.” (Fitzmyer *Scripture*, *the Soul* 41)

D. Robertson (“Literature, The Bible as.” Crim, K., ed. *The Interpreter*’*s Dictionary of the Bible*, *Supplementary Volume*. Nashville: Abingdon, 1976. 547-51. 547): “These scholars, who come from diverse philosophical and theological traditions, are united in considering the Bible primarily and fundamentally as a literary document (as opposed, e.g., to considering it as a historical or theological document).” (Qtd. in Fitzmyer *Scripture*, *the Soul* 41 n 2)

“. . . this new criticism runs the risk of absolutizing its literary character.” (Fitzmyer *Scripture*, *the Soul* 41)

T.S. Eliot (*Selected Essays*: *New Edition*. New York: Harcourt, Brace, 1950. 344-45, his italics): “While I acknowledge the legitimacy of this enjoyment, I am more acutely aware of its abuse. The persons who enjoy these writings *solely* because of their literary merit are essentially parasites; and we know that parasites, when they become too numerous, are pests. I could fulminate against the men of letters who have gone into ecstasies over ‘the Bible as literature,’ the Bible as ‘the noblest monument of English prose.’ Those who talk of the Bible as a ‘monument of English prose’ are merely admiring it as a monument over the grave of Christianity. I must try to avoid the by-paths of my discourse: it is enough to suggest that just as the work of Clarendon, or Gibbon, or Buffon, or Bradley would be of inferior literary value if it were insignificant as history, science and philosophy respectively, so the Bible has had a *literary* influence upon English literature *not* because it has been considered as literature, [41] but because it has been considered as the report of the Word of God. And the fact that men of letters now discuss it as literature probably indicates the *end* of its ‘literary’ influence.” (Qtd. in Fitzmyer Scripture, the Soul 41-42)

“One must also recall that in the United States this approach to the Bible has often been supported by an extrinsic consideration, by the creation of departments of religious studies in state universities, departments in which many religions are studied on an equal basis, and their sacred writings treated as examples of religious literature. As a result, this sort [42] of literary interpretation of the Bible tends to forget that Scripture finds its real matrix and function in a faith-community: the Old Testament is the reflection of the faith of the community of Israel; the New Testament along with the Old is the Church’s book. Hence the implication that the Bible can be understood in some literary way that prescinds from its faith-community context is misguided.” (Fitzmyer *Scripture*, *the Soul* 42-43)

“This literary approach to the Bible is also responsible at times for the non-canonical approach to it that is advocated in some university-milieux.” (Fitzmyer *Scripture*, *the Soul* 43)

“Two specific recent developments in the literary approach to the Bible may now be mentioned: the narrative approach and the rhetorical approach.” (Fitzmyer *Scripture*, *the Soul* 43)

new literary criticism: narrative approach

See “section 1:B of the Commission’s document, *The Interpretation*,41-50 . . .” (Fitzmyer *Interpretation* 81 n 32)

Aletti, J.-N. “L’Approccio narrativo applicato alla Bibbia: Stato della questione e proposte,” *RivB* 39 (1991) 257-76.

Alter, Robert. *The Art of Biblical Narrative*. New York: Basic Books, 1981.

Frei, Hans W. *The Eclipse of Biblical Narrative*: *A Study in Eighteenth and Nineteenth Century Hermeneutics*. New Haven: Yale UP, 1974.

Gros Louis, K.R.R., et al., eds. *Literary Interpretation of Biblical Narratives*. The Bible in Literature Courses. Nashville: Abingdon. 1974.

Kingsbury, J.D. *Matthew as Story*. Philadelphia: Fortress, 1986.

Metz, J.B. *Faith in History and Society*. New York: Seabury/Crossroad, 1980. 205-18, esp. 212-13.

Rhoads, David, and D. Michie. *Mark as Story*: *An Introduction to the Narrative of a Gospel*. Philadelphia: Fortress, 1982.

Weiss, M. “Einiges über die Bauformen des Erzählens in der Bibel.” *Vetus Testament* 13 (1963) 456-75.

Weiss, M. “Weiteres über die Bauformen des Erzählens in der Bibel.” *Biblica* 46 (1965) 181-206.

Narrative criticism is a refinement “of the literary criticism of the Bible that was already part of the basic historical-critical method.” (Fitzmyer *Interpretation* 81)

“. . . because much of the Bible tells stories and recounts events in order to present the history of God’s salvific plan and a powerful recital of its liturgy and catechesis, it is not surprising that new forms of narrative analysis help in the proper understanding of the Bible’s message.” (Fitzmyer *Interpretation* 82)

“The study of the plot, characters, and system of values of different biblical accounts brings out at times aspects of some passages that have been neglected in the past.” (Fitzmyer *Interpretation* 82)

The narrative approach analyzes “stories, with plots, characters, and denouements.” (Fitzmyer *Scripture*, *the Soul* 43)

“The narrative approach concentrates on the communicative power of biblical stories as a means of transmitting the Word of God.” (Fitzmyer *Scripture*, *the Soul* 43)

“. . . people often pass on a message or make an argumentative point by telling a story . . .” (Fitzmyer *Scripture*, *the Soul* 43)

The Bible is “significantly communicating God’s Word through his deeds presented in narrative accounts . . .” (Fitzmyer *Scripture*, *the Soul* 43)

“. . . aspects of the narrative approach could offer a refinement of the basic historical-critical method itself.” (Fitzmyer *Scripture*, *the Soul* 45)

“Such an approach brings out an aspect of the communicated Word of God that had at times been neglected in the traditional literary criticism of the Bible . . .” (Fitzmyer *Scripture*, *the Soul* 44)

The Old Testament “has many accounts of God’s salvific activity on behalf of his people, and [43] this salvation history is even summarized in catechetical resumés (e.g., Ps 78:3-4).” (Fitzmyer *Scripture*, *the Soul* 43-44)

New Testament narratives are “especially in its gospel stories and in the Acts . . . [summarized in] “the story of the cross” (1 Cor 1:18).” (Fitzmyer *Scripture*, *the Soul* 44)

Paul’s letters “can be analyzed for their narrative substructures, their implied tales about God’s activity with His new people fashioned by the story of Jesus itself. Thus from beginning to end the Bible is seen to have a basically narrative character, which accosts the reader with its story-form, and even in a symbolic way.” (Fitzmyer *Scripture*, *the Soul* 44)

“The distinction between the “real author” and the “implied reader” have been profitably introduced into the study of some biblical passages.” (Fitzmyer *Interpretation* 82)

But the narrative approach “is not universally applicable, despite the allegations of some of its practitioners.” (Fitzmyer *Scripture*, *the Soul* 44)

“For much of the written Word of God is simply not cast in narrative form, and the message of the stories, which are alleged to be the substructure of the rest, comes through in greatly watered-down form.” (Fitzmyer *Scripture*, *the Soul* 44)

“The prophetic and wisdom literature of the Old Testament and much of the epistolary writings of the New Testament would be inadequate objects of such analysis.” (Fitzmyer *Scripture*, *the Soul* 44)

Pheme Perkins (“Crisis in Jerusalem? Narrative Criticism in New Testament Studies.” *Theological Studies* 50 (1989) 296-313. 312-13): “the plurality of readings which narrative criticism suggests frustrates what may be the most pervasive goal of theological readings of Scripture: to fix the meaning of the text, to compel it to make an authoritative pronouncement [44] on some issues of theological or ethical concern. . . . Narrative analysis does not yield the kind of conceptual syntheses which might provide the introductory paragraphs to systematic expositions of Christology, ecclesiology, Christian discipleship, or ethics. . . . In the Christian tradition our stories have provoked theological and ethical reflection, but they do not hand us theology or ethics on a platter ready for consumption.” (Fitzmyer *Scripture*, *the Soul* 44-45)

new literary criticism: rhetorical approach

See “section 1:B of the Commission’s document, *The Interpretation*,41-50 . . .” (Fitzmyer *Interpretation* 81 n 32)

Clines., D.J.A., et al., eds. *Art and Meaning*: *Rhetoric in Biblical Literature*. *JSOTSup* 19. Sheffield: U of Sheffield P, 1982.

Kennedy, George A. *New Testament Interpretation through Rhetorical Criticism*. Chapel Hill: U of North Carolina P, 1984.

Wilder, Amos N. *Early Christian Rhetoric*. London: SCM, 1964. Rpt. Cambridge: Harvard UP, 1971.

Rhetorical criticism is a refinement “of the literary criticism of the Bible that was already part of the basic historical-critical method.” (Fitzmyer *Interpretation* 81)

“Because much of the [81] Bible is written to persuade readers to adopt a certain mode of religious life and spirituality, it is not surprising that elements of classical Greek and Roman rhetoric are found in the Bible, along with its Semitic mode of argumentation.” (Fitzmyer *Interpretation* 81-82)

“The rhetorical approach[’s] aim is to analyze the persuasive character of Scripture, the techniques and devices used to accost the readers and to arouse in them proper reactions, emotions, values, and interests.” (Fitzmyer *Scripture*, *the Soul* 45)

Because it has “an edifying and kerygmatic purpose, Scripture contains many elements of ancient rhetorical writing. [It has] a persuasive goal.” (Fitzmyer *Scripture*, *the Soul* 45)

The Bible “seeks to secure allegiance, loyalty, and faith. In other words, it seeks to convince or to explain, and thus makes use of many ancient rhetorical devices.” (Fitzmyer *Scripture*, *the Soul* 46)

The rhetorical approach seeks “the power of persuasive communication in a given sociological structure.” (Fitzmyer *Scripture*, *the Soul* 46)

The rhetorical approach does “form-critical analysis of small units [and studies] the message of a biblical writing as a whole.” (Fitzmyer *Scripture*, *the Soul* 45)

“The authority of the orator (= the author), the discourse he utters (= the text), and the audience addressed (= the readers) can all be analyzed . . . to bring out the proper emotional response.” (Fitzmyer *Scripture*, *the Soul* 46)

Greco-Latin rhetoric

“All three forms of ancient rhetorical eloquence have been found in the Bible . . .” (Fitzmyer *Scripture*, *the Soul* 46)

judiciary: “rhetoric used in law-courts”

deliberative: rhetoric used in “political assemblies”

demonstrative: rhetoric used in “popular celebrations”

Semitic rhetoric

“symmetric composition”

parallelism

the historical-critical method and the rhetorical approach

“. . . much in this approach can enrich the classic historical-critical method . . .” (Fitzmyer *Scripture*, *the Soul* 46)

“. . . rhetorical potential of the biblical text [is] especially in its sapiential, ethical, and communitarian parts.” (Fitzmyer *Scripture*, *the Soul* 46)

“The hortatory sections of Pauline letters could well profit from a better rhetorical analysis.” (Fitzmyer *Scripture*, *the Soul* 46)

But “some proponents propagate this analysis as a substitute for the historical-critical method . . .” (Fitzmyer *Scripture*, *the Soul* 46)

The rhetorical approach ensures that the historical-critical method “is not lost merely in historical analysis . . .” (Fitzmyer *Scripture*, *the Soul* 46)

reader-response criticism

The “study of language and linguistics and of philosophical hermeneutics has made us aware in new ways of a multivalence of human discourse . . .” (Fitzmyer *Scripture*, *the Soul* 61)

Jewish methods of interpretation

This is “The approach through recourse to Jewish traditions of interpretation. This approach is especially pertinent to the study of the NT, since it seeks to apply to NT writings what can be learned from the Jewish mode of interpretation now found in the writings of the Dead Sea Scrolls, in the targums (interpretative translations of the OT into Aramaic), and in many Jewish parabiblical writings.” (Fitzmyer *Interpretation* 82)

reception history

This is “The approach governed by the history of the text’s reception, i.e., the way a given passage has been used in subsequent centuries in theology, literature, asceticism, and mysticism. This approach is called in German *Wirkungsgeschichte*, the “history of the effects,” which a given text has had. It [studies] the text in light of the tradition that it has created.” (Fitzmyer *Interpretation* 82)

canonical approach

Klein, Ralph W. “The Childs’ Proposal: A Symposium with Ralph W. Klein, Gary Stansell and Walter Brueggemann.” *Word & World* 1 (1981) 105-15.

Carroll, R.P. “Canonical Criticism: A Recent Trend in Biblical Studies?” *Expository Times* 92 (1980-81) 73-78.

the approach of Jack A. Sanders

Sanders, JACK A. *Torah and Canon*. Philadelphia: Fortress, 1972.

Sanders, JACK A. *Canon and Community*: *A Guide to Canonical Criticism*. Philadelphia: Fortress, 1984.

Sanders, JACK A. “Biblical Criticism and the Bible as Canon.” *Union* *Seminary* *Quarterly* *Review* 32 (1976-77) 157-65.

Sanders, JACK A. “Text and Canon: Concepts and Method.” *Journal of Biblical Literature* 98 (1979) 5-29.

the approach of Brevard S. Childs

Childs, Brevard S. *Introduction to the Old Testament as Scripture*. Philadelphia: Fortress, 1978.

Childs, Brevard S. *The New Testament as Canon*: *An Introduction*. Philadelphia: Fortress, 1984.

The historical-critical method establishes a pre-canonical interpretation.

Roland E. Murphy, O.Carm. (“The Fear of the Lord: A Fear to End All Fears.” In Charlesworth, J.H., et al., eds. *Overcoming Fear between Jews and Christians*. The American Interfaith Institute. New York: Crossroad, 1992. 172-80. 173-74): “the achievement of modern scholarship is such that Christians and Jews have learned to interpret the Hebrew Bible on its own terms. Here there is much common ground where scholars must learn from one another and where Christians and Jews can stand together.” (Qtd. in Fitzmyer *Scripture*, *the Soul* 49 n 14)

Roland E. Murphy, O.Carm. (“The Fear of the Lord” 174 n 4): “The common ground to which I refer is the interpretation of the Hebrew Bible according to historico-critical methodology. I readily grant that this methodology only approximates its goal of establishing the historical meaning, and also that it does not exhaust the meaning of the text. With all its limitations, however, it does succeed in establishing a shared understanding that is ecumenically important.” (Qtd. in Fitzmyer *Scripture*, *the Soul* 49 n 14)

Jews and Christians use the historical-critical method to interpret the Hebrew Scriptures. This implies “that Jews and Christians should be able to agree on the meaning of a passage . . . The religious or theological sense of the Old Testament is something that Jewish interpreters would be supremely interested in, and that sense is per se what Christian interpreters should be able to agree on with them . . .” (Fitzmyer *Scripture*, *the Soul* 49)

But Christians “see a plus value, which comes to Old Testament passages because of their place [49] in a Christian canon and because they are read in light of the Christ-event.” (Fitzmyer *Scripture*, *the Soul* 49-50)

Canonical criticism “emphasizes the relation of each biblical text to the Bible as a whole, as a norm for the beliefs espoused by a faith-community.” (Fitzmyer *Interpretation* 82)

“. . . one can see how the Book of Isaiah would be interpreted with some differences for Jews and Christians, who have different canons.” (Fitzmyer *Interpretation* 82)

Canonical criticism “not only considers a biblical book in its final form, but also as it functions within the whole of [46] Scripture.” (Fitzmyer *Scripture*, *the Soul* 46-47)

It considers the meaning that a text, “once incorporated into a canon, develops within such a collection as a record and witness of the faith of a community.” (Fitzmyer *Scripture*, *the Soul* 47)

See “the famous dictum of Augustine [*Quaestiones in Heptateuchum* 2.73], *In Vetere Novum* (*Testamentum*) *latet*, *et in Novo Vetus patet* . . .” (Fitzmyer *Scripture*, *the Soul* 49)

After the canon is closed, a text has an “after-life (or tradition).” (Fitzmyer *Scripture*, *the Soul* 49)

“. . . older traditions are adapted to new religious and cultural situations.” (Fitzmyer *Scripture*, *the Soul* 47)

There are rereadings “within the Old Testament itself . . .” (Fitzmyer *Scripture*, *the Soul* 47)

example: “the Exodus tradition is utilized to enhance the account of God’s guidance of Israel in its return from the Babylonian Captivity.” (Fitzmyer *Scripture*, *the Soul* 47)

The New Testament “quotes or uses the Old Testament, its traditions as well as its wording.” (Fitzmyer *Scripture*, *the Soul* 47)

Canonical criticism “emphasizes the theocentric aspect of Scripture, as it depicts God acting as creator and savior of his world and his people in spite of their rebellion against him.” (Fitzmyer *Scripture*, *the Soul* 47)

Canonical criticism “accords to Scripture its proper *Sitz im Leben*, viz. in the communities of faith.” (Fitzmyer *Scripture*, *the Soul* 47)

But canonical criticism depends upon “the canon concerned,” Jewish, Protestant, Catholic, or Orthodox. (Fitzmyer *Scripture*, *the Soul* 47)

canonical criticism and other criticisms

“Whether one should call this approach to Scripture a form of “criticism” is problematic . . .” (Fitzmyer *Scripture*, *the Soul* 48)

It “does not take its place on the same level with source criticism, form criticism, redaction criticism, narrative criticism, or rhetorical criticism, all of which tell us something about the process by which a biblical book came to be and reached its final form . . . about the individual texts in their process of growth or in the attainment of their final form.” (Fitzmyer *Scripture*, *the Soul* 48)

Canonical criticism “says much more about the after-effects of biblical books, about the relationship of fully-constituted biblical writings to one another, and how they function in the whole collection . . .” (Fitzmyer *Scripture*, *the Soul* 48)

But “the Old Testament canon might be seen as a collection having a corporate influence on the New Testament and individual New Testament writings in their very compilation and composition, as they were affected by Old Testament passages.” (Fitzmyer *Scripture*, *the Soul* 48)

example: “the role that the Book of Wisdom played in Paul’s discussion of pagans without the gospel in Rom 1:18-32.” (Fitzmyer *Scripture*, *the Soul* 48 n 11)

problems with canonical criticism

“. . . there is a problem in that one may not be able to speak of a closed canon of Old Testament books prior to the writing of New Testament. Again, which Jewish canon is to be considered? The Palestinian or the Alexandrian, the Hebrew or the Greek?” (Fitzmyer *Scripture*, *the Soul* 48)

“Moreover, one cannot ignore the influence that extracanonical Jewish writings, or so-called intertestamental Jewish literature, have had on New Testament compositions.” (Fitzmyer *Scripture*, *the Soul* 48)

Jude 1:14-15 quotes 1 Enoch 18:15-16. (“It was also about these [sexually immoral opponents who have infiltrated the community to which Jude writes] that Enoch, in the seventh generation from Adam, prophesied, saying, “See, the Lord is coming with ten thousands of his holy ones, 15 to execute judgment on all and to convict all the ungodly of all the deeds of ungodliness that they have committed in such an ungodly way and of all the harsh things that ungodly sinners have spoken against him.””)

“Again, canonical criticism tells us little about the meaning of early writings of the Old Testament in themselves, even though such early writings assume a further significance once they have found themselves in a collection of later date” (Fitzmyer *Scripture*, *the Soul* 49)

sociological approach

Weber, Max. *Ancient Judaism*. 1921. Glencoe IL: Free Press, 1952.

Deissmann, Gustav Adolf. *Light from the Ancient East*. 2nd ed. London: Hodder and Stoughton, 1927.

The “Chicago School of interpretation” included Shirley Jackson Case, Shailer Mathews, and Frederick Grant. (Fitzmyer *Scripture*, *the Soul* 50 n 15)

Theissen, Gerd. *Sociology of Early Palestinian Christianity*. Philadelphia: Fortress, 1978.

Theissen, Gerd. *The Social Setting of Pauline Christianity*. Philadelphia: Fortress, 1982.

Neyrey, Jerome H. *An Ideology of Revolt*; *John*’*s Christology in Social-Science Perspective*. Philadelphia: Fortress, 1988.

Form criticism sought “the communitarian *Sitz im Leben* of a given gospel form . . .” But sociological criticism seeks “a much broader analysis . . .” It uses social-science techniques, “especially from sociology and cultural anthropology, to analyze the traces of social interaction within the people of God and the traces of ancient societal life, Palestinian or Hellenistic, which are reflected in the Bible.” (Fitzmyer *Scripture*, *the Soul* 50)

Biblical books are “not theological treatises” but occasional writings, “documents that have emerged from vital situations [occasions] in God’s people.” (Fitzmyer *Scripture*, *the Soul* 50)

The occasions (situations) are marked by familial, societal, agrarian, urban, economic, and political concerns.” (Fitzmyer *Scripture*, *the Soul* 50)

“. . . different social and economic strata are reflected in the biblical text . . .” (Fitzmyer *Scripture*, *the Soul* 50)

example: Jesus was “a wandering preacher . . .”

example: differences “among Corinthian Christians in their celebration of the [50] Eucharist”

example: “the attitude toward slavery” (Fitzmyer *Scripture*, *the Soul* 50-51)

Customs and institutions impinge on the meaning of texts. (Fitzmyer *Scripture*, *the Soul* 50-51)

limitations

Sociological criticism enriches the historical-critical method but “is scarcely a substitute . . .” (Fitzmyer *Scripture*, *the Soul* 51)

“The elements of the social world of the ancient people who appear in the Bible are not the *object* of the biblical writings themselves . . .” (Fitzmyer *Scripture*, *the Soul* 51)

“. . . sociological theory is not one. There are many schools of sociological analysis and expression, and the move from a modern sociological theory, which has per se been developed from living subjects in a given society, to that of an ancient people known only in part from written records creates a problem . . .” (Fitzmyer *Scripture*, *the Soul* 51)

anthropological approach

“For the anthropological approach, see”: Lang, B., ed. *Anthropological Approaches to the Old Testament*. Issues in Religion and Theology 8. Philadelphia: Fortress, 1985. (Fitzmyer *Scripture*, *the Soul* 50 n 15)

psychological approach

“. . . the prime example of this mode of interpretation of the Bible [is] E. Drewermann of Germany, very little of whose work has been translated into English.” (Fitzmyer *Scripture*, *the Soul* 52 n 16)

“The psychological and psychoanalytical analyses of human experience have proven their worth in the area of religion . . .” (Fitzmyer *Scripture*, *the Soul* 51)

Th psychological approach “has been invaluable in [explaining] biblical symbols, cultic rituals, sacrifice, legal prohibitions, and biblical tabus.” (Fitzmyer *Scripture*, *the Soul* 51)

limitations

It cannot “substitute for the properly oriented historical-critical method . . .” (Fitzmyer *Scripture*, *the Soul* 52)

feminist approach

Collins, Adela Yarbro, ed. *Feminist Perspectives on Biblical Scholarship*. Biblical Scholarship in North America 10. Chico: Scholars, 1985.

Collins, Adela Yarbro, ed. *Women*’*s Bible Commentary*. Louisville: Westminster/John Knox, 1992.

The feminist approach “began in the United States at the end of the nineteenth century . . .” (Fitzmyer *Scripture*, *the Soul* 52)

Stanton, E. Cady. *The Woman*’*s Bible*. 2 vols. New York: European Publ. Co., 1885, 1898.

It “was renewed in the 1970s.” (Fitzmyer *Scripture*, *the Soul* 52)

This approach has emerged owing to the increasing number of women interpreters of the Bible in recent decades, as a result of the general emancipation of women in modern culture and of their struggle for equality with men.” (Fitzmyer *Scripture*, *the Soul* 52)

“. . . biblical exposition has suffered from a predominance of male interpreters.” (Fitzmyer *Scripture*, *the Soul* 52)

feminist approach and historical-critical method

“Normally, it [the feminist approach] makes wide use of this method . . .” (Fitzmyer *Scripture*, *the Soul* 52)

“. . . it has succeeded in studying critically and afresh the portraits of women in the Bible . . .” (Fitzmyer *Scripture*, *the Soul* 52)

“. . . it has succeeded in studying . . . the strata of biblical society in which women often played prominent roles both in Israel and in the early Christian Church.” (Fitzmyer *Scripture*, *the Soul* 52)

“. . . it has brought into proper and equitable light the roles of all disciples of Jesus, male and female, [and] of the apostles Andronicus and Junia.” (Fitzmyer *Scripture*, *the Soul* 52)

“Yet this approach does not offer itself as a substitute for the historical-critical method.” (Fitzmyer *Scripture*, *the Soul* 52)

“questionable elements” (Fitzmyer *Scripture*, *the Soul* 53)

“First, a hermeneutic of suspicion . . . history is usually written by those who win out, . . . by male conquerors . . . So one cannot trust the text; one has to read between the lines for historical truth. This [has led] even to the radical rejection of the Bible.” (Fitzmyer *Scripture*, *the Soul* 53)

A hermeneutic of suspicion “tends to substitute . . . an imaginative reconstruction of historical reality—for instance, of the Jesus-movement—as the norm for Christian belief and practice . . .” (Fitzmyer *Scripture*, *the Soul* 53)

Cardinal Joseph Ratzinger (“Biblical Interpretation in Crisis.” 5 n. 37): “Materialist and feminist exegesis . . . do not even claim to be an understanding of the text itself in the manner in which it was originally intended. At best they may be seen as an expression of the view that the Bible’s message is in and of itself inexplicable. or else that it is meaningless for life in today’s world. In this sense. they are no longer interested in ascertaining the truth, but only in whatever will serve their own particular agendas.” (Fitzmyer *Scripture*, *the Soul* 53 n 18)

“Second, the feminist approach is sometimes questionable in its interpretation of some biblical passages, e.g., Gal 3:28 . . .” (Fitzmyer *Scripture*, *the Soul* 53)

Gal 3:28, “There is no longer Jew or Greek; there is no longer slave or free; there is no longer male and female, for all of you are one in Christ Jesus.”

“That is an affirmation of equal status “in Christ Jesus,” or as a Christian, but it says nothing about the political status of men and women in modern culture or even in the Church of today.” (Fitzmyer *Scripture*, *the Soul* 53)

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“faith presuppositions” (Fitzmyer *Interpretation* 69)

Christians also use the historical-critical method with presuppositions. (Fitzmyer *Scripture*, *the Soul* 28)

Biblical exegesis “uses the philological tools and techniques [but] differs from philology, because it is *philology plus*.” The plus is the faith presuppositions. (Fitzmyer *Interpretation* 68)

Exegesis “differs from philology, because it is *philology plus*. And the *plus* is the presupposition of faith with which one employs the critical method.” (Fitzmyer *Scripture*, *the Soul* 29)

“. . . the “plus” consists of elements of faith:” (Fitzmyer *Scripture*, *the Soul* 30)

“that the book being critically interpreted contains God’s Word set forth in human words of long ago”

“that it has been composed under the guidance of the Spirit and has therefore authority . . .”

“that it has been given by God to His people for their edification and salvation”

“that it is part of a canon”

“that the Spirit who inspired the authors of Scripture is the same as the Spirit who enables the community of interpreters and believers to read and understand its inspired text”

“that in it and through it God Himself continues to speak to human readers of every generation of His people”

“that it is properly expounded only in relation to the Tradition that has grown out of it within . . . the Church”

This agrees “with K. Barth’s concept of “pneumatic” exegesis, even though one might hesitate to agree with his skepticism about human reason and his analysis of the relation of the Bible to the Church.” (Barth, Karl. *Church Dogmatics*. 14 vols. Edinburgh: Clark, 1956-77. 1.1, 183.) (Fitzmyer *Scripture*, *the Soul* 30 n 40)

the Spirit and the community of believers

The Spirit “has never been conceived of as an ongoing revealer functioning somehow independently of Scripture. The Spirit has guided and continues to guide the Church through the centuries into a fuller and deeper understanding of the *historical* revelation once given to God’s people before and in Jesus of Nazareth.” (Fitzmyer *Scripture*, *the Soul* 31)

John 14:26, “But the Advocate, the Holy Spirit, whom the Father will send in my name, will teach you everything and remind you of all that I have said to you.”

John 16:13, “When the Spirit of truth comes, he will guide you into all the truth, for he will not speak on his own but will speak whatever he hears, and he will declare to you the things that are to come.”

“Through that fuller understanding of the historical revelation given by the Spirit God speaks to Christians of today. Yet what he says to Christians of today in that fuller understanding is not wholly different from the primary revelation conveyed to the people of God of old. The homogeneity of God’s revelation is sacrosanct.” (Fitzmyer *Scripture*, *the Soul* 31)

conclusions

“Because the historical-critical method is per se neutral, it can be used with . . . faith presuppositions. Indeed, by reason of them it becomes a *properly-oriented* method of biblical interpretation . . .” (Fitzmyer *Scripture*, *the Soul* 31)

As used by believers, “none of the elements of the method is pursued in and for itself.” (Fitzmyer *Scripture*, *the Soul* 31)

It is not employed solely to achieve historical knowledge, but theological knowledge.

“. . . the techniques, when properly employed, are used only to achieve the main goal of discerning what the biblical message was that the sacred writer of long ago sought to convey and what it continues to say to readers today.” (Fitzmyer *Scripture*, *the Soul* 31)

actualization of the literal sense

Dumais, M. “L’Actualisation de I’Ecriture: Fondements et procédures.” *Science et Esprit* 51 (1999) 27-47.

In the PBC’s *The Interpretation of the Bible in the Church* (1993), “What is new . . . is the emphasis given to the “actualization” of the literal sense of Scripture.” (Fitzmyer *Interpretation* 83)

Actualization is “how one applies the literal sense to the lives of present-day Christians.” (Fitzmyer *Interpretation* 84)

The Commission’s treatment of actualization “goes significantly beyond the Council [i.e., *Dei Verbum*].” (Fitzmyer *Scripture*, *the Soul* 14)

The PBC “makes use of a French word, *actualisation*, which basically means “modernization” or “making present.” Technically, it denotes the actualization of the literal sense of the ancient human authors’ inspired words, ascertained by the historical-critical method of interpretation. Those words are . . . expressed in language adapted to the present time. The Commission reckoned with the wealth of meaning of the biblical text, which gives it a value for all times and cultures. Though the biblical text is of lasting value, it sometimes is time-conditioned in its expression. There are, moreover, a dynamic unity and a complex relationship between the two Testaments, which must be acknowledged.” (Fitzmyer *Interpretation* 14)

rereading

Scholtissek, K. “Relecture—Zu einem neu entdeckten Programmwort der Schriftauslegung (mit Blick auf das Johannesevangelium).” *Bibel und Liturgie* 70 (1997) 309-15.

“Such actualization often involves what is called in French *relecture*, a rereading of the ancient text in the light of present-day events.” (Fitzmyer *Interpretation* 14)

Actualization rereads the literal sense “in the light of new circumstances” and applies it “to the contemporary situation of the People of God.” (Quoting *Interpretation of the Bible in the Church* 113.) (Fitzmyer *Interpretation* 84)

“The model for such *relecture* is found in the Bible itself, when words, phrases, or themes of older written texts are used in new circumstances [14] that add new meaning to the original sense, which was open to it.” (Fitzmyer *Interpretation* 14-15)

“For instance, motifs from the Exodus are taken up in Deutero-Isaiah to give consolation to the people of Israel returning from the Babylonian Captivity . . .” (Fitzmyer *Interpretation* 15) Examples:

“. . . the motifs of Exod 15:1-8, the Song of Moses, are so used in Isa 42:10-13, which calls on all to praise God as the victorious warrior . . .” (Fitzmyer *Interpretation* 15)

The motifs of Exod 14-15, “the passage through the Reed Sea, are so used in Isa 43:16-17; 41:17-20 . . .” (Fitzmyer *Interpretation* 15)

“For instance, . . . motifs from the plagues of Egypt and deliverance from Egypt are taken up in Wisdom 11-19.” (Fitzmyer *Interpretation* 15)

“The Commission, however, also cautions that none of these broadening aspects can be invoked to “attribute to a biblical text whatever meaning we like, interpreting it in a wholly subjective way,” because that would be to introduce “alien meanings” into the text and to disrupt the homogeneity between what it meant and what it means.” (Fitzmyer *Interpretation* 15)

misunderstandings

Louis Bouyer

Louis Bouyer (“Liturgie et exégèse spirituelle.” *La Maison Dieu* 7 (1946) 27-50. 30): the Word of God “is not a dead word, imprisoned in the past, but a living word, immediately addressed to the man of today.” (Fitzmyer’s trans.) (Fitzmyer *Interpretation* 84)

Bouyer was describing “what he wanted to call (wrongly) the “spiritual” sense; they express rather the literal sense itself and its actualization.” (Fitzmyer *Interpretation* 84 n 36)

Avery Cardinal Dulles

Avery Cardinal Dulles (*The Craft of Theology*: *From Symbol to System*. New York: Crossroad, 1992. 69-85. 85): “My own present leaning would be toward a method [of biblical interpretation] that makes use of historical-critical studies to assure a solid foundation in the biblical sources themselves, but does so under the continuous guidance of tradition and magisterial teaching. An adequate theological use of Scripture, I believe, would build also on the achievements [98] of biblical theology and the kind of spiritual exegesis described above [by Louis Bouyer, Henri de Lubac, and Hans U. von Balthasar]. An interpretation that limited itself to the historical-critical phase would overlook the tacit meanings conveyed by the biblical stories, symbols, and metaphors. A comprehensive approach, combining scientific and spiritual exegesis, does better justice to Catholic tradition and the directives of Vatican II, and better serves the needs of systematic theology.” (Fitzmyer *Interpretation* 98-99)

“I have no difficulty with what Dulles says about the use of the historical-critical method along with the continuous guidance of tradition and the magisterium; that would be included in what I mean by the properly oriented use of the method.” (Fitzmyer *Interpretation* 99)

“Nor do I find anything problematic in his implied references to literary, rhetorical, and narrative refinements of that method. Properly oriented historical-critical interpretation of the Bible would include what he calls biblical theology and the tacit meanings of biblical stories, symbols, and metaphors.” (Fitzmyer *Interpretation* 99)

But his “spiritual exegesis”: “. . . I find that a misuse of terminology. What Dulles is calling for, along with [Bouyer, de Lubac, von Balthasar,] and others, is a realization that the written Word of God is not only addressed to the people of old [but] to Christians of today. It is, in effect, God’s Word to us here and now. What Dulles means by “spiritual exegesis” is nothing more than the actualized literal sense of Scripture as ascertained by the properly oriented historical-critical method . . . God speaks to his people today through the inspired written Word, when its literal sense so ascertained is duly actualized.” (Fitzmyer *Interpretation* 99)

Peter S. Williamson

“It would be a mistake, however, to think that the Commission has spoken of “the priority of actualization.”” (Fitzmyer *Interpretation* 84)

Williamson, Peter S. “Actualization: A New Emphasis in Catholic Scripture Study.” *America* 172 (20 May 1995) 17-19. 19. (Williamson “maintained (mistakenly)” that actualization had priority. Fitzmyer *Interpretation* 84 n 39.)

“The Commission did not single out actualization or give it any priority, because actualization is only a building upon the properly ascertained literal sense. It extends it homogeneously to show how what was meant still has meaning for today. Any actualized meaning that does not preserve such a homogeneous connection with what was meant or with the literal sense becomes, in effect, an extraneous sense foisted on the Word of God. It thus becomes eisegesis, the opposite of exegesis, or an accommodated sense (see chapter 6).” (Fitzmyer *Interpretation* 84)

“Although actualization is only an aspect of the literal sense, the Commission has not treated it under the senses of Scripture . . . [Instead,] it is discussed in part IV, “The Interpretation of the Bible in the Life of the Church.”” (*The Interpretation* 113-17) (Fitzmyer *Interpretation* 84)

“When the literal sense of the inspired ancient writings in the Bible is actualized properly, the Word of God speaks to the Christian of today. It produces not merely a renewed interest in the Bible, but a kind of spirituality that is basic to Christian life. All Christian spirituality should be based biblically, founded on the written Word of God, no matter what accidental form it may also take. The basic reason for such spirituality is that the Bible is the Church’s book.” (Fitzmyer *Interpretation* 84)

“As an example of the way the Epistle to the Romans may be used as a source of genuine Christian spirituality, see J.A. Fitzmyer, *Spiritual Exercises Based on Paul*’*s Epistle to the Romans* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 2004).” (Fitzmyer *Interpretation* 84 n 40)

criticisms of the historical-critical method

Wrenn, M.J. “Contemporary Catholic Biblical Scholarship: Certitudes [32] or Hypotheses?” *Kecharitōmenē*: *Mélanges René Laurentin*. Paris: Desclée, 1990. 85-101.

“The historical-critical method, however, has in recent times been criticized. It is said to be defective, to be based on a false premise (reason alone), to be claiming a certitude similar to that of the natural sciences, to be fixated on hypothetical documents rather than on the actual biblical text, to be dissecting the biblical text to the point that its literary unity can no longer be appreciated, and to be lacking all interest in the religious message of the Bible and its contemporary relevance for the spiritual lives of those who would read it today.” (Fitzmyer *Scripture*, *the Soul* 32)

S. Scherrer

Scherrer, S. “Biblical Studies: Where Did We Go Wrong?” *SJP News* 1.3 (1992) 1-5.

Scherrer, S. “Criticizing the Bible? Where Ought We Now Go in Biblical Studies?” *SJP News* 2.4 (1993) 1-4.

Scherrer, S. “Fanciful Reconstructions of the Historical-Critical Method; and the Historic Biblical Revelation of Salvation History.” *SJP News* 2.2 (I 993) 1-9.

Scherrer, S. “Is the Historical-Critical Method in Biblical Studies Bankrupt?” *SJP News* l.l (1992 [appeared February I 993]) 1-5.

Scherrer, S. “The Lord of History and Historical Criticism.” *SJP News* (Maryknoll: St. Jerome Publications) 1.2 (1992) 1-6.

S. Scherrer (“The Lord of History and Historical Criticism” 2, his italics): “The historical-critical method, as it has been predominantly practiced, is based on the *false premise* that an *adequate* interpretation of Scripture, for the use of the Church, can be made by basing its key exegetical decisions on *reason alone*.” (Qtd. in Fitzmyer *Scripture*, *the Soul* 32)

“Scherrer criticizes R. de Vaux and his use of this method. According to him, it enables de Vaux to regard the account in 1 Chr 21:29; 16:39-40; 2 Chr 1:3-6 about “the one altar built by Moses and residing in Gibeon at the time of David and Solomon” as a “falsification” and the tradition about a single sanctuary where the people of Israel were to worship Yahweh as “late and unreliable” (*SJP News* 1/2 [1992] 4). De Vaux did use the adjective “late,” but he did not call the statement false or unreliable. In fairness, one must consider what de Vaux was discussing and how he was discussing it. He was not writing a commentary on 1-2 Chronicles; nor was he trying to bring out the religious meaning of such biblical texts. The book to which Scherrer refers is de Vaux’s classic treatment of the institutions of ancient Israel. The full title of this highly-regarded book is *Ancient Israel*: *Its Life and Institutions* (New York: McGraw-Hill, 1961).” (Fitzmyer *Scripture*, *the Soul* 33 n 43)

“Moreover, one must ask whether the tradition about the one sanctuary where Israel was to worship Yahweh and its location in Jerusalem is an example of a “truth,” which “the books of Scripture” teach “firmly, faithfully, and without error” and which “God wanted put into the sacred writings for the sake of our salvation” [Vatican II, *Dei Verbum* §11]. De Vaux’s position is not “in *open* contradiction to the *explicit religious* teaching of the sacred text!” (Scherrer’s italics). The religious teaching of that text—about [33] Israel’s obligation to worship Yahweh—is intact in de Vaux’s interpretation, whether or not the tradition about where the single sanctuary was to be located is late or not. Scherrer has not shown that the locality or the lateness of the tradition is part of the explicit *religious* teaching of Scripture.” (Fitzmyer *Scripture*, *the Soul* 33-34 n 43)

There is another problem in Scherrer’s criticism and his reference to “reason alone,” which stands in contrast to a recommendation of Leo XIII himself in *Providentissimus Deus*. The Pope acknowledged that the use of human reason also had a place in biblical interpretation: “But he [the exegete] must not on that account consider that it is forbidden, when just cause exists, to push inquiry and exposition beyond what the Fathers have done; provided he carefully observes the rule so wisely laid down by St. Augustine—not to depart from the literal and obvious sense, except only *where reason makes it untenable* or necessity requires” (§112 [emphasis added]). Leo refers to Augustine, *De Gen*. *ad litt*. 8.7.13 [*nisi qua eum vel ratio tenere prohibeat vel necessitas cogat dimittere*]).” (Fitzmyer *Scripture*, *the Soul* 34 n 43)

Some practitioners of the historical-critical method “have thought that their task was finished when they had laid bare [a text’s] hypothetical sources or documents, which has led to their neglect of the actual biblical text and its religious message . . .” (Fitzmyer *Scripture*, *the Soul* 33)

But “From M.-J. Lagrange on, most of the great exegetes in the church in recent decades have not neglected the religious or theological message . . . and have not based their key exegetical decisions on reason alone.” (Fitzmyer *Scripture*, *the Soul* 33)

“Scherrer has at least recognized that Raymond E. [33] Brown, who has made use of the historical-critical method and has stoutly defended it, practises what he (Scherrer) calls “a very *pure* type of exegesis, which seems to be becoming rarer and rarer these days.”” (*SJP News* 1.3 [1993].) (Fitzmyer *Scripture*, *the Soul* 33-34)

“defended it”: e.g., Brown, Raymond E., SS. “Historical-Critical Exegesis and Attempts at Revisionism.” *The Bible Today* 23.3 (1985) 157-65.

Scherrer “tries to maintain that Brown’s exegesis and what he has been criticizing are “not exactly the same thing,” and that “the majority in the field are moving farther and farther away from Fr. Brown’s personal . . . way of doing Biblical scholarship within a Church setting.”” (*SJP News* 1.3 [1993].) (Fitzmyer *Scripture*, *the Soul* 34)

“The trouble here is that Scherrer is making an invalid distinction. Brown’s mode of interpreting Scripture is a good example of the way the historical-critical method is *properly* practised, and Brown himself is not afraid to acknowledge his adherence to that method. Scherrer’s wholesale criticism of the way the method “has been predominantly practiced” fails to countenance the diversity of presupposition with which the neutral method has been and is being employed.” (Fitzmyer *Scripture*, *the Soul* 33-34)

Protestant critics

Sherrer cites, as other critics of modern biblical criticism, the Protestants Brevard S. Childs, Jack A. Sanders, Peter Stuhlmacher, and H. Boers. (Fitzmyer *Scripture*, *the Soul* 35)

Childs, B.S. *Introduction to the Old Testament as Scripture*. Philadelphia: Fortress, 1978.

Childs, B.S. *The New Testament as Canon*: *An Introduction*. Philadelphia: Fortress, 1984.

Sanders, J.A. *From Sacred Story to Sacred Text*. Philadelphia: Fortress, 1987.

Stuhlmacher, P. *Historical Criticism and Theological Interpretation of Scripture*: *Toward a Hermeneutics of Consent*. Philadelphia: Fortress, 1977.

Boers, H. “Historical Criticism versus Prophetic Proclamation.” *Harvard Theological Review* 65 (1972) 393-414.

See on these authors:

Davis, C. “The Theological Career of Historical Criticism of the Bible.” *Cross Currents* 32 (1982-83) 267-84.

Froehlich, K. “Biblical Hermeneutics on the Move.” *Word & World* 1 (1981) 140-52.

Klein, R.W. “The Childs’ Proposal: A Symposium with Ralph W. Klein, Gary Stansell and Walter Brueggemann.” *Word & World* 1 (1981) 105-15.

Lindemann, Eta. *Historical Criticism of the Bible*: *Methodology or Ideology*? Grand Rapids: Baker, 1990.

Cardinal Joseph Ratzinger

Ratzinger’s “Erasmus lecture”

1988: the Rockford Institute Center on Religion and Society hosted a conference, where Ratzinger gave the Erasmus Lecture. (Fitzmyer *Scripture*, *the Soul* 35 n 46)

*Origins* 17.35 (1988) 593-602.

*This World* 22 (1988) 3-19.

Rpt. as “Biblical Interpretation in Crisis: On the Question of the Foundations and Approaches of Exegesis Today.” In Neuhaus, R.J., ed. *Biblical Interpretation in Crisis*: *The Ratzinger Conference on Bible and Church*. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1989. 1-23. Esp. 8-16.

*Biblical Interpretation in Crisis* is papers from the conference. Other papers were:

Brown, Raymond E., SS. “The Contribution of Historical Biblical Criticism to Ecumenical Church Discussion.” 24-49.

Lazareth, W.H. “Luther’s ‘Sola Scriptura’: Traditions of the Gospel for Norming Christian Righteousness.” by 50-73.

Lindbeck, George. “Scripture, Consensus, and Community.” 74-101.

“In the same publication there is also an account of the discussion on this occasion . . .” Stallsworth, P.T. “The Story of an Encounter.” 102-90. (“See also the report of the discussion [of Ratzinger’s lecture] on pp. 109-12.”) (Fitzmyer *Scripture*, *the Soul* 35 n 46)

German version of the lectures (with no report of the discussions): Ratzinger, Joseph, ed. *Schriftauslegung im Widerstreit*. Quaestiones Disputate 117. Freiburg im Breisgau: Herder, 1989.

“In studying these lectures, one should consult”:

Wicks, J. “Biblical Criticism Criticized.” *Gregorianum* 72 (1991) 117-28.

Grelot, Pierre. [Review of the English publication.] *Revue Biblique* 98 (1991) 443-48.

Ratzinger “does not find fault with the method only because of what some of its practitioners do with it, but maintains that “its erroneous application is due to the defects of the method itself. . . . [I]t contains such [35] significant mistaken assumptions that a reexamination of it is now incumbent upon all who would affirm the perennial importance of God’s written word for the church and for the world of today.” (Fitzmyer *Scripture*, *the Soul* 35-36)

“These words are not found in the Cardinal’s paper itself but are attributed to him” by P.T. Stallsworth. (Stallsworth, P.T. “The Story of an Encounter.” In Neuhaus, R.J., ed. *Biblical Interpretation in Crisis*: *The Ratzinger Conference on Bible and Church*. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1989. 102-90. 104.) (Fitzmyer *Scripture*, *the Soul* 36 n 48)

Stallsworth says (“The Story of an Encounter”) that Ratzinger “summarized his position by listing three such mistaken assumptions: (1) that the historical-critical method “enjoys a degree of certitude similar to that enjoyed by the natural sciences”; it fails to realize that Scripture belongs to an area of investigation that is not subject to strict scientific calculation (104); (2) that it presupposes a discontinuity, according to which “the understanding of Jesus prevalent in one phase does not necessarily continue into the next phase” (105); and (3) that “the influence of the history of religions school” and its affirmation of “an objective, scientific methodology” as “an absolute rule for distinguishing between what could have been and what should be explained by developments” are to be explained “on a deeper level” with a philosophical presupposition of Kant. “According to him [Kant], it is only through practical reason that man can make contact with the reality that is his destiny. But using his empirical categories of exact science by definition excludes the appearance of the One who is ‘Wholly Other’ and the initiative of that One (106).” Hence how is one to show any real relevance of Jesus for life today?” (Fitzmyer *Scripture*, *the Soul* 36 n 48)

“By contrast, Ratzinger insisted on three things: (1) “Theology—the study of God and God’s relationship with humanity—cannot be confused with the natural sciences” (106); (2) one has to “learn from the extraordinary,” that something without precedent may occur in history; hence one need not renounce Christian faith to read Scripture; and (3) “the relationship between word and event” must be reexamined, because in accord with biblical terminology “the event itself can be word” (107).” (Fitzmyer *Scripture*, *the Soul* 36 n 48)

Ratzinger “calls for, not a return to the patristic-medieval approach, but an examination [critical] of the approach epitomized by Dibelius and Bultmann, and for the development of a new method, which will preserve the strengths of both approaches [patristic-medieval and modern] but will be cognizant of the shortcomings of both.” (Fitzmyer *Scripture*, *the Soul* 36)

“Surprisingly, Card. Ratzinger, in aiming his remarks at modem interpreters, cites the example of Dibelius and Bultmann in his analysis of the crisis, as if all recent interpreters of Scripture, Catholic and non-Catholic alike, were still working with the liberal approach of Dibelius or the radical skepticism of Bultmann, admitting in their work the Bultmannian subordination of the event to the word, or using the philosophy of Heidegger or Kant in their interpretation.49

“. . . the Lutheran New Testament scholar Karl Paul Donfried answered Card. Ratzinger’s claim during the discussion at the Conference . . .” (Fitzmyer *Scripture*, *the Soul* 37 n 50)

Donfried (Stallsworth “The Story of an Encounter” 111): “Historical-critical scholarship has come a long way since the days of the Bultmannian hegemony.” (Qtd. in Fitzmyer *Scripture*, *the Soul* 37)

Ratzinger shows “the dependence of the Dibelius-Bultmann approach on Kantian philosophy and its [Kantian philosophy’s] explanation that what might “seem like a direct proclamation of the divine can only be myth . . .”” (Fitzmyer *Scripture*, *the Soul* 37 n 49)

Ratzinger (“Biblical Interpretation in Crisis” 16, Fitzmyer’s italics): “It is with this basic conviction that Bultmann, *with the majority of modern exegetes*, read the Bible. He is certain that it cannot be the way it is depicted in the Bible, and he looks for methods to prove the way it really had to be. To that extent there lies in modern exegesis a reduction of history into philosophy, a revision of history by means of philosophy. . . . At its core, the debate about modern exegesis is not a dispute among historians: it is rather a philosophical debate.” (Qtd. in Fitzmyer *Scripture*, *the Soul* 37 n 49)

Dulles on the spiritual sense

Avery Cardinal Dulles (“The Interpretation of the Bible in the Church: A Theological Appraisal.” In *Kirche sein*: *Nachkonziliare Theologie im Dienst der Kirchenreform*: *Für Hermann Josef Pottmeyer*. Freiburg im Breisgau: Herder, 1994. 29-37. 31-32): “this effort [of the Commission] to set forth the senses of Scripture will surely evoke further discussion. The distinctions are not as clear as one might hope. The three meanings [literal, spiritual, and fuller] really collapse into two since the spiritual sense is either the same as the literal, in the event that the inspired writer intended to refer to Christ and the Christian life, or else it is the same as the “fuller” sense, in the event that no such reference was intended. Among the two remaining senses, the distinction between the literal and the fuller sense is less than perspicuous. In its explanation of the literal sense the PBC calls attention to the “dynamic aspect” of many biblical texts, which are “from the start open to further developments . . . more or less foreseeable in advance” (80). . . . In view of this dynamic understanding of the literal sense, it is not easy to distinguish between the literal and the fuller sense.” (Fitzmyer *Interpretation* 96)

“It is easy to agree with Dulles’s appraisal in this regard, but the problem may not be solely with the 1993 document of the Biblical Commission, but with the way in which the question of the senses of Scripture has been discussed up until now. That is why I spoke of the “spiritual” sense as a weasel word. I hope at least that what I have laid out above does not obfuscate the matter still more.” (Fitzmyer *Interpretation* 96)

refutation

“. . . the ancient roots of the historical-critical method [Alexandrian philology, etc.] . . . both Scherrer and Card. Ratzinger obfuscate.” (Fitzmyer *Scripture*, *the Soul* 38 n 51)

Sherrer: *SJP News* 1.2 (1992) 2 col. 2.

Stallingworth (“The Story of an Encounter” 104) quotes Ratzinger “as speaking of Dibelius and Bultmann as the ones “who devised the method”. As a matter of fact, Dibelius and Bultmann *added* . . . the refinement of form criticism.” (Fitzmyer *Scripture*, *the Soul* 38 n 51)

“What such critics of the historical-critical method do not tell us is what mode of post-critical interpretation one is to use as a substitute for historical criticism. All too frequently they espouse a form of literal interpretation not far removed from the fundamentalist . . . or take refuge in some other senses of Scripture, patristic, spiritual, or otherwise.” (Fitzmyer *Scripture*, *the Soul* 37)

conclusions

Historical-critical method “is not perfect, and because it is practised by so many interpreters, it is not surprising that their reconstructions of the past or their assessment of the meaning of the ancient texts is not necessarily . . . unanimous . . .” (Fitzmyer *Scripture*, *the Soul* 31)

“As a neutral method, it can still undergo refinements in its [31] historical or literary aspects. New approaches in biblical interpretation are proposed from time to time, some of them claiming to be of a “post-critical” character, some of them serving to correct and refine the basic method itself.” (Fitzmyer *Scripture*, *the Soul* 31-32)

Farkasfalvy, Denis, O.Cist. “In Search of a ‘Post-Critical’ Method of Biblical Interpretation for Catholic Theology.” *Communio*/*International Catholic Review* 13 (1986) 288-307.

Outler, Albert C. “Toward a Postliberal Hermeneutics.” *Theology Today* 42 (1985-86) 281-96.

The Senses of Scripture

### Introduction

The meaning of passages of scripture have been debated “since the emergence of the NT. Writers of books in that Testament often quoted passages from the OT, using them in different ways.” (Fitzmyer *Interpretation* 86)

Fitzmyer, Joseph A., SJ. “The Use of Explicit Old Testament Quotations in Qumran Literature and in the New Testament.” In *Essays on the Semitic Background of the New Testament*. London: Chapman, 1971. 3-58. Rpt. Missoula: Scholars, 1974. Rpt. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans; Livonia: Dove, 1997. (A “discussion of different ways of interpreting the OT,” Fitzmyer *Interpretation* 86 n 1.)

multiple senses

But “Were such NT and later statements meant to understand OT passages as referring to Christ in their literal sense? . . . Such queries gave rise to the possibility of some other sense of the OT.” (Fitzmyer *Interpretation* 86)

Hanson, A.T. *Jesus Christ in the Old Testament*. London: SPCK, 1965.

Judd, R.H. *Jesus Christ in the Old Testament*. Oregon IL: National Bible Institution, 1928.

“In the history of Christian theology there arose, consequently, different senses of Scripture, two of which were the most prominent: the literal sense, and the spiritual sense.” (Fitzmyer *Interpretation* 86)

Hasitschka, M. “Wörtlicher und geistlicher Sinn der Schrift.” *Bibel und Liturgie* 70 (1997) 152-55.

“Others too appeared in time, such as the fuller sense and the accommodated sense.” (Fitzmyer *Interpretation* 86)

### Literal Sense

literal interpretation in the Church Fathers

“. . . there were Church Fathers who did use a form of the historical-critical method, suited to their own day, and advocated a literal interpretation of Scripture, not the allegorical.” (Fitzmyer *Scripture*, *the Soul* 70)

Origen

“Origen, usually regarded as the great allegorizer of Scripture, was himself at times guilty of concentration on the letter of the text.” (Fitzmyer *Scripture*, *the Soul* 57)

example: “Eustathius attacked Origen’s literal interpretation of 1 Sam 28:3-25, about the witch of Endor, in which Origen sought to find an argument for the resurrection.” (Fitzmyer *Scripture*, *the Soul* 57 n 6)

Klostermann, E. *Origenes*, *Eusthatius von Antiochien und Gregor von Nyssa über die Hexe von Endor*. Kleine Texte 83. Bonn: Marcus und Weber, 1912.

“Origen’s allegorical exegesis did not go without opposition, even in the Eastern Greek Church, for though many in the Alexandrian school adopted it, the Antiochene school, founded by Lucian of Antioch, resisted it, along with Diodore of Tarsus, John Chrysostom, and Theodore of Mopsuestia.” (Fitzmyer *Scripture*, *the Soul* 71)

The Antiochene school interpreted literally. (Fitzmyer *Scripture*, *the Soul* 65)

“A major proponent of the literal sense, no less than Theodore [of Mopsuestia], was in time accused of reverting to a Jewish understanding of the Old Testament.” (Fitzmyer *Scripture*, *the Soul* 71)

Aquinas on the literal sense

Thomas Aquinas (*ST* 1.1.10): “the literal sense is that which the author intended.” (Qtd. in Fitzmyer *Interpretation* 87)

“Sensus literalis est, quem auctor intendit.”

See also *Quaestiones Quodlibetales* VII q. 16, a. 14-16.

Aquinas also called it “sensus historicus” [*ST* 1.1.l0 ad 2].

He subdivided the literal sense into “history, aetiology, analogy” (*historia*, *aetiologia*, *analogia*), a distinction that creates no trouble, even though one might hesitate today to agree with some of the examples that he cited from Scripture.” (Fitzmyer *Interpretation* 87)

1943: Pius XII’s encyclical *Divino afflante Spiritu*

Pius XII (encyclical *Divino afflante Spiritu* §15; *AAS* 35 (1943) 310; *EB* §550; Béchard, Dean P., SJ, ed. and trans. *The Scripture Documents* 125): “Let interpreters bear in mind that their foremost and greatest endeavor should be to discern and define clearly that sense of the biblical words that is called ‘literal’ . . . so that the mind of the author may be made abundantly clear.” (Qtd. in Fitzmyer *Interpretation* 87)

1993: the PBC’s *The Interpretation of the Bible in the Church*

PBC (*The Interpretation of the Bible in the Church* 79): “The literal sense of Scripture is that which has been expressed directly by the inspired human authors.” (Qtd. in Fitzmyer *Interpreation* 88)

“the human authors”

A “human author” is “the last one responsible for the final form of the words . . .” (Fitzmyer *Interpretation* 87)

The author may have written it. (E.g., Luke.)

The author may have dictated it. (E.g., Paul, often.)

The author may have “possibly used a secretary . . .”

The author may have “possibly used a . . . “ghost writer” (as in 1 Peter) . . .”

The author may have been the one in “whose name a disciple may have composed something (as in the Pastoral Epistles).”

“In antiquity, one also understood “author” as the one to whom a literary tradition was ascribed, as in the case of the Pentateuch, often called the Law of Moses.” (Fitzmyer *Interpretation* 87)

“directly”

“Directly” prevents the meaning “from being extended to the later use of the words, either in a quotation by some other author, or in a fuller sense, or in a canonical sense.” (Fitzmyer *Interpretation* 87)

“Avery Cardinal Dulles has suggested that “directly” [means] “intentionally” or “consciously.”” (Fitzmyer *Interpretation* 88 n 14)

Dulles, Avery Cardinal. “The Interpretation of the Bible in the Church: A Theological Appraisal.” In *Kirche sein*: *Nachkonziliare Theologie im Dienst der Kirchenreform*: *Für Hermann Josef Pottmeyer*. Freiburg im Breisgau: Herder, 1994. 29-37. 31.

“Such a meaning of “directly” was not in the minds of the members of the Commission, of which I was one; in fact, it was excluded.” (Fitzmyer *Interpretation* 88 n 14)

Raymond Brown’s definition

Raymond E. Brown, SS (“Hermeneutics.” *NJBC* 1148 (§9): the literal sense is “The sense which the human author directly intended and which the written words conveyed.” (Fitzmyer *Interpretation* 87)

See also Raymond E. Brown, SS. *An Introduction to the New Testament*. Anchor Bible Reference Library. New York: Doubleday, 1997. 35-36.

The relative clause, “which the written words conveyed,” “denotes the message that the words used carried to the first recipients of it . . .” (Fitzmyer *Interpretation* 87)

The literal sense is the goal of the historical-critical method.

“The literal sense is the goal of a properly oriented historical-critical interpretation of Scripture. By “properly oriented” I mean the use of that method with the presupposition of Christian faith that one is interpreting the written Word of God couched in ancient human language, with a message not only for the people of old, but also for Christians of today.” (Fitzmyer *Interpretation* 91)

“. . . the goal of the properly oriented historical-critical method of interpreting the Bible has been always to ascertain its ancient literal meaning: what the human author sought to express as he passed on God’s inspired message to the faith-community.” (Fitzmyer *Interpretation* 83)

“By “properly [83] oriented,” I mean the use of that method with the presupposition of Christian faith, that one is interpreting the written Word of God couched in ancient human language, with a message not only for the people of old, but also for Christians of today.” (Vatican II *Dei Verbum* 12 §21; Béchard, Dean P., SJ, ed. and trans. *The Scripture Documents* 28) (Fitzmyer *Interpretation* 83-84)

intention

One problem is that, since the Bible was “composed by different authors or editors over a long period of time [and] put in its final form at least nineteen hundred years ago, “the mind of the author” is not easy to ascertain. The [88] “author” in many instances is not known, and even the time of composition in often beyond our reach.” (Fitzmyer *Interpretation* 88-89)

intentional fallacy

In the PBC definition (*The Interpretation of the Bible in the Church* 79), “what is striking is the absence in this definition of any reference to the intention or mind of the human author. The emphasis is rather on what “has been expressed directly.”” (Fitzmyer *Interpretation* 88)

“The Commission actually did not develop this aspect or even express itself on this matter, but simply restricted its definition to what “has been expressed directly,” which seemed to convey sufficiently what has always been meant by the definition of the literal sense.” (Fitzmyer *Interpretation* 88)

But “Behind this [absence] . . . lies the conviction often expressed in modern literary criticism that the author’s intention is immaterial or inconsequential to the meaning of a piece of literature. This has been called the “intentional fallacy” or the “fallacy of authorial intention” . . .” (Fitzmyer *Interpretation* 88)

N. Watson (“Authorial Intention: Suspect Concept for Bible Scholarship.” *Australian Biblical Review* 15 (1987) 6-13): “a piece of literature can take on a meaning quite different from what the author may have intended. It can derive a meaning from the context in which it is used or from the perspective of the reader.” (Qtd. in Fitzmyer *Interpretation* 88)

“. . . the New Literary Critics . . . insist that a poem or other piece of literature can acquire an autonomous existence and acquire a meaning that the poet or author did not envisage . . .” (Fitzmyer *Interpretation* 89)

“One might agree that some of the poetic passages of the OT—for instance, some of the Psalms—might be shown to have acquired such an independent meaning, e.g., once they were associated with others in becoming part of the Psalter.” (Fitzmyer *Interpretation* 89)

But “analysis of what “has been expressed directly” . . . does yield in most instances something of the author’s intention . . . That is the proper object of exegesis and the goal of a properly oriented historical-critical interpretation of Scripture.” (Fitzmyer *Interpretation* 89)

The intentional fallacy creates a theological problem. “If the meaning of a biblical text could take on a meaning different from its originally expressed—and, I would add, originally intended—meaning, then how could one say that the Bible is still the source par excellence of divine revelation, the means that God has chosen to convey to generation after generation of his people what his plans, his instructions, and his will in their regard actually are. This characteristic of the written Word of God demands that there be a basic homogeneity between what it meant and what it means, between what the inspired human author sought to express and what he did express, and what is being said by the words so read in the Church of today.” (Fitzmyer *Interpretation* 89)

the literal sense and figurative language

Aquinas “devoted a whole article to the use of metaphor in Scripture.” (*ST* 1.l.9) (Fitzmyer *Interpretation* 88)

Aquinas (*ST* 1.1.10 ad 3): “the parabolic sense is contained in the literal; for something can be denoted by words properly, and something figuratively, and the literal sense is (then) not the figure, but that which is figured.” (Qtd. in Fitzmyer *Interpretation* 87)

examples: “if Christ is called “the Lion of Judah” or “the Lamb of God” (John 1:36), he would not be an animal, a lion or a lamb, but that which “Lion of Judah” or “Lamb of God” stood for or figured.” (Fitzmyer *Interpretation* 87)

“Similarly, the literal sense would include the [87] imperative “Let your loins be girt” (Luke 12:35), a metaphorical expression for the disciple’s need of readiness for action.” (Fitzmyer *Interpretation* 87-88)

“Just as secular poetry and other literary forms can often express things on different levels or with a double sense, so too does the Bible on occasion.” (Fitzmyer *Scripture*, *the Soul* 61)

examples

example: John 2:19-21

John 2:19-21, “Jesus answered them, “Destroy this temple, and in three days I will raise it up.” 20 The Jews then said, “This temple has been under construction for forty-six years, and will you raise it up in three days?” 21 But he was speaking of the temple of his body. 22 After he was raised from the dead, his disciples remembered that he had said this, and they believed the scripture and the word that Jesus had spoken. ”

example: John 11:49-52

John 11:47-52, “So the chief priests and the Pharisees called a meeting of the council . . . 49 But one of them, Caiaphas, who was high priest that year, said to them, . . . 50 “. . . it is better for you to have one man die for the people than to have the whole nation destroyed.” 51 He did not say this on his own, but being high priest that year he prophesied that Jesus was about to die for the nation, 52 and not for the nation only, but to gather into one the dispersed children of God.”

“In these instances both Jesus’ and Caiaphas’s words clearly have to be understood on more than one level, and the evangelist calls attention to a deeper meaning, a prophetic utterance expressing a truth that goes beyond the political calculation of the high priest’s immediate vision or the disciples’ comprehension.” (Fitzmyer *Scripture*, *the Soul* 61)

“In such cases one sees that the literal sense of biblical utterances can carry at times a dynamic dimension surpassing their face value. But to admit this is not to return to the theory of the multiple senses of Scripture that was in vogue in the middle ages.” (Fitzmyer *Scripture*, *the Soul* 61)

a text’s dynamic aspect

PBC (*The Interpretation of the Bible in the Church* 1993): “One should be especially attentive to the dynamic aspect of many texts.”

PBC (*The Interpretation of the Bible in the Church* 1993): “Those who are open to the dynamic aspect of a text will recognize here a profound element of continuity as well as a move to a different level . . .” (Referring to the application of 2 Sam 7:12-13, “where God, speaking of a son of David, promised to establish his throne “forever,” to Christ.)

PBC (*The Interpretation of the Bible in the Church* 1993): “the historical-critical method . . . has at times shown itself insufficiently attentive to the dynamic aspect of meaning and to the possibility that meaning can continue to develop.”

“A further problem related to the literal sense is what the Biblical Commission has called “the dynamic aspect” of the biblical message . . .” (Fitzmyer *Interpretation* 89)

The biblical message “should not always be limited to “the historical circumstances” of its composition.” (Fitzmyer *Interpretation* 89)

example: a royal psalm

“For instance, in a royal psalm the psalmist may have been referring to the enthronement of a certain king, but what he has expressed may envisage the kingly institution as [89] a whole, as it actually was, or as it was intended by God to be in Israel.” (Fitzmyer *Interpretation* 89-90)

PBC (*The Interpretation of the Bible in the Church* 80): “In this way, the text carries the reader beyond the institution of kingship in its actual historical manifestation.” (Qtd. in Fitzmyer *Interpretation* 90)

“That dynamic aspect could lead to a spiritual sense (when the Psalm might be applied to Christ [see below]), but even apart from that dimension of it this aspect is a quality of the literal sense, because it expresses the openness of the text to a broader extension of its meaning. This, then, would be an aspect of the literal sense, of which the interpreter has to be aware.” (Fitzmyer *Interpretation* 90)

multiple literal senses

“Does the biblical text have only one literal sense?” PBC (*The Interpretation of the Bible in the Church* 79): “In general, yes; but there is no question here of a hard and fast rule.” (Qtd. in Fitzmyer *Interpretation* 90)

“A “plurality of meaning” . . . cannot be found everywhere in the Bible, and so one has to be cautious . . .” (Fitzmyer *Interpretation* 90)

“An obvious exception is poetic passages in the Bible, where the author uses words that may have a multivalent reference . . .” (Fitzmyer *Interpretation* 90)

In John, “a number of statements have such ambivalence.” (Fitzmyer *Interpretation* 90)

The PBC cited John 11:47-52 as an example. (Fitzmyer *Interpretation* 90)

John 11:47-52, “So the chief priests and the Pharisees called a meeting of the council and said, “What are we to do? This man is performing many signs. 48 If we let him go on like this, everyone will believe in him, and the Romans will come and destroy both our holy place and our nation.” 49 But one of them, Caiaphas, who was high priest that year, said to them, “You know nothing at all! 50 You do not understand that it is better for you to have one man die for the people than to have the whole nation destroyed.” 51 He did not say this on his own, but being high priest that year he prophesied that Jesus was about to die for the nation, 52 and not for the nation only, but to gather into one the dispersed children of God. 53 So from that day on they planned to put him to death.”

PBC (*The Interpretation of the Bible in the Church* 79): “Even when a human utterance appears to have only one meaning, divine inspiration can guide the expression in such a way as to create more than one meaning. This is the [90] case with the saying of Caiaphas in John 11:50: at one and the same time it expresses both an immoral political ploy and a divine revelation. The two aspects belong, both of them, to the literal sense, for they are both made clear by the context.” (Qtd. in “ (Fitzmyer *Interpretation* 90-91)

“What the Commission does not make clear, however, is that the second meaning of Caiaphas’s words, i.e., his prophecy, is not evident from the inspired recording of his words alone by the evangelist in v. 50. The prophetic character of Caiaphas’s utterance comes rather *from the evangelist*’*s explanation* offered in vv. 51-52: “He did not say this on his own, but being the high priest for that year, he prophesied that Jesus was going to die for the nation, and not only for the nation, but also to gather into one the dispersed children of God.” Would any reader ever have come to such an understanding of Caiaphas’s words in v. 50, were it not for the evangelist’s added explanation?” (Fitzmyer *Interpretation* 91)

“. . . the Commission acknowledged that this instance was “extreme,” and it gave no guarantee that any other biblical texts have more than one literal meaning.” (Fitzmyer *Interpretation* 91)

“. . . one may still reckon with the dynamic aspect of some texts, especially OT texts, when they are subjected to *relecture* in the NT.” (Fitzmyer *Interpretation* 91)

the literal sense and the canonical sense

“. . . the canonical sense of Scripture also makes its contribution to a meaning that surpasses the literal meaning [61] attained by the historical-critical method rightly used.” (Fitzmyer *Scripture*, *the Soul* 61-62)

example: Song of Songs

Murphy, Roland E., O.Carm. “Recent Literature on the Canticle of Canticles.” *CBQ* 16 (1954) 1-11.

Murphy, Roland E., O.Carm. “Patristic and Medieval Exegesis—Help or Hindrance?” *CBQ* 43 (1981) 505-16.

“For instance, the Canticle of Canticles, so expressive of mutual human love between man and woman, was quickly understood in Judaism as an expression of the relationship of Israel and God. Indeed, this was the reason why it found its way into the Jewish canon, both Palestinian and Alexandrian.” (Fitzmyer *Scripture*, *the Soul* 62 n 10)

“Yet when the Christian canon adopted that part of the Hebrew Scriptures, Canticles took on still another canonical sense, which led in time to multiple allegorical interpretations of it as expressive of the relation between the Church and Christ . . .” (Fitzmyer *Scripture*, *the Soul* 62 n 10)

example: the woman in Rev 12

Brown, Raymond E., SS, et al. *Mary in the New Testament*: *A Collaborative Assessment by Protestant and Roman Catholic Scholars*. Philadelphia: Fortress; Ramsey NJ: Paulist, 1978. 219-39.

“. . . the Woman of Revelation 12 [is] clothed with the sun, with the moon under her feet, and crowned with stars.” (Fitzmyer *Scripture*, *the Soul* 62 n 10)

“The primary meaning of the woman is usually understood to be Israel giving birth to the Messiah and to other offspring, the Christian people of God, the Church. So one would have to understand chap. 12, when the Book of Revelation is considered *in and for itself*.” (Fitzmyer *Scripture*, *the Soul* 62 n 10)

But elsewhere in the canon (especially Luke and John), Mary is Jesus’ mother and is at the foot of the cross. These “yield what may be a canonical sense, which was further allegorized in the mariological interpretation of this chapter that came to the fore in the fourth century.” (Fitzmyer *Scripture*, *the Soul* 62 n 10)

“Just how one works with such forms of more than a literal meaning is the task of theology. But to admit this more-than-literal sense does *not* mean that one can find such multivalence of meaning *everywhere* in the Bible. On the contrary, it is of *highly limited* character.” (Fitzmyer *Scripture*, *the Soul* 62)

2 Cor 1:13

2 Cor 1:13a, “For we write you nothing other than what you can read and also understand . . .”

Martin, G. *Reading Scripture as the Word of God*. Ann Arbor: Word of Life, 1975. 32-37.

“. . . to disregard that injunction about the literal meaning of Scripture would be to introduce all sorts of subjective eisegesis.” (Fitzmyer *Scripture*, *the Soul* 62)

### Spiritual Sense

introduction

Origen was first to use the term “spiritual sense.” (Fitzmyer *Scripture*, *the Soul* 66 n 16)

Rahner, Karl, SJ. “Le début d’une doctrine des cinq sens spirituels chez Origène.” *Revue* *d*’*ascetique* *et* *mystique* 13 (1932) 113-45.

Origen (*Peri Archon* 4.3.5): “all [of scripture] has a spiritual sense (*to pneumatikon*), but not all of it has a bodily sense (*to sōmatikon*).” (Qtd. in Fitzmyer *Scripture*, *the Soul* 66 n 16)

“. . . the term “spiritual,” when used of the meaning of a biblical passage, has become a weasel word. Its connotation always depends on who is using it, and one has to try to sort out its intended nuances.” (Fitzmyer *Interpretation* 91)

#### Spiritual Sense as Statements about Spiritual Matters

Both testaments contain literal statements about spiritual matters.

E.g., Deut 4:39, “the Lord is God in heaven above and on the earth beneath . . .”

E.g., Hab 2:4b, “the righteous live by their faithfulness.”

Such statements are sometimes called the Bible’s “spiritual sense.”

Such statements are part of the Bible’s literal sense. They do not comprise a second sense alongside the literal sense.

“anticipatory relationship”

PBC (*The Interpretation of the Bible in the Church* 82): “Already in the Old Testament, there are many instances where texts have a religious or spiritual sense as their literal sense. Christian faith recognizes in such cases an anticipatory relationship to the new life brought by Christ.” (Qtd. in Fitzmyer *Interpretation* 93)

anticipatory relationship as a christological reading of the Old Testament

Fitzmyer equates the PBC’s “anticipatory relationship” with a christological reading of the Old Testament.

How does that “anticipatory relationship” differ “from the traditional christological sense of the OT”? That is “not clear . . .” (Fitzmyer *Interpretation* 93)

“To my way of thinking, that is simply saying the same thing in another way, since the “anticipatory relationship” is really something added to the literal sense of the OT text, because of “the new life brought by Christ.”” (Fitzmyer *Interpretation* 93)

“Moreover, such an understanding of the spiritual sense says nothing about what might be a “spiritual” meaning of NT passages.” (Fitzmyer *Interpretation* 93)

anticipatory relationship as Old Testament literal statements about spiritual matters

But the PBC’s “anticipatory relationship” may simply mean literal statements in the Old Testament about spiritual matters also mentioned in the New Testament.

Literal statements about something spiritual in the Old Testament may differ somewhat in meaning from literal statements about the same matter in the New Testament. But both sets of statements are not unrelated, since both are about the same matter. The Old Testament references provide background to the New Testament references. The New Testament references provide developments of the Old Testament references.

example: God’s Spirit

The Old Testament makes literal statements about God’s Spirit. E.g.:

Wis 7:22, “There is in her [Wisdom] a spirit that is intelligent, holy, unique, manifold, subtle . . .”

Isa 63:11, “Then they remembered the days of old, of Moses his servant. Where is the one who brought them up out of the sea with the shepherds of his flock? Where is the one who put within them his holy spirit . . .”

The New Testament makes literal statements about God’s Spirit. E.g.:

Matt 28:19, “baptiz[e] them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit.”

John 14:26, “But the Advocate, the Holy Spirit, . . . will teach you everything . . .”

Rom 5:5, “. . . God’s love has been poured into our hearts through the Holy Spirit that has been given to us.”

All of these references inform a biblical theology of God’s Spirit, and they ultimately inform a systematic theology of God’s Spirit.

the PBC’s conflation of literal and spiritual senses

“The Commission also stated [*Interpretation* 82] that, contrary to a current view, there is not necessarily a distinction between the two senses [literal and spiritual]. When a biblical text relates directly to the paschal mystery of Christ or to the new life which results from it, its literal sense is already a spiritual sense. Such is regularly the case in the NT.” (Fitzmyer *Interpretation* 93)

Does that mean, then, that every verse of the NT has not only a literal but also a spiritual sense, or that the literal sense of every verse is already [93] its spiritual sense, having a christological meaning? Why, then, distinguish them?” (Fitzmyer *Interpretation* 93-94)

the literal sense as the spiritual sense

“. . . normally there is one literal sense to most passages of Scripture, [and] that meaning has usually to be regarded as its spiritual sense, as the inspired meaning of the sacred text through which God’s Word addresses us today . . .” (Fitzmyer *Scripture*, *the Soul* 60)

The historical-critical method explains “*the literal sense precisely as the spiritual sense of the Word of God*.” (Fitzmyer *Scripture*, *the Soul* 63)

“. . . the spiritual sense of Scripture is nothing other than the literal sense intended by the inspired human author.” (Fitzmyer *Scripture*, *the Soul* 63)

1943: Pius XII’s *Divino afflante Spiritu*

Pius XII (*Divino afflante Spiritu* §24): the literal sense is related to the “theological doctrine in faith and morals of the individual books or texts.” (Qtd. in Fitzmyer *Scripture*, *the Soul* 63)

Pius XII (*Divino afflante Spiritu* §26): the meaning of scripture “clearly intended by God [is] the literal meaning of the words, intended and expressed by the sacred writer . . .” (Qtd. in Fitzmyer *Scripture*, *the Soul* 63)

Pius XII (*Divino afflante Spiritu* §27, italics added): but a Catholic interpreter must “disclose and expound *this spiritual significance*, intended and ordained by God.” (Qtd. in Fitzmyer *Scripture*, *the Soul* 63)

“If I have insisted on an identification of the literal sense of Scripture with the spiritual sense, it is because of what Pius XII said about the former . . .” (Fitzmyer *Scripture*, *the Soul* 64)

1965: Vatican II’s *Dei verbum*

Vatican II (*Dei verbum* §12): without mentioning the spiritual sense, it said that, “since Sacred Scripture must be read and interpreted according to the same Spirit by which it was written, no less serious attention must be given to the content and unity of the whole of Scripture, if the meaning of the sacred texts is to be brought to light, taking into account the living Tradition of the whole Church and the analogy of faith.” (Qtd. in Fitzmyer *Scripture*, *the Soul* 63 n 12)

Some complain that the historical-critical method results in “sterile commentaries . . .” (Fitzmyer *Scripture*, *the Soul* 63)

Pius XII (*Divino afflante Spiritu* 1943 §25): “they scarcely ever find anything in biblical commentaries to raise their hearts to God, to nourish their souls or promote their interior life.” (Qtd. in Fitzmyer *Scripture*, *the Soul* 63)

Pius XII “may well have been referring to the writings of some commentators who have used the historical-critical method. [But do] such commentators . . . allow presuppositions of faith to enhance and enrich its own proper effects? Do they seek to elucidate this literal, spiritual sense?” (Fitzmyer *Scripture*, *the Soul* 63-64)

Jewish readers “still find in the Hebrew Scriptures the spiritual sense of the Word of God intended for them, which nourishes their interior lives, and . . . Christians readers can find in the literal sense of Old Testament writings food for their spiritual lives too.” (Fitzmyer *Scripture*, *the Soul* 64)

#### Spiritual Sense as Christological Readings of the Old Testament

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spiritual sense’s “traditional meaning”: the Old Testament’s Christological meaning

The “traditional meaning” of “spiritual sense” is “the christological sense of OT passages.” (Fitzmyer *Interpretation* 92)

Here the Old Testament is read as *praeparatio evangelica*. (Fitzmyer *Interpretation* 86)

“This Christian understanding of the Old Testament [is] an *added* spiritual sense . . .” (Fitzmyer *Scripture*, *the Soul* 65)

The “christological meaning of the OT . . . is an added sense, [92] i.e., added to the literal sense of the OT. Thus, it is a more-than-literal sense of the OT.” (Fitzmyer *Interpretation* 92-93)

examples of christological readings of the Old Testament

New Testament

The New Testament viewed “key Old Testament texts . . . as messianic [and] in many places” applied them to Jesus. (Fitzmyer *Scripture*, *the Soul* 66)

The NT writers “often hint” at the Christological meaning of the Old Testament. (Fitzmyer *Interpretation* 92)

Luke 24:25-27 (Emmaus)

Luke 24:25-27, “Then he said to them, “Oh, how foolish you are and how slow of heart to believe all that the prophets have declared! 26 Was it not necessary that the Messiah should suffer these things and then enter into his glory?” 27 Then beginning with Moses and all the prophets, he interpreted to them the things about himself in all the scriptures.”

On the way to Emmaus, the risen Christ shows how the Messiah must suffer. “Yet one will look in vain for specific passages in the Old Testament that speak of a suffering Messiah, which is not the same as the suffering Servant of Deutero-Isaiah.” (Fitzmyer *Scripture*, *the Soul* 65 n 14)

Luke 24:44

Luke 24:44, “Then he said to them, “These are my words that I spoke to you while I was still with you—that everything written about me in the law of Moses, the prophets, and the psalms must be fulfilled.””

“. . . the risen Christ . . . was interpreting the OT in a global spiritual sense.” (Fitzmyer *Interpretation* 92)

John 12:16; 20:8-9

John 12:16, “His disciples did not understand these things at first, but when Jesus was glorified, then they remembered that these things had been written of him and had been done to him.”

John 20:8-9, “Then the other disciple, who reached the tomb first, also went in, and he saw and believed, 9 for as yet they did not understand the scripture, that he must rise from the dead.”

Acts 13:29

Acts 13:29, (Paul at Pisidian Antioch) “When they had carried out everything that was written about him, they took him down from the tree and laid him in a tomb.”

Rom 4:23-24

Rom 4:23-24, “Now the words, “it [Abraham’s faith in Gen 15:6 LXX] was reckoned to him,” were written not for his sake alone 24 but for ours also.”

“. . . Paul was thinking of the spiritual meaning of that OT passage.” (Fitzmyer *Interpretation* 92)

2 Cor 3:14

2 Cor 3:14, “But their [the people of Israel’s] minds were hardened. Indeed, to this very day, when they hear the reading of the old covenant, the same veil is still there; it is not unveiled since in Christ it is set aside. 15 Indeed, to this very day whenever Moses is read, a veil lies over their minds, 16 but when one turns to the Lord, the veil is removed.”

“Only in Christ” means, “of course, . . . a christological way of reading . . .” (Fitzmyer *Interpretation* 95 n 32)

““Only in Christ” is the added (Christian) spiritual meaning given by Paul to the words of Moses.” (Fitzmyer *Interpretation* 95 n 32)

Heb 1:5

Heb 1:5, “For to which of the angels did God ever say, “You are my Son; today I have begotten you”? Or again, “I will be his Father, and he will be my Son”?”

Heb 1:5 “understands Ps 2:7 of Jesus as God’s Son . . .” (Fitzmyer *Interpretation* 92)

Heb 2:5-9

Heb 2:5-9, “Now God did not subject the coming world, about which we are speaking, to angels. 6 But someone has testified somewhere, “What are humans that you are mindful of them or mortals that you care for them? 7 You have made them for a little while lower than the angels; you have crowned them with glory and honor, 8 subjecting all things under their feet.” Now in subjecting all things to them, God left nothing outside their control. As it is, we do not yet see everything in subjection to them, 9 but we do see Jesus, who for a little while was made lower than the angels, now crowned with glory and honor because of the suffering of death, so that by the grace of God he might taste death for everyone.”

Heb 2:5-9 understands Ps 8:5-7 of “Jesus ‘crowned with glory and honor’ . . . made ‘for a little while lower than angels.”” (Fitzmyer *Interpretation* 92)

*Gospel of Thomas*

*Gospel According to Thomas* (§52. Elliott, J.K. *The Apocryphal New Testament*: *A Collection of Apocryphal Christian Literature in an English Translation*. Oxford: Clarendon, 1993. 142): “His disciples said to him, ‘Twenty-four prophets have spoken in Israel, and all of them spoke concerning you.’” (Qtd. in Fitzmyer *Interpretation* 86)

Church Fathers

Many Church Fathers considered Christ to be “the fulfillment of the Law and the Prophets . . .” (Fitzmyer *Scripture*, *the Soul* 66)

Origen

Origen. *Peri Archōn* 4.3.5. (*GCS* 22:331; *SC* 268:362.)

Crouzel, H. *Origen*. San Francisco: Harper and Row, 1989. 61-84.

de Lubac, Henri, SJ. *Histoire et Esprit*: *L*’*Intelligence de l*’*Ecriture d*’*après Origène*. Paris: Aubier, 1950. 92-194.

“This “spiritual sense” is called traditional because it is traced back to Origen, who certainly made it popular, if he was not the first so to label it.” (Fitzmyer *Interpretation* 92)

Origen “maintained that all Scripture (meaning the OT) had a spiritual (*pneumatikon*) sense, but not all of it had a bodily (*sōmatikon*) sense.” (Fitzmyer *Interpretation* 92)

“Origen insisted on this sense of Scripture especially in his debate with Jewish interpreters of the OT.” (Fitzmyer *Interpretation* 92)

Augustine: “In the Old [Testament] the New lies hidden, and in the New the Old is unfolded.” (*In Vetere* [*Testamentum*] *Novum latet*, *et in Novo Vetus patet*.) (Fitzmyer *Scripture*, *the Soul* 64)

use of the Christological meaning

PBC (*The Interpretation of the Bible in the Church* 97): “The Fathers of the Church teach [us] to read the Bible theologically, within the heart of a living Tradition, with an authentic Christian spirit.” (Qtd. in Fitzmyer *Interpretation* 93)

“What is valid in the patristic interpretation is the continuation of the christological meaning of the OT given by inspired NT writers, since their aim was to unite the two Testaments and to draw out the deep and real meaning of the biblical text in light of the entire economy of salvation.” (See de Lubac *The Sources of Revelation* 13.) (Fitzmyer *Interpretation* 93)

liturgy

“This traditional meaning is likewise the motivation for the use of the OT in much of the Christian liturgy.” (Fitzmyer *Interpretation* 92)

on christological readings of the Old Testament

1943: Pius XII’s *Divino afflante Spiritu*

*Divino afflante Spiritu* §l6; *EB* §552; Béchard, Dean P., SJ, ed. and trans. *The Scripture Documents* 125-26.

Pius XII used “spiritual sense” in its traditional meaning. (Fitzmyer *Interpretation* 92)

Pius XII adopted “a venerable patristic usage, [the use of] “spiritual sense” [for] a sense restricted to the Old Testament.” (Fitzmyer *Scripture*, *the Soul* 65)

He used “spiritual sense” to mean “that what was said and done in the Old Testament “prefigured in a spiritual way” what was to come in the new dispensation of grace [*Divino afflante Spiritu* §26]. In other words, he used the term to mean the reading of the Old Testament in a christological sense.” (Fitzmyer *Scripture*, *the Soul* 64)

1993: the PBC’s *The Interpretation of the Bible in the Church*

The PBC used “spiritual sense” in its traditional meaning. (Fitzmyer *Interpretation* 92)

PBC (*The Interpretation of the Bible in the Church* 81): the spiritual sense is “the meaning expressed by the biblical texts when read under the influence of the Holy Spirit, in the context of the paschal mystery of Christ and of the new life which flows from it. . . . In it the New Testament recognizes the fulfillment of the Scriptures.” (Qtd. in Fitzmyer *Interpretation* 92)

“In itself, this christological meaning of the OT is not problematic . . .” (Fitzmyer *Interpretation* 92)

“. . . OT themes are enriched by their NT counterparts and are transformed progressively by the NT thrust.” (Fitzmyer *Interpretation* 92)

“. . . canonical criticism helps to explain the added sense that Christian readers find in the Old Testament as related to the New.” (Fitzmyer *Scripture*, *the Soul* 64)

The Christological meaning “recognizes a unity in the written Word of God, i.e., in the OT and NT together . . . It recognizes this as a theological unity . . .” (Fitzmyer *Interpretation* 92)

“. . . the Christian interpreter has to respect” the theological unity of the Bible. (Fitzmyer *Interpretation* 92)

“. . . the Church has kept alive through its living Tradition, a unity which respects the two Testaments and does not try to confuse them. It seeks rather to accord them their proper historical function and pertinence to the people of God.” (Fitzmyer *Interpretation* 92)

This makes “the “spiritual” understanding of the Old Testament different for Christians from that of” Jews. (Fitzmyer *Scripture*, *the Soul* 65)

#### Spiritual Sense as Three Medieval Senses

introduction

Does “the OT itself, apart from its added christological connotation . . ., have a spiritual sense? Another way of putting this question can be formulated in terms of the medieval four senses of Scripture.” (Fitzmyer *Interpretation* 94)

“. . . by the end of the patristic period most interpreters of Scripture oscillated between the literal and the spiritual sense, depending on the issue that was being discussed. This resulted in the medieval fourfold sense of Scripture . . .” (Fitzmyer *Scripture*, *the Soul* 71)

“. . . in the Middle Ages, as a heritage of the patristic period, the spiritual or mystical sense was not only distinguished from the literal but subdivided into three forms: the allegorical, the moral (or tropological), and the anagogic (or eschatological) senses.” (Fitzmyer *Scripture*, *the Soul* 67)

1200s: the distich

Augustine of Dacia, OP (actually of Denmark; late 1200s): “*Littera gesta docet*, *quid credas allegoria*, *moralis quid agas*, *quid speres anagogia*.” (“The letter teaches facts; allegory, what you are to believe; moral, what you are to do; and anagogic, what you are to hope for.”) (Qtd. in Fitzmyer *Scripture*, *the Soul* 67)

The distich “is ascribed usually to Augustine [Augustinus] of Dacia, O.P., who was of Scandinavian origin (d. 1282); but it merely formulated what was distinguished earlier in the time of Augustine of Hippo.” (Fitzmyer *Interpretation* 94 n 29)

The PBC (*Interpretation*) quotes the distich. (Fitzmyer *Interpretation* 94)

“*Littera gesta docet*, *quid credas allegoria*, / *moralis quid agas*, *quid speres anagogia*.” (Qtd. in Fitzmyer *Interpretation* 94)

*Littera gesta docet*, The letter teaches facts,

*quid credas allegoria*, the allegorical what you are to believe,

*moralis quid agas*, the moral what you are to do,

*quid speres anagogia*, the anagogic what you are to hope for.

(“. . . “*littera gesta docet* (the letter teaches facts), *quid credas allegoria* (the allegorical [sense] what you are to believe), *moralis quid agas* (the moral [sense] what you are to do), *quid speres anagogia* (the anagogic [sense] what you are to hope for).” (Fitzmyer *Interpretation* 94)

“Nicholas of Lyra (*Postilla in Gal*. 4.3) has as the last clause, “*quo tendas anagogia*.” (Fitzmyer *Interpretation* 94 n 29)

Cf. *Wikipedia* (“Four Senses of Scripture.” 19 May 2023):

*Lettera gesta docet*, The literal teaches history,

*quid credas allegoria*, the allegorical, what you should believe,

*Moralia quid agas*, the moral, what you should do,

*quo tendas*, *anagogia*. the anagogical, where you are going.

“The *littera* expressed the historical meaning that the human author wanted to convey. The other three were considered subdivisions of the spiritual sense.” (Fitzmyer *Interpretation* 94)

Aquinas on the distich

Aquinas (*ST* 1.1.10) said that “the first meaning, by which words signify things, belongs to the first sense, which is the historical or literal meaning.” (Fitzmyer *Interpretation* 94)

“Illa ergo prima significatio, qua voces significant res, pertinet ad primum sensum, qui est sensus historicus vel literalis.” (Fitzmyer *Interpretation* 94 n 30)

problems with the distich

“. . . many quote [the distich] with approval . . .” (Fitzmyer *Interpretation* 94)

But it is “problematic . . .” (Fitzmyer *Interpretation* 94)

literal ≠ references to beliefs

According to the distich, the literal sense cannot refer to beliefs.

“. . . it asserts that the *littera*, or “literal sense,” would have nothing to do with faith or with what one is to believe.” (Fitzmyer *Interpretation* 94)

“Astoundingly, it says rather that Christian faith is to be governed by the allegorical meaning of Scripture: *quid credas allegoria*!” (Fitzmyer *Interpretation* 94)

“. . . such an understanding of “literal sense” would seem to mean that the Hebrew Scriptures in the many centuries before the coming of Jesus of Nazareth were devoid of any spiritual meaning. And that the written Word of God in the Law, the Prophets, and the Writings had only a “historical” sense, as the medievals understood the term.” Were the oracles to the Jews (Rom 3:2), “in their literal meaning, devoid of nourishment for the spiritual lives of the Chosen People of old?” (Fitzmyer *Interpretation* 94)

literal sense ≠ references to spiritual matters

According to the distich, the literal sense cannot refer to spiritual matters (piety, relation to God).

But sometimes the literal sense has a spiritual sense. (Fitzmyer *Interpretation* 95)

example: the *Shema*`

Deut 6:4, “Hear, O Israel: The Lord is our God, the Lord alone.”

“. . . the literal sense of that proposition has at once a spiritual dimension.” (Fitzmyer *Interpretation* 95)

“. . . it is still true for those Jews of today . . .” (Fitzmyer *Interpretation* 95)

“For Christians too, the literal sense of the *Shema*` is itself the spiritual sense of those words, even apart from any reference to Christ.” (Fitzmyer *Interpretation* 95)

example: the ten commandments

“The same would have to be said of the “spiritual” dimension of the literal meaning of the Decalogue (Exod 20:1-17; Deut 5:6-21),

example: Old Testament moral injunctions

“The same would have to be said . . . of the numerous prophetic pronouncements about the care of widows and orphans, aliens and the poor.” (Fitzmyer *Interpretation* 95)

Isa 1:17; 10:2; Jer 22:3; Zech 7:10; Mal 3:5

“These and other such directives in the OT are still meant to guide Christians in their religious lives . . . such OT teaching is not governed solely by *littera gesta docet* but rather by *moralis quid agas*, by the “moral” sense, as the medievals understood the term.” (Fitzmyer *Interpretation* 95)

example: Ps 23

When a Christian “prays, “The Lord is my shepherd” (Ps 23:1), it could have a christological meaning, if “Lord” is understood in the NT sense of *Kyrios* used of the risen Christ. But the Christian could also direct that prayer to the “Lord” in the sense of the God of the OT or God the Father, and the literal sense of the metaphor used in that Psalm would be feeding the religious and spiritual life of such a Christian, as much as it would that of a devout modern Jew who would so pray.” (Fitzmyer *Interpretation* 95)

Perhaps references to spiritual matters should not be called a “spiritual sense.” (Fitzmyer *Interpretation* 95)

“I have tried to set forth the reasons why I have used it, which may justify its use.” (Fitzmyer *Interpretation* 95)

Using “spiritual sense” for spiritual referents “has not been given much [95] treatment in the 1993 document of the Biblical Commission, apart from the not-too-clear statement about there not being “necessarily a distinction between the two senses.”” (Fitzmyer *Interpretation* 95-96)

PBC (*The Interpretation of the Bible in the Church* 82): “there is not necessarily a distinction between the two [94] senses [literal and spiritual].” (Fitzmyer *Interpretation* 94-95)

References to spiritual matters can indeed be “the “literal sense” of such OT passages . . .” (Fitzmyer *Interpretation* 95)

Some other term could be used, “something like the “religious” import of what has been expressed literally.” (Fitzmyer *Interpretation* 95)

But “the connotations of the medieval senses . . . create the problem, when *littera* is set over against *allegoria* and *moralis*.” (Fitzmyer *Interpretation* 95)

#### Spiritual Sense as Allegorical Sense

not three, but one spiritual sense (the allegorical)

The moral sense is the literal sense when a passage is speaking about moral matters (e.g., the *Shema*`, Deut 6:4-5; the ten commandments, Exod 20:2-17; Deut 5:6-21).

The anagogical sense is the literal sense when a passage is speaking about eschatological matters (e.g., hell in the parable of the rich man and Lazarus, Luke 16:19-31; the many mansions in heaven, John 14:2).

Therefore, only one of the four medieval spiritual senses is a sense in addition to the literal sense: the allegorical sense.

allegory in the Church Fathers

2 Cor 3:6

2 Cor 3:6, God “has made us qualified to be ministers of a new covenant, not of letter but of spirit, for the letter kills, but the Spirit gives life.”

Church Fathers “built upon” Paul’s distinction in 2 Cor 3:6. (Fitzmyer *Scripture*, *the Soul* 65)

But for many Church Fathers, reading “not of letter but of spirit” (2 Cor 3:6) “meant that they could freely take phrases from the Bible and, in ignoring their contextual sense, use them in a generic way to propound (Christian) truths . . .” (Fitzmyer *Scripture*, *the Soul* 65)

This “resulted in allegorical and typological interpretations of the Old Testament to discover its “spiritual” meaning.” (Fitzmyer *Scripture*, *the Soul* 65)

“This proved to be, indeed, a departure from the literal sense of the Bible . . .” (Fitzmyer *Scripture*, *the Soul* 65)

70-132 CE: *Epistle of Barnabas*

“Such a spiritual interpretation of Scripture can be found as early as the *Epistle of Barnabas* . . .” (Fitzmyer *Scripture*, *the Soul* 66)

example: “the allegorical interpretation of the red heifer (of Numbers 19) in *Barn*. 8:1-7: “The calf is Jesus . . . and why was the wool put on the wood? Because the kingdom of Jesus is on the wood, and because those who hope in him will live forever. . . . For this reason the things that happened are plain to us, but obscure to them, because they did not listen to the voice of the Lord.”” (Fitzmyer *Scripture*, *the Soul* 66 n 15)

example: *Barn*. 9:7-9, “the allegorical interpretation of the number 318, the men of his household that Abraham circumcised (by a conflation of Gen 17:23, 27 and 14:14): “. . . for Abraham, who first practised circumcision, looked forward in the spirit to Jesus and received the doctrines of three letters. For it says, ‘Abraham circumcised the men of his household eighteen and three hundred.’ What therefore was the knowledge granted him? Notice that it mentions the eighteen first, and after a pause it says three hundred. The eighteen are ι´, ‘ten’ (and) η´, ‘eight.’ (And there) you have Jesus. Because the cross was destined to be favored in the τ´, it also mentions the three hundred. So it indicates Jesus in the two letters, and the cross in one. He knows this who made the gift of his teaching planted in us.”” (Fitzmyer *Scripture*, *the Soul* 66 n 15)

“Such a spiritual interpretation of Scripture can be found . . . in the writings of Justin Martyr, especially in his *Dialogue with Trypho* [155-160] . . .” (Fitzmyer *Scripture*, *the Soul* 66)

“Such a spiritual interpretation of Scripture can be found” in Tertullian (c. 155-c.220). (Fitzmyer *Scripture*, *the Soul* 66)

Origen (c. 185-c. 253)

“But the prime mover in this spiritual interpretation of the Old Testament was Origen . . .” (Fitzmyer *Scripture*, *the Soul* 66)

Johannes Quasten calls Origen “the first scientific exegete of the Catholic Church.” (Qtd. in Fitzmyer *Scripture*, *the Soul* 66 n 16)

But Quasten also says (*Patrology* 2.48) that Origen’s commentaries “are a strange mixture of philological, textual, historical, and etymological notes and theological and philosophical observations. The author’s main interest is not the literal but the mystical sense, which he finds by applying the allegorical method.” (Qtd. in Fitzmyer *Scripture*, *the Soul* 66 n 16)

Origen “distinguished three levels of Scripture: its body (what “simple” readers [66] would find as its “common and immediate meaning”), its soul (what “a little more advanced” readers would “further” discover as its meaning), and its spirit (what the “perfect” or “spiritually mature” [1 Cor 2:6-7] readers would discern as “the shadow of the good things to come” [Heb 10:1]).” (*Peri Archon* 4.2.4. See *Hom*. *in Numeros* 9.7.) (Fitzmyer *Scripture*, *the Soul* 66-67)

1 Cor 2:6-7, “Yet among the mature we do speak wisdom, though it is not a wisdom of this age or of the rulers of this age, who are being destroyed. 7 But we speak God’s wisdom, a hidden mystery, which God decreed before the ages for our glory . . .”

Heb 10:1, “Since the law has only a shadow of the good things to come and not the true form of these realities, it can never, by the same sacrifices that are continually offered year after year, make perfect those who approach.”

“Sometimes Origen referred to the senses of Scripture as *historica*, *mystica*, and *moralis* . . .” (*Hom*. *in Genesim* 2.6. *Hom*. *in Exodum* 1.4) (Fitzmyer *Scripture*, *the Soul* 67)

de Lubac, Henri, SJ. *Exégèse médiévale*: *Les quatre sens de l*’*Ecriture*. *Theologie* 41. 2 vols. Paris: Aubier, 1959. 201-03.

“. . . the relation of the moral to the historical or the mystical sense differed at times.” (Fitzmyer *Scripture*, *the Soul* 67)

“He maintained that the difficulties of the literal text were intended by God to spur the reader on to seek their spiritual meaning. In using both allegory and typology and in focusing his interpretation of the Old Testament christologically, he discovered meanings that went far beyond the literal sense.” (Fitzmyer *Scripture*, *the Soul* 67)

later allegorists

“Origen was followed in such a spiritual interpretation of Scripture by Methodius [Methodius of Olympus, d. 311], Didymus the Blind [c. 313-398], and others.” (Fitzmyer *Scripture*, *the Soul* 67)

Jerome

Jerome “at times criticized the Origenist interpretation of the Old Testament . . .” (Fitzmyer *Scripture*, *the Soul* 71)

But he “also proposed the spiritual sense of many Old Testament passages.” (Fitzmyer *Scripture*, *the Soul* 71)

assessment of patristic interpretation

pro

“The patristic contribution to the interpretation of the Bible sought to treat it above all as the Word of God read and savored in the Christian community and its liturgy. That [67] emphasis was not only right, but such interpretation, consequently, had much to do with the formation of the Christian canon, with the shaping of the dogmatic Tradition of the Church in its basic christological and trinitarian orientations, and with the developing liturgy. In these ways the patristic interpretation was only bringing to the fore in an explicit fashion what was often only implicit or latent in Scripture.” (Fitzmyer *Scripture*, *the Soul* 67-68)

con

Patristic interpretation often failed to consider genres. (Fitzmyer *Scripture*, *the Soul* 70)

There was rarely “unanimous consent of the Fathers.” (Fitzmyer *Scripture*, *the Soul* 70)

“When one hears today the call for a return to a patristic interpretation of Scripture, there is often latent in it a recollection of Church documents that spoke at times of the “unanimous consent of the Fathers” as the guide for biblical interpretation.” (Fitzmyer *Scripture*, *the Soul* 70)

Trent (“decree of 1546 on the Latin Vulgate and the mode of interpreting Scripture”: *EB* 62; DS 1507). (Fitzmyer *Scripture*, *the Soul* 70 n 23)

Trent (profession of faith: *EB* 73: DS 1863): “*iuxta unanimem consensum Patrum*.” (Fitzmyer *Scripture*, *the Soul* 70 n 23)

Vatican I (*Constitutio dogmatica* “*Dei Filius*,” *De fide catholica*): repeated Trent’s profession of faith (*EB* 78; DS 3007). (Fitzmyer *Scripture*, *the Soul* 70 n 23)

“Yet there was no uniform or monolithic patristic interpretation, either in the Greek Church of the East, Alexandrian or Antiochene, or in the Latin Church of the West. No one can ever tell us where such a “unanimous consent of the Fathers” is to be found . . .” (Fitzmyer *Scripture*, *the Soul* 70)

Pius XII “finally thought it pertinent to call attention to the fact that there are but few texts whose sense has been defined by the authority of the Church, “nor are those more numerous about which the teaching of the Holy Fathers is unanimous.” (*Divino afflante Spiritu* 47. *EB* 565. *RSS* 565. DS 3831.) (Fitzmyer *Scripture*, *the Soul* 70)

modern proponents of the allegorical sense

“Calls are heard today to replace it [the historical-critical method] . . .” (Fitzmyer *Scripture*, *the Soul* 7)

Some want “a return to precritical interpretation, to the patristic or a spiritual interpretation.” (Fitzmyer *Scripture*, *the Soul* 7)

“. . . there are those who call for a return to a “precritical” mode of interpretation, or for a return to a theological interpretation of the Bible.” (Fitzmyer *Scripture*, *the Soul* 59)

“. . . “spiritual exegesis” [is] advocated by L. Bouyer, H. de Lubac, H.U. von Balthasar, et al.” (Fitzmyer *Scripture*, *the Soul* 90 n 68)

“Many other systematic theologians could be listed here: H. de Lubac, Y. Congar, et al.” (Fitzmyer *Scripture*, *the Soul* 59 n 8)

Romano Guardini

Guardini, Romano. “Heilige Schrift und Glaubenswissenschaft.” *Die Schildgenossen* 8 (1928) 24-57.

René Laurentin

Laurentin, René. *Comment reconcilier l*’*exégèse et la foi*. Paris: O.E.I.L., 1984.

Louis Bouyer

Louis Bouyer (“Liturgie et exégèse spirituelle.” *Maison-Dieu* 7 [1946] 27-50. 30): a Christian reader seeks “not a dead word, imprisoned in the past, but a living word, addressed immediately to the man of today who takes part in the celebration of the liturgy, a word which concerns him, because it is for him that it was uttered and remains uttered.” (Qtd. in Fitzmyer *Scripture*, *the Soul* 59)

Henri de Lubac, SJ

Henri de Lubac, SJ (*The Sources of Revelation*. New York: Herder and Herder, 1968. 1-72. 27-28): “The ‘spiritual meaning’ . . . is of necessity a view in faith. The meaning which stems from it is only perceived in the light of Christ and under the action of his Spirit, within his Church. One who takes up the study of the history of Israel’s religion in this fashion gives all its historical importance to it, because he understands it as the salvation history of the Church. Strictly speaking, though, he does not study this salvation history as a historian, whose goal is to see the spectacle of events unfold before him; he meditates on it as a believer—in order to live by it. This is his own history, from which he cannot remove himself. This history interests him personally. It is a mystery which is also his own mystery, identically. Consequently, he does not question the Bible as he would any other document or series of documents about the past, but by the psychology of the Old Testament believers. Besides, he knows that they could not have been explicitly aware of everything which he discovers in their writings . . .” (Fitzmyer *Scripture*, *the Soul* 91 n 70)

“It is great in theory, but how does it work out in practice?” (Fitzmyer *Scripture*, *the Soul* 91 n 70)

“And how would a believing Jewish interpreter of the Old Testament understand that?” (Fitzmyer *Scripture*, *the Soul* 91 n 70)

Hans Urs von Balthasar

Hans Urs von Balthasar’s “ranting against “modern exegesis” was notorious . . .” (Fitzmyer *Scripture*, *the Soul* 59 n 8)

von Balthasar, Hans Urs. “Exegese und Dogmatik.” *Internationale kirchliche Zeitschrift* 5 (I 976) 385- 92.

See Guitton, Jean. *Silence sur l*’*essentiel*. Paris: Desclée, 1986.

Hans Urs von Balthasar (“The Word, Scripture, and Tradition.” In *Word and Revelation*: *Essays in Theology I*. New York: Herder and Herder, 1964. 9-30. 26-27. His italics): “Scripture . . . is *God speaking to man*. It [90] means a word that is not past but present, because eternal, a word spoken to me personally and not simply to others.” (Fitzmyer *Scripture*, *the Soul* 90-91)

“Von Balthasar also calls Scripture “the body of the logos” and denies that this patristic idea, according to which both the Eucharist and Scripture mediate to the faithful the one, incarnate logos, is “a merely arbitrary piece of allegorizing” (p. 15). But what else is it? This is a good example of the scholarly *Schwärmerei* to which those who advocate a spiritual exegesis of Scripture are led. It is not “exegesis” at all; it is *eisegesis*.” (Fitzmyer *Scripture*, *the Soul* 91)

Avery Dulles, SJ

Avery Dulles, SJ (*The Craft of Theology*: *From Symbol to System*. New York: Crossroad, 1992. 85): “My own present leaning would be toward a method that makes use of historical-critical studies to assure a solid foundation in the biblical sources themselves, but does so under the continuous guidance of tradition and magisterial teaching. An adequate theological use of Scripture, I believe, would build also on the achievements of biblical theology and the kind of spiritual exegesis described above [“as advocated by L. Bouyer, H. de Lubac, H.U. von Balthasar, et al.,” 90 n 68]. An interpretation that limited itself to the historical-critical phase would overlook the tacit meanings conveyed by the biblical stories, symbols, and metaphors. A comprehensive approach, combining scientific and spiritual exegesis, does better justice to Catholic tradition and the directives of Vatican II, and better serves the needs of systematic theology.” (Qtd. in Fitzmyer *Scripture*, *the Soul* 90)

“Properly-oriented historical-critical exegesis, as already described, would also include biblical theology and the tacit meanings of biblical stories, symbols, and metaphors.” (Fitzmyer *Scripture*, *the Soul* 90)

Joseph Cardinal Ratzinger

“This is also what is problematic about the critique that Card. Ratzinger has written of modern biblical interpretation, and with that of H.U. von Balthasar. Both of them cite as an ideal model of interpretation Gregory of Nyssa’s interpretation of the Canticle of Canticles [*Hom*. *in Canticum* 10; ed. H. Langerbeck 6.295-296]. [See: Canévet, M. *Grégoire de Nysse et l*’*herméneutique biblique*: *Etudes des rapports entre le langage et la connaissance de Dieu*. Paris: Etudes Augustiniennes, 1983.] Yet how can that sort of interpretation be applied to other parts of the Old Testament (e.g., to the legal sections of the Pentateuch) or even to most of the New Testament? I fail to see how it can even be applied to the Book of Revelation, which has in its history been subject to much allegorical interpretation.” (Fitzmyer *Scripture*, *the Soul* 92 n 72)

“Interpreters who use the properly-oriented historical-critical method also maintain that Scripture is God speaking to human beings, eternally addressing them personally. But they would be reluctant to recognize as the Word of God much of the eisegetical fruits of the so-called spiritual interpretation of Scripture being advocated by some of the proponents of it cited by Dulles.” (Fitzmyer *Scripture*, *the Soul* 91)

refutation of modern allegorizing

PBC (*Bible et christologie*. Paris: Editions du Cerf, 1984. 69 [1.3.3]): “Indeed, many problems still remain obscure about the composition process of the sacred writings that finally [59] emerged from their inspired authors. As a result, those who would dispense with the study of problems of this sort would be approaching Scripture only in a superficial way; wrongly judging that their way of reading Scripture is “theological,” they would be setting off on a deceptive route. Solutions that are too easy can in no way provide the solid basis needed for studies in biblical theology, even when engaged in with full faith.” (Fitzmyer *Scripture*, *the Soul* 59-60)

Trans.in Fitzmyer, Joseph A., SJ. *Scripture and Christology*: *A Statement of the Biblical Commission with a Commentary*. Mahwah: Paulist, 1986. Esp. 56-58.

“The Commission had discussed eleven different approaches to Christology in modern times and pointed out the risks that each one might run. Then it added an overview of the biblical testimony to Jesus the Christ. Nowhere in the document does the Commission speak of the historical-critical method, but in its effort to present an overview of an “integral Christology” (the total testimony of the Bible to Christ Jesus), it insisted time after time on “the demands of biblical criticism” (e.g., 1.2.7.2), which it clearly distinguished from “critical hypotheses . . . always subject to revision” (1.2.10). In the instance quoted above, the Commission was alluding to the claims of those who maintain that they prefer to interpret Scripture not historically, but theologically, or as did the Fathers of the Church. It thus expressed a necessary caution about the naiveté of such a would-be theological approach.” (Fitzmyer *Scripture*, *the Soul* 60)

The “relation of Scripture and theology [is] frequently discussed by specialists in fundamental and dogmatic theology [91] . . . They like to tell exegetes and biblical theologians how they should be doing their job, and yet they themselves have rarely, if ever, faced the difficult task of interpreting Scripture [by the historical-critical method]. It is one thing to philosophize about the interpretation of Scripture, another thing to engage in it. It is easy to find fault with the historical-critical method of biblical interpretation, but . . . the critics fail to show how the interpretation of Scripture should rather be carried out, other than invoking the use of an unspecified spiritual sense.” (Fitzmyer *Scripture*, *the Soul* 91-92)

warnings about the four senses

Aquinas

Aquinas accepted “the four senses in vogue in his day . . .” (Fitzmyer *Scripture*, *the Soul* 71)

But he also reacted against the “multiplicity of senses of Scripture . . .” (Fitzmyer *Scripture*, *the Soul* 71)

He said the literal sense was what the author intended. (*ST* 1.1.10 resp. dic. [at end]: “quem auctor intendit”) (Fitzmyer *Scripture*, *the Soul* 71-72)

Aquinas (*ST* 1.1.10 ad 1): “all the senses are based on one, namely the literal, from which alone an argument can be drawn, and not from those which are said by way of allegory. . . . Yet nothing is lost to sacred Scripture because of this, because nothing necessary for faith is contained in the spiritual sense, which Scripture does not clearly pass on elsewhere by the literal sense.” (Qtd. in Fitzmyer *Scripture*, *the Soul* 71)

“Et ita etiam nulla confusio sequitur in sacra Scriptura: cum omnes sensus fundentur super unum, scilicet litteralem; ex quo solo potest trahi argumentum, non autem ex his quae secundum allegoriam dicuntur, ut dicit Augustinus in epistola contra Vincentium Donatistam. Non tamen ex hoc aliquid deperit sacrae Scripturae: quia nihil sub spirituali sensu continetur fdei necessarium, quod Scriptura per litteralem sensum alicubi manifeste non tradit.” (Fitzmyer *Scripture*, *the Soul* 71 n 25)

Benedict XV in *Spiritus Paraclitus* (1920) reiterated “This idea of the other senses being based on the literal sense . . .” (AAS 12 [1920] 385-422 esp. 410-11. *EB* §485-86.) (Fitzmyer *Scripture*, *the Soul* 71 n 25)

Pius XII

Pius XII “conceded that a figurative sense may be needed in preaching . . .” (*Divino afflante Spiritu* §27) (Fitzmyer *Scripture*, *the Soul* 72)

But he “warned about senses other than the literal.” (Fitzmyer *Scripture*, *the Soul* 72)

Pius XII (*Divino afflante Spiritu* §27): “refrain scrupulously from proposing as the genuine meaning of Sacred Scripture other figurative senses.” (Qtd. in Fitzmyer *Scripture*, *the Soul* 72)

Pius XII (*Divino afflante Spiritu* §27): “this use of the Sacred Scripture is, as it were, extrinsic to it and accidental, and . . ., especially in these days, it is not free from danger.” (Qtd. in Fitzmyer *Scripture*, *the Soul* 72)

abuse of the allegorical sense

Recognizing “the spiritual sense of the OT does not mean that the modern Christian interpreter accepts as valid all the fanciful figurative, allegorical, and typological meanings attributed to the OT by patristic writers (such as Origen and the Alexandrian School or Ambrose and Augustine).” (Fitzmyer *Interpretation* 93)

“The patristic liberty in taking a phrase out of its context and producing multifarious symbolic and allegorical meanings, which the Fathers have given at times, is another matter. They are not of the essence of the spiritual sense and run “the risk of being something of an embarrassment to people of today.”” (PBC *The Interpretation of the Bible in the Church* 97) (Fitzmyer *Interpretation* 93)

reaction to the four senses

It was “in reaction to [37] the medieval multiple senses of Scripture that the historical-critical method of interpretation came into renewed use in its quest of the meaning expressed by the human author. Reaction to the allegorical use of Scripture was particularly strong at the time of the Renaissance, the Reformation, and the Enlightenment . . .” (Fitzmyer *Scripture*, *the Soul* 37-38)

### Fuller Sense (*Sensus Plenior*)

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Fernández, A. “Sentido plenior, literal, típico, espiritual.” *Biblica* 34 (1953) 299-326.

Fernández, A. *Institutiones Biblicae*. Rome: Biblical Institute, 1925. 2nd ed. 1927.

definition of *sensus plenior*

“*Sensus plenior*”: “the sense that God . . . intended over and above that envisaged by the human author.” (Fitzmyer *Scripture*, *the Soul* 69)

PBC (*The Interpretation of the Bible in the Church* 83): the *sensus plenior* is the “deeper meaning of the text, intended by God, but not clearly expressed by the human author.” (Qtd. in Fitzmyer *Interpretation* 97)

history of the concept

“The *sensus plenior* of Scripture is a relatively new notion. It was given serious consideration only in the first part of the twentieth century, and so it does not have the venerable status of the two senses already discussed. The term was coined by A. Fernández in 1925.” (*Institutiones Biblicae* 305-07) (Fitzmyer *Interpretation* 96)

the *sensus plenior* in the PBC’s *The Interpretation of the Bible in the Church* (1993)

PBC (*The Interpretation of the Bible in the Church* 83): “Its existence in the biblical text comes to be known when one studies the text in the light of other biblical texts which utilize it or in its relationship with the internal development of revelation.” (Qtd. in Fitzmyer *Interpretation* 97)

God could “have moved a human writer to formulate something, the *sensus plenior* of which would have become apparent in the light of subsequent reference to or use of that formulation, and of which the human author so moved originally would have had no inkling.” (Fitzmyer *Interpretation* 97)

“. . . there has to be another passage in Scripture that rereads the original passage and thus reveals a further meaning of that text.” (Fitzmyer *Interpretation* 97)

“Or there has to be a genuine development in the Church’s dogmatic Tradition that makes known the *sensus plenior* of a biblical text.” (Fitzmyer *Interpretation* 97)

“. . . the Commission in no way authorizes an individual interpreter to invoke it [the fuller sense] in the explanation of any biblical text whatsoever. There is always the need of the control of further use of the text either in Scripture itself or in the dogmatic Tradition of the Church.” (Fitzmyer *Interpretation* 97)

“. . . not every passage in Scripture enjoys such a fuller sense; only those that are picked up in a later passage of Scripture or in the subsequent dogmatic Tradition of the Church are to be so recognized. There must be some control of this sort; otherwise Scripture itself would be open to widespread and subjective fuller senses.” (Fitzmyer *Scripture*, *the Soul* 69)

how the *sensus plenior* arises

“. . . the *sensus plenior* is a case where the dynamic aspect of the OT may be seen to result in a fuller meaning, as a later use of it exploits its “open” character.” (Fitzmyer *Interpretation* 97)

“. . . a meaning that goes “beyond” the original biblical meaning may become part of the Spirit-guided postwritten status of the text, viz., that which has become its genuine dogmatic Tradition.” (Fitzmyer *Interpretation* 72)

“Modern literary critics insist sometimes that a text once composed takes on a life of its own and may even convey a meaning beyond that of the original author’s intention. There is some truth in that view, especially when it is a question of poetry . . .” (Fitzmyer *Interpretation* 72)

But a meaning that goes beyond the meaning of the biblical author “can never [lose] all homogeneity with the original meaning of the author.” (Fitzmyer *Interpretation* 72)

example from scripture: “virgin” birth

Matt 1:23 (“the virgin shall become pregnant”) “supplies such a sense” (a *sensus plenior*) to Isa 7:14 (“the young woman is with child”). Isa 7:14 has Hebrew `*almāh*, “young marriageable girl”; Matt 1:23 has Greek *parthenos* (from the LXX), “virgin,” “thus giving a *sensus plenior* . . .” (Fitzmyer *Interpretation* 97)

example from tradition: Trinity

Scripture is ambiguous about the Trinty. (Fitzmyer *Scripture*, *the Soul* 68)

2 Cor 3:17, “Now the Lord is the Spirit . . .”

2 Cor 13:13, “The grace of the Lord Jesus Christ, the love of God, and the communion of the Holy Spirit be with all of you.”

“The historical-critical interpretation of the Bible would not find the Trinity as such in the New Testament.” (Fitzmyer *Scripture*, *the Soul* 68)

It does discover “a clear teaching about God the Father, about Christ the Son, and about the holy Spirit . . .” (Fitzmyer *Scripture*, *the Soul* 68)

It does discover “an inceptive teaching about the relations between them, especially in the Pauline letters and Johannine writings.” (Fitzmyer *Scripture*, *the Soul* 68)

Only patristic interpretation formulated “in an unambiguous way the doctrine of the Triune God . . .” (Fitzmyer *Scripture*, *the Soul* 68)

“The Commission cites . . . the patristic and conciliar teaching about the persons of the Trinity as [an added] sense given to the NT data about God the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit.” (Fitzmyer *Interpretation* 97)

example from tradition: original sin

Rom 5:12-21, “Therefore, just as sin came into the world through one man, and death came through sin, and so death spread to all because all have sinned—13 for sin was indeed in the world before the law, but sin is not reckoned when there is no law. 14 Yet death reigned from Adam to Moses, even over those who did not sin in the likeness of Adam . . . 16 . . . For the judgment following one trespass brought condemnation . . . 17 . . . because of the one man’s trespass, death reigned through that one . . . 18 . . . one man’s trespass led to condemnation for all . . . 19 . . . through the one man’s disobedience the many were made sinners . . . 20 But law came in, so that the trespass might increase, but where sin increased, grace abounded all the more, 21 so that, just as sin reigned in death, so grace might also reign through justification leading to eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord.”

“Original sin is a term derived from Western Latin theology, *peccatum originale*.” (Fitzmyer *Scripture*, *the Soul* 69 n 21)

“One will look in vain for an equivalent of *originale* in the Eastern Greek theological tradition. Greek theologians, to be sure, interpreted Paul’s letter to the Romans and explained Adam’s sin and its effects on humanity, but they did not speak of it as “original” sin.” (Fitzmyer *Scripture*, *the Soul* 69 n 21)

Theophilus of Antioch called Eve “*archēgos hamartias*,” “leader/pioneer of sin.” (*Ad Autolycum* 2.28) “That is the same phrase that Cyril of Jerusalem uses of the Devil.” (*Catecheses* 2.4) (Fitzmyer *Scripture*, *the Soul* 69 n 21)

“In Rom 5:12-21 Paul teaches that Adam, in sinning, affected all humanity in a causal way so that all human beings share in his mortality and sinfulness.” (Fitzmyer *Scripture*, *the Soul* 68)

“But it remained for Augustine to explain that causality in terms, not of imitation (as Pelagius advocated), but of propagation or generation, and [68] thus the doctrine of *Peccatum originate*, Original Sin, came to formulation.” (Fitzmyer *Scripture*, *the Soul* 68-69)

Augustine (*De peccatorum meritis et remissione* 1.9.10): “This is [said] of propagation, not of imitation; for [if it were meant of imitation], he would have [68] said, ‘Through the Devil.” (See *Contra duas epistolas Pelagianorum* 4.4.7.) (Fitzmyer *Scripture*, *the Soul* 68-69 n 20)

Rom 5:12, “sin came into the world *through* one man . . .”

Rom 5:17, “because of the one man’s trespass, death reigned *through* that one . . .”

Rom 5:19, “*through* the one man’s disobedience the many were made sinners . . .”

“. . . the Council of Trent provided the *sensus plenior* of Paul’s teaching in Rom 5:12, when it defined original sin as involved in that passage.” (*Decretum de Peccato Originali*. 17 June 1546. Ch. 2. DH 1512.) (Fitzmyer *Interpretation* 97)

Avery Dulles “finds it difficult to accept the Commission’s view of the Tridentine interpretation of Rom 5:12 in terms of original sin as an adequate example of the *sensus plenior*. For him “the language of the Council seems to indicate an intention to interpret Paul’s literal meaning” (p. 32). And yet Dulles grants that “Trent is admittedly dealing with a point slightly different from what Paul had in mind, and is relying in part on the Vulgate translation of Rom 5:12, which read: ‘. . . in whom [Adam] all have sinned’ (*in quo omnes peccaverunt*). But it seems clear that the Council was intending to interpret the thought of Paul himself.” But if the “point” is “slightly different from what Paul has in mind,” is there not room for a *sensus plenior*, which the Tradition that Trent was enshrining officially has made known? After all, in the sixteenth century no one ever spoke of a “fuller sense” . . . It has proved to be a notion that allows one today to understand more properly the kind of definition in which the Council of Trent was engaged. I find it difficult to think that the Council defined that *peccatum originale*, a Western, Latin theological concept, which is lacking in the Eastern, Greek patristic Tradition, is the “literal sense” of Rom 5:12. Cf. my discussion of this point . . . in *Romans* (AB 33; New York: Doubleday, 1993) 409-10.” (Fitzmyer *Interpretation* 96 n 33)

on the examples from tradition (Trinity and original sin)

“Such patristic interpretation may well be regarded as the *sensus plenior* of New Testament passages, for within the dogmatic Tradition of the Church it has supplied in given cases the sense that God, the primary author of Scripture, intended over and above that envisaged by the human author. It may be regarded as the term of a trajectory, the starting-point of which can be found in the sacred writings themselves, in the human author’s original literal sense of a given passage. In such cases, the patristic sense, supplying the *sensus plenior* of biblical passages, has thus added to the literal sense of Scripture a sense important for the Christian Church and Christian theology.” (Fitzmyer *Scripture*, *the Soul* 69)

### Accommodated Sense

introduction

“An “accommodated sense” is found when an interpreter uses a meaning that is not warranted by the words, phrase, or context of a passage.” (Fitzmyer *Interpretation* 98)

An accommodation imposes on a biblical text “a meaning that neither the principal nor the secondary author . . . intended or expressed.” (Fitzmyer *Interpretation* 98)

“It is really the result of eisegesis, the opposite of exegesis—the reading of some meaning into the text.” (Fitzmyer *Interpretation* 98)

“There have been times when modern writers use the term “spiritual sense” to mean an “accommodated sense” of Scripture.” (Fitzmyer *Interpretation* 98)

“. . . accommodated meanings of biblical texts should not be called the “spiritual sense” . . . [That is] another example of how “spiritual” sense has become a weasel word.” (Fitzmyer *Interpretation* 98)

example: Col 3:3

Col 3:3, “ “for you have died, and your life is hidden with Christ in God.”

Col 3:3, which exhorts the Christians of Colossae to think of what is above . . ., expressing the share in the glorious life of Christ that is their destiny as righteous Christians.” (Fitzmyer *Interpretation* 98)

In the encyclical *Redemptoris Mater* (announcing 1988 as a Marian Year), John Paul II used Col 3:3 “of Mary living with Jesus during the so-called Hidden Life . . .” (Fitzmyer *Interpretation* 98)

John Paul II. Encyclical *Redemptoris Mater*. 1987. §17. *AAS* 79 (1987). *Origins* 16 (1986-87) 752. *The Pope Speaks* 32 (1987) 169.

Cardinal Joseph Ratzinger calls *Redemptoris Mater* a “biblical meditation.” (*Maria*—*Gottes Ja zum Menschen*: *Papst Johannes Paul II Enzyklika* ‘*Mutter des Erlösers*’: *Hinführung von Joseph Kardinal Ratzinger*; *Kommentar von Hans-Urs von Balthasar*. 2nd ed. Freiburg im Breisgau: Herder, 1987. 107.

John Paul II (*Redemptoris Mater* §17): “During the years of Jesus’ hidden life in the house at Nazareth, Mary’s life, too, is ‘hid with Christ in God’ (Col. 3:3) through faith.” (Qtd. in Fitzmyer *Interpretation* 98)

“That use of Col 3:3 [is] an “accommodation” of the biblical text, foisting on it a meaning that neither the principal nor the secondary author . . . intended or expressed.” (Fitzmyer *Interpretation* 98)

### Conclusion

“. . . biblical truth is not univocal, but rather analogous.” (Fitzmyer *Interpretation* 99-100)

The literal, spiritual, and fuller senses “make known to us what the written Word of God means and reveals . . .” (Fitzmyer *Interpretation* 100)

# Scripture and Systematic Theology

## Scripture and Tradition

### Introduction

“The coinherence of Scripture and Tradition or *Scripture interpreted* is the primary object of theological study.” (Fitzmyer *Scripture*, *the Soul* 72)

The “different senses of Scripture have influenced the relation of Scripture and Tradition, which together as a unit pass on to us the Word of God, the object of theological inquiry and study.” (Fitzmyer *Scripture*, *the Soul* 72)

If scripture “is to function as the “soul of sacred Theology,” then one has to reckon with Scripture in its own formulation and its own theology.” (Fitzmyer *Scripture*, *the Soul* 72)

Scripture must exercise “*the* normative role, in theology as well as in the life of the Church.” (Fitzmyer *Scripture*, *the Soul* 72)

### Scripture on Scripture as Normative

introduction

“. . . biblical data about the relation of Scripture and Tradition are not numerous. Yet what there is instructs us that both Scripture and Tradition were regarded as normative for the teaching of the primitive Christian community.” (Fitzmyer *Scripture*, *the Soul* 76)

Scripture “is not *sola Scriptura* that functions as the vivifying principle . . .” (Fitzmyer *Scripture*, *the Soul* 55)

Scripture is the soul of theology in unity with tradition. (Fitzmyer *Scripture*, *the Soul* 56)

scriptural references to a canon

Ben Sira, opening sentence of the prologue, “Many great teachings have been given to us through the Law and the Prophets 2 and the others that followed them . . .”

“Here we have the earliest [72] reference to what may have been an awareness of a canon of Scripture, of a collection of normative and authoritative sacred writings.” (Fitzmyer *Scripture*, *the Soul* 72-73)

In the LXX we find “*hē graphē* in the sense of “Scripture.”” (Fitzmyer *Scripture*, *the Soul* 73)

In l Chr 15:15, “whereas the Hebrew Masoretic Text says, “as Moses had ordained according to the word of the Lord,” the Greek of the Septuagint renders it, “as Moses had ordained in the word of God according to Scripture” (*kata ten graphen*).” (Fitzmyer *Scripture*, *the Soul* 73)

In 2 Chr 30:5, “*kata tēn graphēn* renders Hebrew *kakkātûb*, “as was written.”” (Fitzmyer *Scripture*, *the Soul* 73 n 28)

See 2 Chr 30:18. (Fitzmyer *Scripture*, *the Soul* 73)

Luke 24:44, “Then he said to them, “These are my words that I spoke to you while I was still with you—that everything written about me in the law of Moses, the prophets, and the psalms must be fulfilled.””

The law, prophets, and psalms contain “authoritative teaching about him.” (Fitzmyer *Scripture*, *the Soul* 73)

2 Tim 3:16-17, “All scripture is inspired by God and is useful for teaching, for reproof, for correction, and for training in righteousness, 17 so that the person of God may be proficient, equipped for every good work.”

“Early Christians regarded Scripture, in the sense of the Old Testament, as normative . . .” (Fitzmyer *Scripture*, *the Soul* 76)

### Scripture on Tradition as Normative

introduction

“When one looks in Scripture itself for the idea of Tradition, there is . . . little to be mentioned.” (Fitzmyer *Scripture*, *the Soul* 73)

Old Testament references

*Paradidonai* (to hand on [a teaching]) and *paradosis* (tradition) are not in the Old Testament. (Fitzmyer *Scripture*, *the Soul* 73)

*Masar* occurs “only in the sense of “handing over, delivering up” persons (Num 31:5, 16).” (Fitzmyer *Scripture*, *the Soul* 73)

In the LXX they are only “in some deuterocanonical books.” (See Congar ch. 1, “The Existence of Tradition in the Old and New Testament.”) (Fitzmyer *Scripture*, *the Soul* 73)

“Thus the Old Testament itself is not a real source for any [73] biblical teaching about normative tradition or for the idea of a relation between Scripture and Tradition.” (Fitzmyer *Scripture*, *the Soul* 74)

But the Old Testament writings indicate a “prehistory of some books.” (Fitzmyer *Scripture*, *the Soul* 74)

The documentary hypothesis of the pentateuch shows “that a normative tradition antedated the final redaction of the Pentateuch.” (Fitzmyer *Scripture*, *the Soul* 74)

“. . . isolated traces of oracular tradition regarded as normative can thus be detected in the Old Testament, but they are not numerous.” (Fitzmyer *Scripture*, *the Soul* 74)

Jeremiah’s oracles influenced “Ezekiel, Daniel, certain psalms, and Deutero-Isaiah, but in what form this influence was felt is hard to say.” (Fitzmyer *Scripture*, *the Soul* 74)

New Testament references

*Paradosis* and *paradidonai* are in the New Testament. (Fitzmyer *Scripture*, *the Soul* 73)

Most references are to oral tradition. (Fitzmyer *Scripture*, *the Soul* 74 n 30)

The New Testament has indications of traditions related to scripture. (Fitzmyer *Scripture*, *the Soul* 74)

Mark 7 on “the relation of Tradition to Scripture” (Fitzmyer *Scripture*, *the Soul* 75)

In Mark 7:3, “. . . Jesus is asked why his disciples do not follow “the tradition of the elders” . . . about washing their hands before eating. Jesus rejoins by calling it “a human tradition,” which he sets over against “God’s commandment.” He accuses them of “nullifying God’s word in favor of traditions you have handed on” (Mark 7:9-13; cf. Matt 15:21-28). Here a special contrast is made between human tradition and “the Word of God,” i.e., Scripture, referring to the Fourth Commandment (Exod 20: 12). The idea of a tradition as normative is present here, even if Jesus rejects [74] the Pharisaic notion of it.31 Thus a gospel episode warns Christians about the negative role that tradition, when its origin is human, can play. In effect, it denies a normative role to such human tradition and severs all connection of it with Scripture. Yet apart from this isolated episode there is no other saying of Jesus that would bear on the relation of Tradition to Scripture.” (Fitzmyer *Scripture*, *the Soul* 74-75)

“Josephus also mentions such traditions . . .” Josephus (*Ant*. 13.10.6 §297): “The Pharisees passed on to the people certain regulations transmitted by former generations, which are not recorded in the laws of Moses.” (Qtd. in Fitzmyer *Scripture*, *the Soul* 75 n 35)

See also *Ant*. 10.4.1 §51; 13.16.2 §408 (*kata tēn patrōan paradosin*). (Fitzmyer *Scripture*, *the Soul* 75 n 31)

See also Philo. *De spec*. *leg*. 4.28 §150. (Fitzmyer *Scripture*, *the Soul* 75 n 31)

Paul

Paul refers to the Old Testament Scriptures as *graphai hagiai*, “holy Scriptures” (Rom 1:2), thus recognizing their authority.” (Fitzmyer *Scripture*, *the Soul* 75)

He says “these writings were not composed solely for the people of old. Having quoted Gen 15:6 about the justification of Abraham because of his faith, he says that those words were not written for Abraham’s sake alone, but for ours too (Rom 4:24; cf. 15:4). He thus modernizes the sense of an Old Testament passage and actualizes its pertinence.” (Fitzmyer *Scripture*, *the Soul* 75)

Paul also recognizes tradition “in the early church to which he is tributary and which he regards as normative.” (Fitzmyer *Scripture*, *the Soul* 75)

“traditions”

1 Cor 11:2, “I commend you because you remember me in everything and maintain the traditions just as I handed them on to you.”

2 Thess 2:15, “So then, brothers and sisters, stand firm and hold fast to the traditions that you were taught by us, either by word of mouth or by our letter.”

eucharist

1 Cor 11:23, “For I received from the Lord what I also handed on to you, that the Lord Jesus on the night when he was betrayed took a loaf of bread . . .”

“Here he uses the official words of Tradition: *parelabon*, “I received,” and *paredōka*, “I passed on.”” (Fitzmyer *Scripture*, *the Soul* 75)

These expressions are not in the MT or LXX. (Fitzmyer *Scripture*, *the Soul* 75 n 32)

But “they reflect the standard vocabulary that will emerge in the later rabbinical writings: [75] *qibbēl*, “receive” (a teaching), and *māsar*, “hand on” (a teaching).” (Fitzmyer *Scripture*, *the Soul* 75-76 n 32)

Gerhardsson, Birger. *Memory and Manuscript*: *Oral Tradition and Written Transmission in Rabbinic Judaism and Early Christianity*. Acta Seminarii Neotestamentici Upsaliensis 22. Uppsala: Almqvist & Wiksells, 1961. 288-323.

rule of faith

1 Cor 15:1-5, “Now I want you to understand, brothers and sisters, the good news that I proclaimed to you, which you in turn received [παρελάβετε, *parelabete*], in which also you stand, 2 through which also you are being saved, if you hold firmly to the message that I proclaimed to you—unless you have come to believe in vain. 3 For I handed on [παρέδωκα, *paredōka*] to you as of first importance what I in turn had received [παρέλαβον, *parelabon*]: that Christ died for our sins in accordance with the scriptures 4 and that he was buried and that he was raised on the third day in accordance with the scriptures 5 and that he appeared to Cephas, then to the twelve.”

“. . . here Paul adapts part of the early kerygma . . .” (Fitzmyer *Scripture*, *the Soul* 75)

“So Paul cites the primitive kerygma of the church that existed before him in relation to his own preaching of the gospel . . .” (Fitzmyer *Scripture*, *the Soul* 76)

“So Paul cites the primitive kerygma . . . as a normative Tradition.” (Fitzmyer *Scripture*, *the Soul* 76)

The first generation of Christians “was governed by an oral Tradition . . . [before] the New Testament . . .” (Fitzmyer *Scripture*, *the Soul* 77)

But the early Christians had the Old Testament.

“. . . Tradition did not exist alone; as it was being fashioned, it developed in consonance with the Hebrew Scriptures . . .” (Fitzmyer *Scripture*, *the Soul* 77)

The New Testament “was born indeed of a preexistent Christian Tradition, a Tradition, however, that was already normed in no small way by the already existing (Old Testament) Scriptures.” (Fitzmyer *Scripture*, *the Soul* 79)

“Today we have access to that early Christian Tradition only through the New Testament itself. Hence the insistence of modern theologians on the coinherence of Scripture and Tradition.” (Fitzmyer *Scripture*, *the Soul* 77)

rabbinical references

“In the later rabbinical writings *paradidonai* is expressed as *masar* . . .” (Fitzmyer *Scripture*, *the Soul* 73)

Wis 14:15 says that “a father who fashioned an image of his dead son “and handed on [παραδίδωμι] to his subjects mysteries and rites.” (Fitzmyer *Scripture*, *the Soul* 73)

Most references are to oral tradition. (Fitzmyer *Scripture*, *the Soul* 74 n 30)

Greco-Roman references

“This sense of *paradidonai* is also found in extrabiblical Greek writers . . .” (Fitzmyer *Scripture*, *the Soul* 73 n 30)

Pfister, E. *Philologus* 69 (1915) 415.

Plato (*Philebus* 16c): “those of old . . . passed on this report.” (Qtd. in Fitzmyer *Scripture*, *the Soul* 73 n 30)

Diodorus Siculus (5.48.4).

Most references are to oral tradition. (Fitzmyer *Scripture*, *the Soul* 74 n 30)

### Scripture and Tradition

1965: Vatican II’s *Dei Verbum*

Vatican II (*Dei verbum* §7): “sacred Tradition . . . and sacred Scripture . . . are like a mirror in which the pilgrim Church on earth looks at God . . .” (Qtd. in Fitzmyer *Scripture*, *the Soul* 55)

“. . . Scripture and Tradition coinhere and reflect to us the Word of God . . .” (Fitzmyer *Scripture*, *the Soul* 56)

Vatican II (*Dei verbum* §§9-10): “There exist a close connection and communication between sacred Tradition and sacred Scripture. For both of them, flowing from the same divine wellspring, in a certain way merge into a unity and tend toward the same end. For sacred Scripture is the word of God inasmuch as it is consigned to writing under the inspiration of the divine Spirit. To the successors of the apostles, sacred Tradition hands on in its full purity God’s word, entrusted to the apostles by Christ the Lord and the Holy Spirit. Thus, led by the light of the Spirit of truth, these successors can in their preaching preserve this word of God faithfully, explain it, and make it more widely known. Consequently, it is not from sacred Scripture [55] alone that the Church draws her certainty about everything which has been revealed. Both sacred Tradition and sacred Scripture are to be accepted and venerated with the same sense of devotion and reverence. Sacred Tradition and sacred Scripture form one sacred deposit of the word of God, which is committed to the Church.” (Qtd. in Fitzmyer *Scripture*, *the Soul* 55-56)

Vatican II (*Dei verbum* §21): scripture and tradition are “the supreme rule of faith . . .” (Qtd. in Fitzmyer *Scripture*, *the Soul* 56)

Revelation “is expressed in Tradition and Scripture, a single deposit of the Word of God. [*Dei Verbum* ch. 2] thus emphasizes the inseparability of Scripture and Tradition and avoids saying that there are any revealed truths transmitted solely by Tradition.” (Fitzmyer *Interpretation* 7)

“. . . that Tradition which is born of it [scripture] is itself an interpretation of Scripture . . .” (Fitzmyer *Scripture*, *the Soul* 56)

Anderson, Bernard W. “Tradition and Scripture in the Community of Faith.” *Journal of Biblical Literature* 100 (1981) 5-21.

tradition as an outgrowth of scripture

The “self-revelation of God is transmitted to all generations through the gospel of Christ preached by the apostles and their successors with the help of the Holy Spirit . . .” (Fitzmyer *Interpretation* 7)

“Tradition is regarded as a genuine norm since it is “a legitimate unfolding of biblical data.”” (Rahner, Karl. “Scripture and Theology.” *Theological Investigations 6*. Baltimore: Helicon, 1969. 89-97. 92.) (Fitzmyer *Scripture*, *the Soul* 78)

“Sometimes Tradition represents a process that may begin as a legitimate theological extension of a biblical teaching that is per se “open,” i.e., which could develop in one way or another. Catholics see this development as Spirit-guided so that it becomes part of the “Church’s living faith and dogmatic Tradition.” (Fitzmyer *Scripture*, *the Soul* 78)

example (“in a negative sense”): foot washing

John 13:12-15, Jesus washes feet and tells the disciples they should wash each other’s feet.

“. . . the *open* character of [the passage] . . . could conceivably have developed in the Tradition into a sacrament . . .” (Fitzmyer *Scripture*, *the Soul* 78)

example (“in a positive sense”): anointing of the sick

In James 5:14, Christians are to summon elders of the church “to anoint the sick with oil and to pray over them . . .” (Fitzmyer *Scripture*, *the Soul* 78)

“. . . the *open* character of the teaching . . . led in time to the Sacrament of the Anointing of the Sick.” (Fitzmyer *Scripture*, *the Soul* 78)

“Such an extension of the meaning of a biblical verse is being called “theological,” because it is per se not biblical. It is rather a conclusion drawn from a biblical text under the Spirit-guided development of Tradition.” (Fitzmyer *Scripture*, *the Soul* 78)

scripture and tradition as norms

The charism of biblical inspiration was “a movement of God’s Spirit that the Christian Tradition has always regarded as privileged and distinct from the Spirit’s assistance in guiding the Church in its ongoing teaching, i.e., in its dogmatic definitions, either conciliar or papal.” (Fitzmyer *Scripture*, *the Soul* 79)

“Thus the written Word of God has become a testimony without peer to guide the faith of the people of God. In saying this, I am not identifying Scripture with revelation or with the Word of God, pure and simple. Yet as the *written* Word of God it does stand over the dogmatic Tradition that springs from it and over the Church’s magisterium that serves the Word of God, handing it on, guarding it scrupulously, and explaining it faithfully—all with the assistance of the Spirit.” (*Dei verbum* §10) (Fitzmyer *Scripture*, *the Soul* 79)

“Karl Rahner explained the relation of Scripture and Tradition by adopting a famous Lutheran distinction . . .” (Fitzmyer *Interpretation* 13)

Rahner, Karl. “Scripture and Theology.” *Theological Investigations*. Baltimore: Helicon, 1969. 6.89-97 esp. 93.

Rahner, Karl. “Bible, B. Theology.” *Sacramentum Mundi*. 6 vols. New York: Herder and Herder, 1968-70. 1.171-78.

Scripture is *norma normans non normata*, “the norm that norms (but is) not normed . . .” (Fitzmyer *Scripture*, *the Soul* 79)

“. . . Scripture is the norm that norms faith and all else in the Church, but is itself not normed . . .” (Fitzmyer *Interpretation* 13)

That is “because it is unmanipulable (*unverfügbar*) by either the Tradition or the magisterium.” (Fitzmyer *Scripture*, *the Soul* 79)

Vatican II (*Dei verbum* §21): “Therefore, like the Christian religion itself, all the preaching of the Church must [79] be nourished and ruled by sacred Scripture.” (Fitzmyer *Scripture*, *the Soul* 79-80)

Tradition is *norma normata*, “the normed norm”: “it is normed by Scripture.” (Fitzmyer *Scripture*, *the Soul* 80)

Tradition is “a norm of faith and life, but it is normed (by Scripture).” (Fitzmyer *Interpretation* 13)

“The reason for Rahner’s adoption of this explanation was that for him, Tradition is nothing more than “a legitimate unfolding of the biblical data.” [“Scripture and Theology” 92] So understood, it is easy to comprehend how the twosome can be called a single deposit and the supreme rule of faith.” (Fitzmyer *Interpretation* 13)

Karl Rahner (“Bible. B. Theology.” *Sacramentum mundi*. 6 vols. New York: Herder and Herder, 1968-70. 1.171-78. 176-77): “Even the magisterium which interprets Scripture under the assistance of the Spirit does not thereby place itself above Scripture but under it [*Dei Verbum* §10]; it knows that Scripture brought into existence by the Spirit and read by the Church with the assistance of the Spirit conveys its true meaning. In that way Scripture remains the *norma non normata* of theology and the Church.” (Qtd. in Fitzmyer *Scripture*, *the Soul* 79 n 36)

Karl Rahner (“Scripture and Theology.” *Theological Investigations 6*. Baltimore: Helicon, 1969. 89-97. 93): “We may therefore state quite confidently that for theology, scripture is in practice the only material source of faith [78] to which it has to turn as being the absolutely original, underived source and *norma non normata*.” (Qtd. in Fitzmyer *Scripture*, *the Soul* 78-79 n 36)

“Thus related to Tradition, Scripture is the source of the life of faith in the Christian community, and hence the wellspring of theology.” (Fitzmyer *Scripture*, *the Soul* 79-80)

non-scriptural traditions

Catholicism accepts Augustine’s principle: “Not because Scripture says it, but because Scripture does not contradict it.” (“*Non quia Scriptura dicit*, *sed quia Scriptura non contradicit*.” *De Trin*. 7.4) (Fitzmyer *Scripture*, *the Soul* 80)

“Suppose Scripture does not contain an example, a promise, or a command as the basis of a certain teaching, is that teaching absolutely excluded, even if it can be seen only as a development or a theological extension of some seminal biblical doctrine?40” (Fitzmyer *Scripture*, *the Soul* 80)

Cyprian (*Ep*. 74.9): “Tradition without truth is but error grown old.” (*Traditio sine veritate vetustas erroris*.”) “This view of Cyprian is important because it cautions against what may be only human tradition in the Church and in theology. In this regard, one would have to insist again on the Spirit-guided character of the Tradition that develops. The assistance of the Spirit is what preserves the Tradition from error and guarantees it in the truth.” (Fitzmyer *Scripture*, *the Soul* 80 n 40)

“. . . recall the idea of the openness of Scripture, which may develop in a certain direction, and not in another. Such teachings are clearly part of the dogmatic theologian’s bailiwick and task.” (Fitzmyer *Scripture*, *the Soul* 80)

“The relationship between Scripture and Tradition is one that intimately affects the study of theology. For the theologian is always confronted with the problem of how one is to regard the seminal teachings of Scripture and allow for the flowering of such teaching as it develops into full-blown forms. The acorn is not an oak; but there is no oak without an acorn. The organic unity between the two is essential.” (Fitzmyer *Scripture*, *the Soul* 80)

the magisterium

Vatican II (*Dei Verbum* §10, Béchard, Dean P., SJ, ed. and trans. *The Scripture Documents* 23): “The task of authentically interpreting the Word of God, whether in its written form or in the form of tradition, has been entrusted to the Teaching Office of the Church, whose authority is exercised in the name of Jesus Christ. Indeed, this Teaching Office is not above the Word of God but serves it by teaching only what has been handed on. At the divine command and with the help of the Holy Spirit, the Teaching Office listens to the Word of God devoutly, guards it with dedication, and faithfully explains it. All that it proposes for belief as divinely revealed is drawn from this single deposit of faith.” (Qtd. in Fitzmyer *Interpretation* 9)

“This relation of the Teaching Office (*magisterium*) to the Word of God is a novel notion, never before enunciated in the Church’s teaching about Scripture.” (Fitzmyer *Interpretation* 9)

Note that “the Teaching Office “is not above the Word of God but serves it by teaching only what has been handed on.” It does not say that the Teaching Office is not above the *written Word of God* or Scripture. Yet that meaning of “the Word of God” is not excluded, because in the preceding sentence “the Word of God” is qualified, “whether in its written form or in the form of tradition.” What the Constitution was trying to offset was the [9] criticism sometimes heard that for Catholics the ultimate norm of belief is the magisterium.” (Fitzmyer *Interpretation* 9-10)

biblical theology and systematic theology

Krister Stendahl

Stendahl, Krister. “Biblical Theology, Contemporary.” Buttrick, G.A., ed. *The Interpreter*’*s Dictionary of the Bible*. 4 vols. Nashville: Abingdon, 1962. 1.418-32.

Biblical theology is descriptive; systematic theology is normative. (Fitzmyer *Scripture*, *the Soul* 81)

Biblical theology says “what the Bible meant”; systematic theology says “what it means today.” (Fitzmyer *Scripture*, *the Soul* 81)

Stendahl’s *IDB* article was influential. (Fitzmyer *Scripture*, *the Soul* 81)

But “His view has often been debated.” (Fitzmyer *Scripture*, *the Soul* 81)

E.g.: Dulles, Avery, SJ. “Response to Krister Stendahl’s ‘Method in the Study of Biblical Theology.’” In Hyatt, J.P., ed. *The Bible in Modern Scholarship*. Nashville: Abingdon, 1965. 210-16.

Fitzmyer thinks “biblical theology is not only descriptive. It too is normative, albeit in an inceptive way.” (Fitzmyer *Scripture*, *the Soul* 81)

A “synthesis of the teaching of a New Testament writer, say Paul or John, is not only descriptive, but is also normative.” (Fitzmyer *Scripture*, *the Soul* 81)

E.g.: Fitzmyer, Joseph A., SJ. *Paul and His Theology*: *A Brief Sketch*. Englewood Cliffs: Prentice Hall, 1989. 59-71.

E.g.: “. . . I, as a Christian, have to believe that I, a branch, shall bear fruit (= live a holy life) only if I remain in union with Christ, the vine. “ (Fitzmyer *Scripture*, *the Soul* 81)

Pauline theology synthesizes Paul’s teachings, not just to describe them, but to provide normative doctrines. (Fitzmyer *Scripture*, *the Soul* 81)

A synthesis “is an inceptive norm, however, because biblical theology in itself is not the whole story, and that is where Tradition and systematic theology enter in to interpret the inceptive teaching.” (Fitzmyer *Scripture*, *the Soul* 81)

Systematic theologians “cannot spin off the top of their heads an explanation of justification wholly severed of its biblical roots; it is rather their job to reformulate, perhaps even to [81] reconceptualize, the inceptive biblical teaching on such a topic in the light of Tradition and new developments in the life of the Church.” (Fitzmyer *Scripture*, *the Soul* 81-82)

“In this way biblical theology is a prime and normative factor in the study of the Sacred Page, which is the “soul of sacred Theology.”” (Fitzmyer *Scripture*, *the Soul* 82)

scripture and systematic theology

Scripture is “the sacred page.”

Vatican II (*Dei verbum* §24): scripture is “the Sacred Page” (*sacra Pagina*). (Fitzmyer *Scripture*, *the Soul* 54)

Scripture is “the soul of theology.” (Fitzmyer *Interpretation* 11)

Scripture is “the animating or vivifying principle of the understanding of Christian faith.” (Fitzmyer *Scripture*, *the Soul* 55)

1687: Thirteenth General Congregation of the Society of Jesus

“. . . Scripture as the soul of theology . . . has recently been traced back to the seventeenth century, when it was used in Decree 15 of the Thirteenth General Congregation of the Society of Jesus, held at Rome in 1687 . . .” (Fitzmyer *Interpretation* 11 n 18)

Thirteenth General Congregation of the Society of Jesus: “*ut anima ipsa verae theologiae*.” (Qtd. in Fitzmyer *Interpretation* 11 n 18)

See *Decreta Canones Censurae et Praecepta Congregationum Generalium Societatis Iesu* (3 vols.; Avignon: F. Seguin, 1830), 1:262; J. W. Padberg et al., *For Matters of Greater Moment*: *The First Thirty Jesuit General Congregations*; *A Brief History and a Translation of Decrees*. St. Louis: Institute of Jesuit Sources, 1994. 357.

See: Lera, J.M. “Sacrae paginae studium sit veluti anima Sacrae Theologiae (Notas sobre el origen y procedencia de esta frase).” In Vargas Machuca, A., and G. Ruiz, eds. *Palabra y vida*: *Homenaje a J*. *Alonso Díaz* . . .” Madrid: UPCM, 1984. 409-22.

See: LaFontaine, R., ed. *L*’*Écriture âme de la théologie*. Collection IET 9. Brussels: Institut d’Études Théologiques, 1990.

1893: Leo XVII (*Providentissimus Deus*. *ASS* 26 (1893-94) 283. *EB* §114): “It is most desirable and necessary that the use of the same sacred Scripture should influence the discipline of theology and be, as it were, its soul” (*eiusque proprie sit anima*).” (Fitzmyer *Interpretation* 11)

1920: Benedict XV, *Spiritus Paraclitus* §13. (*AAS* 12 (1920) 409. *EB* §483; Béchard, Dean P., SJ, ed. and trans. *The Scripture Documents* 100.) (Fitzmyer *Interpretation* 11 n 17)

1965 (Oct. 28): Vatican II (*Optatam totius* [decree *On Priestly Formation*] §2. *AAS* 58 [1966] 723): “In the study of sacred Scripture, which ought to be the soul of all theology [54] (*Sacrae Scripturae studio*, *quae universae theologiae veluti anima esse debet*), students should be trained with special diligence.” (Fitzmyer *Scripture*, *the Soul* 54-55 n 2)

1965 (Nov. 18): Vatican II (*Dei verbum* §24; Béchard, Dean P., SJ, ed. and trans. *The Scripture Documents* 29): “The Sacred Scriptures contain the Word of God, and, because they are inspired, they are truly the Word of God. Therefore, let the study of the sacred page be, as it were, the soul of sacred Theology [*anima sacrae Theologiae*] . . . By scrutinizing in the light of faith all truth stored up in the mystery of Christ, theology is most powerfully strengthened and constantly rejuvenated by that [written] word.” (Qtd. in Fitzmyer *Scripture*, *the Soul* 54)

1991: International Theological Commission (*De interpretatione dogmatum*. Gregorianum 72.1 [1991] 5-37. 24 [c. 1.1]): “The study of Sacred Scripture should be the soul of theology, and likewise of all preaching.” (“*Sacrae Scripturae studium theologiae simul et omnis praedicationis sit anima*.”) (*Gregorianum* 72 [1991] 5-37. 24 [c. 1.1].) (Fitzmyer *Scripture*, *the Soul* 54-55 n 2)

Scripture and tradition are the “permanent foundation” of theology. (ch. 11) (Fitzmyer *Interpretation* 11)

### 1961: Karl Rahner’s “Exegese und Dogmatik”

introduction

Rahner, Karl, SJ. “Exegese und Dogmatik.” *Stimmen der Zeit* 168 (1961) 241-62. Rpt.. *Schriften zur Theologie*. 16 vols. Einsiedeln: Benziger, 1954-84. Vol. 5 (1964) 82-111.

Rahner, Karl, SJ. “Exegesis and Dogmatic Theology.” *Theological Investigations*. 21 vols. Baltimore: Helicon; New York: Crossroad, 1961-88. Vol. 5 (1966) 67-83.

Vroom, Hendrik M. “Does Theology Presuppose Faith?” *Scottish Journal of Theology* 45.2 (May 1992) 145-64.

“Prior to the Second World War (and so, prior to Pope Pius XII’s encyclical), theologians often used Scripture merely as a sourcebook for proof texts to support theses spun out almost independently of the Bible. [Karl Rahner] sought to correct that and to establish a mutual dialogue between Catholic exegetes and dogmatic theologians.” (Fitzmyer *Interpretation* 11)

But Rahner, in “Exegesis and Dogmatic Theology” (70-74), discussed “the roles of the exegete and the dogmatic theologian . . .” (Fitzmyer *Scripture*, *the Soul* 82)

He addressed exegetes “with the formal second plural German pronoun “Ihr,” but [used] the familiar “Du,” when he addressed his colleagues, fellow dogmatic theologians.” (Fitzmyer *Interpretation* 11)

He said to the exegetes: (“Exegesis and Dogmatic Theology” 70-74) (Fitzmyer *Scripture*, *the Soul* 82)

“you too “are Catholic theologians””

“you must pay attention to “the Catholic principles governing the relationship between exegesis and dogmatic theology””

you must “build a bridge from your investigations and interpretations to the rest of theology””

you need “a more exact knowledge of scholastic theology”

Rahner also said to the exegetes:

Rahner (“Exegesis and Dogmatic Theology” 78-79): “the exegete has the right and the duty to do the work of the historian of fundamental theology in connection with the New Testament, precisely if and because he should be a Catholic theologian who may not simply start from the bare and unproved act of faith. Hence, he does not always need to begin by simply presupposing the inspiration and inerrancy of Scripture in every case.” (Qtd. in Fitzmyer *Scripture*, *the Soul* 83)

Brown’s responses to Rahner’s criticisms of exegetes:

Brown, Raymond E., SS. “Scripture and Dogma Today.” *America* 157.12 (31 Oct. 1987) 286-89.

Brown, Raymond E., SS. *Biblical Exegesis and Church Doctrine*. Mahwah: Paulist, 1985.

Brown, Raymond E., SS. “Historical-Critical Exegesis and Attempts at Revisionism.” *The Bible Today* 23.3 (1985) 157-65.

He said to the systematicians:

Rahner (“Exegesis and Dogmatic Theology” 77): “You know less about exegesis than you should. As a dogmatic theologian you rightly claim to be allowed to engage [82] in the work of exegesis and biblical theology in your own right, and not just to accept the results of the exegetical work of the specialist. For it is your job as a dogmatic theologian to use all available means for listening to the word of God wherever it is pronounced—and where better than in Holy Scripture? But then you must perform the work of exegesis in the way it has to be done today . . . Your exegesis in dogmatic theology must be convincing also to the specialist in exegesis.” (Qtd. in Fitzmyer *Scripture*, *the Soul* 82-83)

Rahner as exegete

Rahner “was not a good example [83] of a dogmatic theologian who engaged in exegesis as it should be practised . . .” (Fitzmyer *Scripture*, *the Soul* 83-84)

Rahner (*Foundations of Christian Faith*: *An Introduction to the Idea of Christianity*. Crossroad Book. New York: Seabury, 1978. 14): “In reflecting . . . upon the historical credibility of the resurrection and upon the self-understanding of Jesus that is ascribed to him by dogmatic theology, we can make use of only as much scriptural data here as is sufficiently certain today from an honest exegesis. By the very nature of the foundational course, as distinguished from *later and necessary* biblical theology, fundamental theology, ecclesiology and dogmatic theology, we may include only as much exegesis and biblical theology in the foundational course as is absolutely necessary. Then later exegesis and biblical theology can gather, organize and incorporate the rest of the positive, biblical material which must also be included in the church’s theology.” (Fitzmyer *Scripture*, *the Soul* 84 n 49)

“One senses here a begrudging attitude toward Scripture: unfortunately one has to deal with it, willy nilly.” (Fitzmyer *Scripture*, *the Soul* 84 n 49)

“. . . better examples” of systematicians “who engaged in exegesis as it should be practised” are Edward Schillebeeckx, OP, and Walter Kasper.” (Fitzmyer *Scripture*, *the Soul* 84)

But Schillebeeckx “has depended too much on German Protestant interpreters, when he should have been reading more moderate contributions of their Catholic peers.” (Fitzmyer *Scripture*, *the Soul* 84 n 50)

### Some Systematicians on Scripture and Tradition

Joseph Ratzinger

Cardinal Joseph Ratzinger (“Dogmatic Constitution on Divine Revelation.” In Vorgrimler, Herbert, ed. *Commentary on the Documents of Vatican II*. 5 vols. New York: Herder and Herder, 1967-69. Vol. 3., 1968. 3.191. [*Das zweite Vatikanische Konzil*, *Dokumente und Kommentare*]): “the relation should not be understood in terms of a mechanical juxtaposition, but as an organic interpenetration . . . the indissoluble interpenetration of Scripture and tradition.” (Qtd. in Fitzmyer *Scripture*, *the Soul* 77 n 33)

Cardinal Joseph Ratzinger (“Dogmatic Constitution on Divine Revelation” 3.194, his italics): “It is stated that Scripture *is* the Word of God consigned to writing. Tradition, however, is described only functionally, in terms of what it *does*: it hands on the word of God, but *is* not the word of God.” (Qtd. in Fitzmyer *Scripture*, *the Soul* 77)

Cardinal Joseph Ratzinger (qtd. in Stallsworth, P.T. “The Story of an Encounter.” In Neuhaus, R.J., ed. *Biblical Interpretation in Crisis*: *The Ratzinger Conference on Bible and Church*. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1989. 102-90. 118): “There is a mutual relationship here: The Bible interprets the church, and the church interprets the Bible. Again, this must be a mutual relationship. We cannot seek refuge [77] in an ecclesiastical positivism. Finally, the last word belongs to the church, but the church must give the last word to the Bible.” (Fitzmyer *Scripture*, *the Soul* 77-78 n 34)

Gerald O’Collins and D. Kendall

O’Collins, Gerald, SJ, and D. Kendall. “The Faith of Jesus.” *Theological Studies* 53 (1992) 403-23.

The opening section of “The Faith of Jesus,” on “The Nature of Faith,” distinguishes *fides quae* (what Jesus believed) and *fides qua* (Jesus’ commitment of faith). (Fitzmyer *Scripture*, *the Soul* 84)

The article then treats Jesus’ human knowledge. (Fitzmyer *Scripture*, *the Soul* 84)

It reflects a “debate inherited from Thomas Aquinas . . .” (Fitzmyer *Scripture*, *the Soul* 84)

Recent documents “reveal a remarkable change of position that no longer insists that Jesus during his earthly [84] life enjoyed the beatific vision.” (Fitzmyer *Scripture*, *the Soul* 84-85)

The Holy Office (decree *Lamentabili*, 1918)

Pius XII (encyclical *Mystici Corporis Christi*, 1943)

International Theological Commission (Sharkey, M. *International Theological Commission*: *Texts and Documents 1969-1985*. San Francisco: Ignatius, 1989. 185-205. DS 3434)

International Theological Commission (Sharkey *International Theological Commission* 197-223. DS 3645-47)

International Theological Commission (Sharkey *International Theological Commission* 305-16.. DS 3812)

“From their survey O’Collins and Kendall conclude only that Jesus was “(humanly) conscious of (1) his divine identity as Son of God and (2) his revealing/redemptive mission.”” (O’Collins and D. Kendall 411) (Fitzmyer *Scripture*, *the Soul* 85)

“Then they take up the question of Jesus’ human faith . . .” (Fitzmyer *Scripture*, *the Soul* 85)

“the faith of Jesus Christ” (Rom 3:22, 26; Gal 2:16a, 16b, 20; 3:22; Eph 3:12; Phil 3:9) (also Rev 14:12, “faith of Jesus”)

“. . . growing numbers of interpreters admit that faith was an operative factor in the life of the earthly Jesus, who was himself “a model and exemplar of faith.”” (Fitzmyer *Scripture*, *the Soul* 85)

synoptic texts on the content of Jesus’ faith

O’Collins and Kendall (421): what Jesus believed (*fides quae*) “did not coincide perfectly with that of later Christians. In some ways it was different even from the faith of his Jewish contemporaries, inasmuch as, for example, he knew and could not in the technical sense of the word confess the existence of God. At the same time, Jesus’ confession of faith could coincide substantially with that of contemporary and earlier Jews. An analogous approach to the content of faith allows for similarities and differences between the faith of devout Jews, Jesus’ faith, and subsequent Christian faith.” (Qtd. in Fitzmyer *Scripture*, *the Soul* 85)

O’Collins and Kendall’s “treatment of the [85] biblical data” is faulty. (Fitzmyer *Scripture*, *the Soul* 85-86)

“They fail to make clear the distinction between what New Testament writers outside the Gospels attribute to [Jesus’ faith] and what the Gospels may portray as his psychological awareness.” (Fitzmyer *Scripture*, *the Soul* 86)

They cite D. Tracy (*The Analogical Imagination*. New York: Crossroad, 1981. 326): the “psychology of Jesus is unavailable to modern scholarship.”

But they “dismiss it and thus fail to perceive its pertinence to their discussion.” (Fitzmyer *Scripture*, *the Soul* 86)

“Further, they fail to reckon with the complexity of the Synoptic problem, and this weakens their entire approach. . . . [They fail] to reckon with the three stages of the gospel tradition . . .” (Instruction of the Biblical Commission 1964) (Fitzmyer *Scripture*, *the Soul* 86)

O’Collins and Kendall (“The Faith of Jesus” 415): “the Synoptic Gospels do not aim at presenting the inner life of Jesus, and as documents written out of faith, they cannot be read as ‘normal’ historical sources . . .”

“. . . do they, then, really permit us in “the authentic sayings they preserve” to “reach some modest, yet important conclusions about his interior dispositions”?” (“The Faith of Jesus” 416) (Fitzmyer *Scripture*, *the Soul* 86)

“Can one really psychoanalyze Jesus himself on the basis of documents compiled a generation at least after the facts that they describe, even if they do preserve in some fashion “authentic sayings”?” (Fitzmyer *Scripture*, *the Soul* 86)

O’Collins and Kendall gloss over “an important aspect” of “the relation between Scripture and theology . . .” (Fitzmyer *Scripture*, *the Soul* 86)

“For the faith of Christians in the twentieth century is not based solely on what exegetes or theologians can reconstruct as the inner dispositions of Jesus of Nazareth or even on the gospel that he preached as [86] reconstructed by historical research. It is rather normed by the figure of Jesus of Nazareth as passed on to us by the early Christian Church in that Tradition that is enshrined in the Scriptures.” (Fitzmyer *Scripture*, *the Soul* 86-87)

“And not just in the New Testament, but in the total biblical testimony to him.” Fitzmyer *Scripture*, *the Soul* 87 n 57)

“The two have to be kept in tandem: Jesus of Nazareth as the definitive revealer of God his Father *and* the early testimony to him in the Christian kerygma and its Scripture. These two, in tandem, supply the vitality both for Christian faith and Christian theology.” (Fitzmyer *Scripture*, *the Soul* 87)

Avery Dulles (*The Craft of Theology*: *From Symbol to System*. New York: Crossroad, 1992. 81): “The deeds of God in salvation history are not Christian revelation except as taken up into the preaching and memory of the Church, which treasures Scripture as a privileged text.” (Fitzmyer *Scripture*, *the Soul* 87)

“So whether the Jesus of history had “faith” and in what sense he may have had it is really of little importance for the faith of Christians in the twentieth century. That he may have been “a model and exemplar of faith” in the sense of his dedication and obedience to his Father is indeed part of the biblical (New Testament) teaching, as O’Collins and Kendall have well presented it. But that is the question of Jesus’ *fides qua*, whereas the analysis of Jesus’ *fides quae* as a factor for the faith of Christians today is relatively unimportant. Indeed, the meagre results of their investigation reveal its futility.” (Fitzmyer *Scripture*, *the Soul* 87)

Hans Küng’s “Historico-Critical Exegesis as a Challenge to Dogmatic Theology”

In: *Theology for the Third Millennium*: *An Ecumenical View*. New York: Doubleday, 1988. 85-99.

“Küng sees dogmatic theology separated by a gulf from historical-critical interpretation of the Bible. Whereas exegesis should be [87] the “basic theological discipline,” it should open up “the way to the Jesus of history.”” (Fitzmyer *Scripture*, *the Soul* 87-88)

Küng borrows “basic theological discipline” from Catholic exegete Josef Blank: “Exegesis als theologische Basiswissenschaft.” *Theologische* *Quartalschrift* 159 (1979) 2-23.

“Küng (*Theology for the Third Millennium* 86): “the order of the *original* (authentic) tradition of Jesus the Christ (*norma normans*), laid down in the New Testament, as opposed to all *subsequent* church tradition (*norma normata*), must have consequences for defining the relationship between exegesis and dogmatics.” (Qtd. in Fitzmyer *Scripture*, *the Soul* 88)

“But Küng’s call for a “historico-critically responsible dogmatic theology” is undermined by his identification of the *norma normans* with “the Jesus of history” alone.” (Fitzmyer *Scripture*, *the Soul* 88)

“What Küng means by the Jesus of history is in reality “the historical Jesus,” i.e., Jesus as reconstructed by historical research.” (Fitzmyer *Scripture*, *the Soul* 88)

“This historical Jesus is not the same as the Jesus of history, the one who walked the roads of Palestine centuries ago and who evangelized the people of his time. He remains inaccessible to us; what little is known about him is that recovered by historical research, based mostly on a critical reading of the Gospels.” (Fitzmyer *Scripture*, *the Soul* 88)

For the meagre extrabiblical historical record about Jesus, see: Fitzmyer, Joseph A., SJ. *A Christological Catechism*: *New Testament Answers*. Rev. ed. Mahwah: Paulist, 1991. 11-14.

Meier, John P. *A Marginal Jew*: *Rethinking the Historical Jesus*. Anchor Bible Reference Library. New York: Doubleday, 1991. 56-111.

“. . . a critical reading of the Gospels . . . results in “the historical Jesus,” and his story cannot be reconstructed with unanimous consent . . .” (Fitzmyer *Scripture*, *the Soul* 88)

Brief presentation: Fitzmyer, Joseph A., SJ. *A Christological Catechism*: *New Testament Answers*. Rev. ed. Mahwah: Paulist, 1991. 16-18.

“But this “historical Jesus” is a human reconstruction. As such, it can never function as the *norma* [88] *normans* of Christian faith or of theology.” (Fitzmyer *Scripture*, *the Soul* 88-89)

“This is likewise what is at fault in the feminist approach of”: Fiorenza, Elizabeth Schüssler. *In Memory of Her*. New York: Crossroad, 1983. (Fitzmyer *Scripture*, *the Soul* 89 n 64)

The historical Jesus “is no substitute for the written Word of God itself, for the inspired New Testament. If it were such a substitute, Scripture would cease to be the soul of theology.” (Fitzmyer *Scripture*, *the Soul* 89)

“Moreover, Küng . . . writes as a typical systematic theologian in his neglect of the Old Testament, which as part of the written Word of God is also part of the *norma normans* of Christian theology.” (Fitzmyer *Scripture*, *the Soul* 89)

“To be fair to Küng, I have to add that he eventually recognizes that the findings of exegesis have to be subjected to a systematic review “against the background of the history of dogma, theology, the Church, and the world” (pp. 86-87). The overall thrust of his discussion, however, tends to play this down.” (Fitzmyer *Scripture*, *the Soul* 89 n 65)

“ What is at fault here is the failure to recognize that two things have to be preserved in tandem, Jesus of Nazareth and the testimony to him that the Scriptures present. The latter is what the Biblical Commission called an “integral Christology,” one that has listened to the whole of the biblical tradition, the Old Testament as well as the New Testament, since in the Christian view it all bears witness to Christ and has been given to us as the norm of Christian faith and theology.” (Fitzmyer *Scripture*, *the Soul* 89)

Pontifical Biblical Commission. *Scripture and Christology*: *A Statement of the Biblical Commission with a Commentary*. Trans Joseph A. Fitzmyer, SJ. Mahwah: Paulist, 1986. 32 (§1.3.3), 92.

Küng is right, however, when he castigates his dogmatic colleagues for sometimes blocking or ignoring “the findings of historico-critical exegesis (the Neo-Scholastic phase)” or . . . domesticating them “(the phase of speculative harmonization).”67 (*Theology for the Third Millennium* 87) (Fitzmyer *Scripture*, *the Soul* 89)

Biblical Interpretation before Vatican Council II

## Introduction

“. . . it has been the lot of dedicated Scripture scholars to be the target of well-meaning critics who . . . claim that their work undermines Christian faith.” (Fitzmyer *Interpretation* 17)

“conservative” and “liberal”

Developments in the history of biblical interpretation will be labeled “conservative” or “liberal.”

“Conservative” means tending to delay or oppose developments in biblical interpretation.

“Liberal” means tending to advance or promote developments in biblical interpretation.

## Liberal: Alexandrian Philology

introduction

Marrou, Henri-Irénée. *A History of Education in Antiquity*. London: Sheed and Ward, 1956. 466 pp. Rpt. Madison: U of Wisconsin P, 1982. (*Histoire de l'education dans Antiquité*. 3rd. ed. Paris: Seuil 160-216, esp. 165-75.

Pfeiffer, R. *History of Classical Scholarship from the Beginnings to the End of the Hellenistic Age*. Oxford: Clarendon, 1968. 87-279.

“The historical-critical method of biblical interpretation . . . is ultimately derived from the Alexandrian School of interpretation in late Hellenistic times, especially under the Ptolemies who founded the library at Alexandria and attracted famous grammarians, rhetoricians, and philosophers to the Museion.” (Fitzmyer *Scripture*, *the Soul* 8)

The historical-critical method “can be traced to the work of the Scholiasts who commented on Greek epic and lyric poets in the library of ancient Alexandria in the last two or three centuries B.C.” (Fitzmyer *Interpretation* 61)

the Alexandrian library

c. 300 BCE: “A research institute that was especially noted for its scientific and literary scholarship, the Alexandrian Museum was built near the royal palace about the 3rd century bce possibly by Ptolemy I Soter (reigned 323–285/283 bce).” (“Alexandrian Museum.” *Britannica*.)

“The Library of Alexandria was not only the largest learning center of its time but the first of its kind.” (“Destruction of Alexandria Library: A Historical Reappraisal.” *JNU*.*ac*.*bd*.)

284 BCE: Zenodotus of Ephesus “became the director of the library about 284 B.C. . . . [He] collated manuscripts of Homer’s writings and compiled a *Homeric Glossary*, a study of difficult words in those writings.” (Fitzmyer *Interpretation* 61)

c. 200 BCE: “Aristophanes of Byzantium (lived c. 257-c. 180 BC) became the fourth head librarian sometime around 200 BC. Aristophanes of Byzantium edited poetic texts and introduced the division of poems into separate lines on the page, since they had previously been written out just like prose. He also invented the system of Greek diacritics, wrote important works on lexicography, and introduced a series of signs for textual criticism.” (“Library of Alexandria.” *Wikipedia*. 2 July 2023.)

48 BCE: “His [Julius Caesar’s] soldiers set fire to some of the Egyptian ships docked in the Alexandrian port while trying to clear the wharves to block the fleet belonging to Cleopatra's brother Ptolemy XIV. This fire purportedly spread to the parts of the city nearest to the docks, causing considerable devastation.” (“Library of Alexandria.” *Wikipedia*. 2 July 2023.)

c. 175 BCE: “Aristarchus of Samothrace (lived c. 216-c. 145 BC) was the sixth head librarian.[46] He earned a reputation as the greatest of all ancient scholars and produced not only texts of classic poems and works of prose, but full hypomnemata, or long, free-standing commentaries, on them.” (“Library of Alexandria.” *Wikipedia*. 2 July 2023.)

c. 100 BCE: “By this time, all major classical poetic texts had finally been standardized and extensive commentaries had already been produced on the writings of all the major literary authors of the Greek Classical Era.” (“Library of Alexandria.” *Wikipedia*. 2 July 2023.)

“Alexandrian scholarship was probably introduced to Rome in the first century BC . . .” (“Library of Alexandria.” *Wikipedia*. 2 July 2023.)

389 CE: “The second, more famous, burning of the library came at the hands of Theophilus who was Patriarch of Alexandria from 385 to 412 CE. He turned the Temple of Serapis into a Christian church. It is likely that the collection was destroyed by the Christians who moved in.” (“Historical Libraries: The Library of Alexandria.” *MyMCPL*.*org*. 20 Dec. 2019.)

## Church Fathers

conservative: allegorical interpretation

“. . . most of the patristic commentators did not seek to expound the literal meaning of the biblical text, but allegorized it, being preoccupied with what has been called the “spiritual” sense of Scripture.” (Fitzmyer *Interpretation* 61)

“Along with the quest of the literal meaning, an allegorical interpretation of Scripture was also developed, especially by Origen and some of his followers.” (Fitzmyer *Scripture*, *the Soul* 9)

Origen

Quasten, Johannes. *Patrology*. 3 vols. Westminster MD: Newman, 1953. 2.44-45.

J. Quasten (*Patrology*. 3 vols. Westminster MD: Newman, 1950-60. 2.42): “It is not true that this method was for him only a means of eliminating the Old Testament, for which, on the contrary, he had the highest regard. But it is true that he thus introduced into exegesis a dangerous subjectivism leading to arbitrariness and error.” (Qtd. in Fitzmyer *Scripture*, *the Soul* 9 n 7)

Jerome (c. 342-347-420) and Augustine (354-430) on Jonah’s bush (4:6)

Augustine *Ep*. 71.5. *Corpus Scriptorum Ecclesiasticorum Latinorum* (*CSEL*) 34.253. Trans. in *Fathers of the Church* 12.327.

Jonah 4:6, “The Lord God appointed a bush and made it come up over Jonah, to give shade over his head, to save him from his discomfort, so Jonah was very happy about the bush.”

From 389-392 CE, Jerome “translated anew the OT prophets into Latin from the *hebraica veritas* (Hebrew truth), as he was wont to refer to the original Hebrew text. When he reached the fourth chapter of the Book of Jonah, where the prophet in distress of soul and wishing to die goes out of the city of Nineveh and sits down in a hut that he had made for himself, Jerome translated v. 6 as follows: *Et praeparavit Dominus Deus hederam et ascendit super caput Ionae ut esset umbra super caput eius et protegeret eum* (The Lord God prepared ivy, and it grew up over Jonah’s head, that it might be a shade over his head and protect him).” (Fitzmyer *Interpretation* 17)

“The Hebrew word in the Masoretic Text is *qîqāyôn*, the name of some plant not yet identified with certainty. Modern dictionaries note that it is often identified with the castor-oil plant (*Ricinus communis*) but usually cite also the meanings given in the ancient versions.” (Fitzmyer *Interpretation* 18 n )

In “an African town . . . When the people heard the familiar passage with the new word *hedera* (ivy) instead of *cucurbita* (gourd) of older Latin translations based on the Septuagint [κολοκύνθῃ], such a tumult ensued that the bishop had to consult some Jews, who told him that *cucurbita* was the sense of the Hebrew.” (Fitzmyer *Interpretation* 17)

The bishop of the town “sanctioned the reading of Jerome’s new translation in his churches.” (Fitzmyer *Interpretation* 17)

“Even Augustine suspected the motives of the Jews who gave the African bishop that information: “Was it out of ignorance or malice that they replied that what the Greek and Latin manuscripts read and said was (also) found in the Hebrew?” (*Ep*. 71.5. Fitzmyer’s trans.) (Fitzmyer *Interpretation* 17 n 1)

“In A.D. 403, Augustine, who had already been a bishop for about eight years, wrote to Jerome about this incident and protested against the innovation, *hedera* instead of *cucurbita*, because of the effect that it had on the African bishop’s flock. He concluded by suggesting that possibly Jerome was not always right: “And so it seems also to us that you too at times could have erred in some respects.” (*Ep*. 71.5; *CSEL* 34.253) (Fitzmyer *Interpretation* 17)

“Jerome replied “that, though the Septuagint had “gourd,” other Greek translators including Aquila had used “ivy,” and that the Hebrew word actually designated a plant called by the Syrians of his day *ciceion*. [Cf. Hebrew *qîqāyôn*.] “If I had wanted merely to transcribe *ciceion*, no one would have understood me; if I put down ‘gourd,’ I would be saying what is not in the Hebrew; so I put ‘ivy’ to agree with other translators.”” (*Ep*. 112.22; *CSEL* 55.392-93) (Fitzmyer *Interpretation* 18)

Augustine “regarded the Septuagint as inspired . . .” (Fitzmyer *Interpretation* 18)

Augustine (*De civitate Dei* 18.43; *CSEL* 40/2.337; Fathers of the Church 24:156): “For the same Spirit who inspired the original Prophets as they wrote was no less present to the Seventy as they translated what the Prophets had written.” (Qtd. in Fitzmyer *Interpretation* 18 n 4)

So “Augustine answered in A.D. 405 that he still preferred *cucurbita*, the meaning of the word in the Septuagint. Since he regarded the Septuagint as inspired, he begged Jerome for a good translation of it. He also informed the exegete of Bethlehem, who was more interested in the *hebraica veritas*, “I do not wish your translation from the Hebrew to be read in the churches, for fear of upsetting the flock of Christ with great scandal, by publishing something new, something seemingly contrary to the authority of the Septuagint, which version their ears and hearts are accustomed to hear, and which was accepted even by the apostles.”” (*Ep*. 82.35; *CSEL* 34.396; *Fathers of the Church* 12.419) (Fitzmyer *Interpretation* 18)

“. . . Jerome’s translation *hedera* has remained for centuries, while Augustine’s story of the African bishop is recalled as an interesting incident—if not a fable—by the biographers of the learned, irascible, impatient, but saintly Eusebius Hieronymus.” (Fitzmyer *Interpretation* 18)

analogy with modern critics

“. . . the fear that the Scripture scholars of the world are undermining the faith has appeared before in the history of the Church.” (Fitzmyer *Interpretation* 33)

“The mentality of Augustine displayed in this incident is somewhat akin to that which modern Scripture scholars meet in their attempts to set forth the meaning of certain biblical passages. In Jerome’s day, it was a question of translation; today it is a question of interpretation; but the fear is the same: *ne* . . . *tamquam novum aliquid proferentes magno scandalo perturbemus plebes Christi* (for fear of upsetting the flock of Christ with great scandal by publishing something new).” (Fitzmyer *Interpretation* 18)

“The reaction to modern Catholic biblical scholars has been at times . . . a fear that the biblical innovation will upset something.” (Fitzmyer *Interpretation* 18)

use of Church Fathers today

Church Father’s unanimity guarantees infallibility

“Murillo maintained that a unanimous consent of the Fathers resulted in a *de fide* interpretation, no matter what the subject is (e.g., that Moses wrote the Pentateuch).” (Fitzmyer *Interpretation* 20)

Church Father’s unanimity does not guarantee infallibility

Pius XII (*Divino afflante Spiritu* §47): “in the immense matter contained in the sacred Books—legislative, historical, sapiential, and prophetical—there are but few texts . . . about which the teaching of the Holy Fathers is unanimous.” (Qtd. in Fitzmyer *Interpretation* 6)

liberal: literal interpretation

Some “Church writers in the patristic period imitated the techniques developed in such Alexandrian classical philology.” (Fitzmyer *Interpretation* 61)

Origen (c. 185-c. 253)

Field, F. *Origenis Hexaplorum quae supersunt*. 2 vols. Oxford: Clarendon, 1875.

The historical-critical method “was the mode of interpretation [8] employed at first by Origen, the great biblical interpreter, who brought to his task the grammatical, literary, and philosophical training of his time.” (Fitzmyer *Scripture*, *the Soul* 8-9)

“. . . Origen’s critical work on the Hebrew and Greek texts of the OT resulted in his famous *Hexapla* (or sixfold Bible), which arranged the text in six parallel columns: the Hebrew consonantal text in Hebrew characters; the same Hebrew text in Greek characters to fix the vocalization and proper pronunciation (e.g., ἰααβὲ‚ as the proper pronunciation of Hebrew יהוה, hence “Yahweh”); the Greek version of Aquila; the Greek version of Symmachus; the Greek version of the Septuagint; and the Greek version of Theodotion.” (Fitzmyer *Interpretation* 61)

“Origen made use of it in his attempt to establish the critical text of the Old Testament: *Hexapla* . . ., especially in his work on the fifth column, the text of the Septuagint, which he sought to establish as best he could, in comparing it with the Hebrew (which he read only with great difficulty) and with the other Greek versions of Aquila, Symmachus, and Theodotion (where this existed).” (Fitzmyer *Scripture*, *the Soul* 9 n 5)

Lucian of Antioch (c. 240-312)

“. . . allegorical interpretation met with no little opposition on the part of Lucian of Antioch, who objected to its excesses and brought into existence the Antiochene school of literal interpretation.” (Quasten, J. *Patrology*. 3 vols. Westminster MD: Newman, 1950-60. 2.142-43.) (Fitzmyer *Scripture*, *the Soul* 9)

Augustine (354-430)

Collins, R.F. “Augustine of Hippo Precursor of Modern Biblical Scholarship.” *Louvain Studies* 12 (1987) 131-51.

Merkel, H. *Die Widerspruche zwischen den Evangelien*: *Ihre polemische und apologetische Behandlung in der Alten Kirche bis zu Augustin*. WUNT 13. Tübingen: Mohr (Siebeck), 1971.

Augustine “used critical methods in [his] commentaries on biblical books.” (Fitzmyer *Interpretation* 61)

“Augustine used a form of it [the historical-critical method] in . . . *De consensu evangelistarum libri quattuor*.” (Fitzmyer *Scripture*, *the Soul* 9 n 6)

Augustine “expounds some of his theory of interpretation” in *De doctrina christiana libri quattuor* (1.1; 2.18; 3.86). (Fitzmyer *Scripture*, *the Soul* 9 n 6)

Jerome (c. 345-420)

Kelly, J.N.D. *Jerome*: *His Life Writings and Controversies*. London: Duckworth, 1976.

Jerome “used critical methods in [his] commentaries on biblical books.” (Fitzmyer *Interpretation* 61)

“Jerome’s use can be found especially in his commentaries on the Prophets (e.g.. *Commentariorum in Esaiam libri I-XI*), in which he translated the Hebrew (= the Vulgate) along with Septuagint variants, and discussed others in Origen’s *Hexapla*, together with a literal commentary, and often a spiritual exposition of the passage relating it to Christ or the Church.” (Fitzmyer *Scripture*, *the Soul* 9 n 6)

Pius XII pointed out (*Divino afflante Spiritu* 29; Béchard, Dean P., SJ, ed. and trans. *The Scripture Documents* 132) “that “especially in matters pertaining to history” the commentators of past ages lacked almost all the information that was needed for their clear exposition.” (Fitzmyer *Interpretation* 20)

## Middle Ages

The Latin Vulgate was “practically the only Bible in use” from Jerome to the Renaissance. (Fitzmyer *Scripture*, *the Soul* 10)

## Renaissance

conservative

“. . . the ordinary people were not well instructed in biblical teaching or the contents of the Bible.” (Fitzmyer *Interpretation* 1)

liberal

Neil, W. “The Criticism and Theological Use of the Bible.” *The Cambridge History of the Bible*. 3 vols. Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 1979, 1969, 1963. 3.238-93.

The Renaissance emphasized “p*recursus ad fontes*, “getting back to the sources,” which involved the study of classical Greek, the Semitic languages, and the writings of ancient authors whose works had long been neglected . . .” (Fitzmyer *Scripture*, *the Soul* 10)

“Part of that work [*recursus ad fontes*] entailed the study of the Bible in its original languages . . .” (Fitzmyer *Interpretation* 61)

“. . . in practically all earlier periods in the Western Church,” scholars studied the Bible in Latin. (Fitzmyer *Interpretation* 61)

“. . . numerous Catholic scholars were in the forefront of the study of the Bible and the languages in which it was originally composed, Hebrew, Aramaic, and Greek . . .” (Fitzmyer *Interpretation* 1)

“To this period is traced the study of the Bible in its original languages, Aramaic, Greek, and Hebrew, instead of the Latin Vulgate, which had been practically the only Bible in use in the intervening periods in the Western Church since Jerome.” (Fitzmyer *Scripture*, *the Soul* 10)

## Liberal: Reformation

introduction

Stuhlmacher, P. *Historical Criticism and Theological Interpretation of Scripture*. Philadelphia: Fortress, 1977. 32-36.

Luther and Calvin “did not radically depart from the traditional interpretation of Scripture . . .” (Fitzmyer *Interpretation* 61)

But “they accorded the Bible a primacy over the Church and its interpretation of Scripture, which gradually resulted in the abandonment of allegorical interpretation and in an emphasis on the literal sense of the original texts.” (Fitzmyer *Interpretation* 61)

“. . . reformers such as Martin Luther and John Calvin emphasized the study of the written Word of God in a new way and insisted on the instruction and education of the faithful in an area that had become somewhat neglected.” (Fitzmyer *Interpretation* 1)

The Bible “was then being translated widely into the vernacular.” (Fitzmyer *Scripture*, *the Soul* 10)

perspicuity of scripture

The Reformers eliminated tradition as a source of revelation and opted for *sola scriptura*, the Bible alone as an source in religion. One aspect of *sola scriptura* was the perspicuity of scripture, the Bible’s self-explanation to the ordinary reader.

“The doctrine of the clarity of Scripture (often called the perspicuity of Scripture) is a Protestant Christian position teaching that “. . . those things which are necessary to be known, believed, and observed, for salvation, are so clearly propounded and opened in some place of Scripture or other, that not only the learned, but the unlearned, in a due use of the ordinary means, may attain unto a sufficient understanding of them”.” (Qtd. from *The Westminster Confession of Faith*, 1646, ch. 1.) (“Clarity of Scripture.” *Wikipedia*. 8 Apr. 2023.)

“Such a defense of the historical-critical method of interpreting the Bible [as Fitzmyer has given] may seem as though I am imposing a heavy burden on readers, who might justly object: “Why does one have to know all these things about the Bible? Why cannot one just open the book and read it—read it as the Word of *God*?” Such a question is often asked. The answer to it comes from two passages in the Bible itself.” (Fitzmyer *Interpretation* 72)

2 Peter 3 on Paul’s letters

2 Pet 3:15-17, “regard the patience of our Lord as salvation. So also our beloved brother Paul wrote to you according to the wisdom given him, 16 speaking of this as he does in all his letters. There are some things in them hard to understand, which the ignorant and unstable twist to their own destruction, as they do the other scriptures. 17 You therefore, beloved, since you are forewarned, beware that you are not carried away with the error of the lawless and lose your own stability.”

“Whoever wrote that passage at the beginning of the second Christian century was already aware of the difficulty that people were having with the proper understanding of Paul’s letters.” (Fitzmyer *Interpretation* 73)

the Ethiopian eunuch

Acts 8:27b-, “Now there was an Ethiopian eunuch, a court official of the Candace, the queen of the Ethiopians, in charge of her entire treasury. He had come to Jerusalem to worship 28 and was returning home; seated in his chariot, he was reading the prophet Isaiah. 29 Then the Spirit said to Philip, “Go over to this chariot and join it.” 30 So Philip ran up to it and heard him reading the prophet Isaiah. He asked, “Do you understand what you are reading?” 31 He replied, “How can I, unless someone guides me?” And he invited Philip to get in and sit beside him. 32 Now the passage of the scripture that he was reading was this [Isa 53:7b-8]: “Like a sheep he was led to the slaughter, and like a lamb silent before its shearer, so he does not open his mouth. 33 In his humiliation justice was denied him. Who can describe his generation? For his life is taken away from the earth.” 34 The eunuch asked Philip, “About whom, may I ask you, does the prophet say this, about himself or about someone else?” 35 Then Philip began to speak, and starting with this scripture he proclaimed to him the good news about Jesus. 36 As they were going along the road, they came to some water, and the eunuch said, “Look, here is water! What is to prevent me from being baptized?”, 38 He commanded the chariot to stop, and both of them, Philip and the eunuch, went down into the water, and Philip baptized him. 39 When they came up out of the water, the Spirit of the Lord snatched Philip away; the eunuch saw him no more and went on his way rejoicing.”

“Philip draws near and asks him whether he understands what he is reading. The Ethiopian’s answer is well known: “How can I, unless someone guides me?” (8:31). Thus the soon-to-be-baptized Ethiopian Jew reveals his difficult experience in trying to understand a passage . . .—an experience that is often that of the modern reader of the Bible as well. Yet it is also the experience with which the historical-critical method of interpreting the Bible is trying to cope: to guide the reader.” (Fitzmyer *Interpretation* 73)

## 1600s-1700s

conservative: 1545-1648: Counter-Reformation

justification of the dates

1545-1563: Council of Trent

1618-1648: the Thirty Years War

“Part of the unfortunate heritage of the Counter Reformation has been that Catholics tended to shy away from the Bible, as if it were “the Protestant book.”” (Fitzmyer *Interpretation* 1)

“Catholics often lived their lives almost independently of the Bible in the post-Tridentine era.” (Fitzmyer *Interpretation* 2)

“. . . the post-Tridentine heritage . . . came to an end only in the last half of the twentieth century, especially under the influence of the Second Vatican Council.” (Fitzmyer *Interpretation* 2)

liberal: astronomy (the Galileo Affair)

“. . . people commonly believed that the sun moved around the earth.” (Fitzmyer *Interpretation* 62)

Copernicus (1473-1543) and Galileo (1564-1642) “had a important bearing on the study of the literal sense . . . [It] was involved in the interpretation of Josh 10:12-13 about the sun standing still.” (Fitzmyer *Scripture*, *the Soul* 10)

Josh 10:12-13, “On the day when the Lord gave the Amorites over to the Israelites, Joshua spoke to the LORD, and he said in the sight of Israel, “Sun, stand still at Gibeon, and Moon, in the valley of Aijalon.” 13 And the sun stood still, and the moon stopped until the nation took vengeance on their enemies. Is this not written in the Book of Jashar? The sun stopped in midheaven and did not hurry to set for about a whole day.”

1615: “Galileo’s championing of Copernican heliocentrism . . . was investigated by the Roman Inquisition in 1615, which concluded that heliocentrism was foolish, absurd, and heretical since it contradicted Holy Scripture.” (“Galileo Galilei.” *Wikipedia*. 22 July 2023.)

1632: “Galileo later defended his views in *Dialogue Concerning the Two Chief World Systems* (1632), which appeared to attack Pope Urban VIII and thus alienated both the Pope and the Jesuits, who had both supported Galileo up until this point. He was tried by the Inquisition, found “vehemently suspect of heresy”, and forced to recant. He spent the rest of his life under house arrest.” (“Galileo Galilei.” *Wikipedia*. 22 July 2023.)

conservative: Jansenism (1640-1728)

justification of the dates

1640: Jansenism begins with the publication of Cornelius Jansen’s posthumous *Augustinus*.

1728: Louis Antoine de Noailles, cardinal and archbishop of Paris, finally signs Clement IX’s papal bull *Unigenitus* (1713), which condemned Jansenism.

“. . . the Frenchman Pasquier Quesnel [was] one of the leaders [1] of the Jansenist movement.” (Fitzmyer *Interpretation* 1-2)

1693: Quesnel published *Le Nouveau Testament en français avec des réflexions morales sur chaque verset*. (Fitzmyer *Interpretation* 2)

1713: Pope Clement XI’s apostolic constitution (in the form of a papal bull) *Unigenitus Dei Filius* censured 101 of Quesnel’s propositions. (Fitzmyer *Interpretation* 1-2)

“Among the propositions were several that dealt with the Bible, and from them one gains an impression of how the Bible was regarded then in Catholic life.” (Fitzmyer *Interpretation* 2)

On Acts 8:28 (“seated in his chariot, he [the Ethiopian eunuch] was reading the prophet Isaiah [ch. 53]”), Quesnel wrote, “The reading of Sacred Scripture is for everybody.” That proposition was condemned (§80) [DH 2480]. “We would love to know what in it was “offensive to pious ears” or “close to heresy.” (Fitzmyer *Interpretation* 2)

On Acts 8:31 (the eunuch asks, “How can I [understand what I’m reading], unless someone guides me?”), Quesnel wrote, “The holy obscurity of the Word of God is not a reason for the laity to dispense themselves from the reading of it” (§81) [DH 2481].” That proposition was condemned. (Fitzmyer *Interpretation* 2)

On Acts 15:21 (Moses “has been read aloud every Sabbath in the synagogues”), Quesnel had written, “Sunday ought to be kept holy by pious readings and above all by the reading of Sacred Scriptures. It is damnably wrong to want to withhold a Christian from such reading.” (§82).” That proposition was condemned. (Fitzmyer *Interpretation* 2)

liberal: 1637-1804: Enlightenment

justification of the dates

1637: René Descartes’s *Discourse on Method*

1804: Immanuel Kant’s death

historical criticism in the 1600s

Those who developed the method further included: (Fitzmyer *Interpretation* 62)

Dutch jurist and theologian Hugo Grotius (1583-1645) (Protestant)

French Oratorian scripture scholar Richard Simon (1638-1712) (Catholic)

Dutch philosopher Baruch Spinoza (1632-1677) (Jewish)

deist and rationalist (antidogmatic) presuppositions

“. . . Reimarus and the lives of Jesus . . . stemmed either from deist attacks on historical Christianity or historical studies that sought to be liberated from all dogmatic influence, so that the Gospels could be analyzed solely as records of antiquity.” (Fitzmyer *Interpretation* 66)

“One reason why the historical-critical method of biblical interpretation has fallen under suspicion recently is that it was tainted at an important stage in its development with presuppositions that are not necessarily part of it.” (Fitzmyer *Interpretation* 66)

It was tainted by “deist attacks on historical Christianity . . .” (Fitzmyer *Interpretation* 66)

It “was tainted . . . by the rationalist presuppositions with which the *Leben-Jesu Forschung* once used it.” (Fitzmyer *Interpretation* 66)

“Thus rationalist attacks on traditional Christianity, especially its supernatural aspects, [25] were linked to an otherwise neutral method, which they tainted unduly. For what was at fault was the rationalist presupposition with which the method was used, not the method itself.” (Fitzmyer *Scripture*, *the Soul* 25-26)

Hermann Samuel Reimarus (1694-1768)

Reimarus, Hermann Samuel. *Von dem Zweck Jesu und seiner Jünger*: *Noch ein Fragment des Wolfenbüttelschen Ungenannten*. Berlin: Wever, 1784.

Reimarus, Hermann Samuel. *Fragmente des Wolfenbüttelschen Ungenannten*: *Ein Anhang zu dem Fragment vom Zweck Jesu und seiner Jünger*. Berlin: 1788. 5th ed. Berlin: Reimer, 1895.

Reimarus, Hermann Samuel. *Apologie*: *Oder Schutzschrift für die vernünftigen Verehrer Gottes*. 2 vols. Frankfurt: Insel, 1972.

Reimarus, Hermann Samuel. *Reimarus Fragments*. Ed. Charles H. Talbert. Lives of Jesus Series. Philadelphia: Fortress, 1970.

Reimarus, Hermann Samuel. *The Goal of Jesus and His Disciples*. Ed. G.W. Buchanan. Leiden: Brill, 1970.

Critique of Reimarus: Strauss, David Friedrich. *Hermann Samuel Reimarus und seine Schutzschrift für die vernünftigen Verehrer Gottes*. 1863. Rpt. Hildesheim/Zurich: Olms, 1991.

1767: Reimarus finished *Apologie*, *oder Schutzschrift für die vernünftigen Verehrer Gottes*, “but fear of consequences . . . deterred him from publishing it during his lifetime.” (Fitzmyer *Scripture*, *the Soul* 11)

1774-78: the philosopher Gotthold Ephraim Lessing published seven parts of an early draft of Reimarus’ work as *Fragmente des Wolfenbüttelschen Ungenannten*. (Fitzmyer *Scripture*, *the Soul* 11)

“Reimarus’s son disclosed the identity of the unnamed author only in 1814.” (Fitzmyer *Scripture*, *the Soul* 11 n 11)

“The complete manuscript of Reimarus is said to have been published only in 1972 . . .” (Fitzmyer *Scripture*, *the Soul* 11 n 11)

Reimarus attacked Christianity, “but fear of consequences that might ensue deterred him from publishing it during his lifetime. Seven parts of his study were published subsequently by Gottfried Ephraim Lessing under the title *Wolfenbüttel Fragmente* (1774-78).” (Fitzmyer *Interpretation* 62)

## 1800s

liberal: German historism

Historism was founded in Germany (as *Historismus*). (“Historism.” *Wikipedia*. 3 June 2023.)

Leopold von Ranke (1795-1886)

von Ranke, Leopold. *Geschichte der römanischen und germanischen Völker von 1494 bis 1514*: *Zur Kritik neuerer Geschichtschreiber*. Sämmtliche Werke 33-34. 3rd ed. Leipzig: Duncker und Humblot [*sic*], 1885.

von Ranke “made it his ambition to present the past *wie es eigentlich gewesen*, “as it really was.”” (*Geschichte* vii) (Fitzmyer *Scripture*, *the Soul* 11)

The historian von Ranke reacted against “lawlike and quantitative approaches . . .” (“Historism.” *Wikipedia*. 3 June 2023.)

Stefan Berger (“Stefan Berger Responds to Ulrich Muhlack.” *Bulletin of the German Historical Institute London* 23.1 (May 2001) 21–33): by contrast, historicism (*Historizismus*) “is based on the notion that history develops according to predetermined laws towards a particular end.” (“Historism.” *Wikipedia*. 3 June 2023.)

Karl Popper complained that “Historism does not aim for the ‘laws’ of history, but premises the individuality of each historical situation.” (“Historism.” *Wikipedia*. 3 June 2023.)

Historism explains history using sympathy and understanding for actors and events. (“Historism.” *Wikipedia*. 3 June 2023.)

It sees all human institutions as subject to perpetual change. (“Historism.” *Wikipedia*. 3 June 2023.)

The “goal of “objective historiography” affected many biblical scholars of the time.” (Fitzmyer *Interpretation* 62)

deist use of historism

“. . . deist attacks on historical Christianity . . . developed the method . . .” (Fitzmyer *Interpretation* 62)

liberal: life-of-Jesus research

“Reimarus’ work led eventually to the so-called Life of Jesus research (*Leben-Jesu Forschung*) of the mid-nineteenth century.” (Fitzmyer *Scripture*, *the Soul* 11)

The ambitious goal of “objective historiography” affected many biblical interpreters . . .” (Fitzmyer *Scripture*, *the Soul* 11)

Scholars like “Ferdinand Christian Baur, Heinrich E.G. Paulus, David Friedrich Strauss, Bruno Bauer, and Ernest Renan composed their studies of the historical Jesus of Nazareth, treating the Gospels merely as ancient human records.” (Fitzmyer *Interpretation* 62)

The historical-critical method “was tainted seriously by the rationalist presuppositions with which the *Leben-Jesu Forschung* once used it.” (Fitzmyer *Interpretation* 66)

It was “the rationalist spirit with which much of the critical interpretation of the Bible in the nineteenth century [was] conducted in the wake of the Enlightenment.” (Fitzmyer *Scripture*, *the Soul* 15)

“Adolf von Harnack [1851-1930], the patrologist and church historian, sought to curb the extreme tendencies of [66] that allegedly presuppositionless study of the historical Jesus, and emphasized a respect for tradition; but he never abandoned the historical-critical method itself.” (Fitzmyer *Interpretation* 66-67)

Albert Schweitzer (1875-1965)

Schweitzer, Albert. *Von Reimarus zu Wrede*: *eine Geschichte der Leben-Jesu-Forschung*, 1906. 2nd ed. Tübingen: Mohr, 1913.

Schweitzer, Albert. *The Quest of the Historical Jesus*: *A Critical Study of Its Progress from Reimarus to Wrede*. Trans. William Montgomery. London: Black, 1910. Rpt. 1948.

1906: in *The Quest of the Historical Jesus*, Schweitzer “showed that such investigation of the life of Jesus had sprung not from a purely historical interest in Jesus but from a “struggle against the tyranny of dogma,” and that the greatest of such “lives” of Jesus, those by Reimarus and Strauss, had been “written with hate”—“not so much hate of the Person of Jesus as of the supernatural nimbus with which it was so easy to surround him.”” (*The Quest of the Historical Jesus* 4-5) (Fitzmyer *Interpretation* 67)

The Jesus Seminar shared many rationalist, antidogmatic presuppositions. (Fitzmyer *Interpretation* 68)

Funk, Robert W., et al. *The Five Gospels*: *The Search for the Authentic Words of Jesus*. San Francisco: HarperSanFrancisco, 1993.

Funk, Robert W. *The Acts of Jesus*: *The Search for the Authentic Deeds of Jesus*. San Francisco: HarperSanFrancisco, 1998.

Johnson, Luke Timothy. *The Misguided Quest for the Historical Jesus and the Truth of the Traditional Gospels*. San Francisco: HarperSanFrancisco, 1997.

liberal: late 1700s-1900s: archaeological discoveries

introduction

After the Enlightenment [79], “great historical and archaeological discoveries” contributed “to the development of the historical-critical method of interpreting Scripture . . .” (Fitzmyer *Scripture*, *the Soul* 12)

“These discoveries impinged on biblical history” (the history of Israel and the beginnings of Christianity). (Fitzmyer *Scripture*, *the Soul* 12)

Discoveries of “Egyptian, Assyrian-Babylonian, and Ugaritic literature, of Hellenistic Greek documents, and of the Dead Sea Scrolls have opened up areas of information and comparable religious literature, which were unknown to interpreters of the Bible in the patristic, medieval, Renaissance, or even the Reformation periods.” (Fitzmyer *Interpretation* 80)

“Such discoveries were unexpected, but they made it impossible for one to interpret the Bible in the simplistic and often allegorical ways that had been in vogue since the time of the Fathers of the Church and of medieval theologians.” (Fitzmyer *Interpretation* 79)

Rosetta Stone: Egyptian literature

Assmann, J., et al. “Egyptian Literature.” Anchor Bible Dictionary 2.378-99.

Pritchard, J.B., ed. The Ancient Near East: Supplementary Texts and Pictures Relating to the Old Testament. Princeton: Princeton UP, 1969.

Pritchard, J.B., ed. The Ancient Near Eastern Texts Relating to the Old Testament. 3rd ed. Princeton: Princeton UP, 1969.

Rosetta Stone

Andrews, C. The British Museum Book of the Rosetta Stone. New York: Dorset, 1981.

Lagier, C. Autour de la pierre de Rosette. Brussels: Fondation Egyptologique Reine Elisabeth, 1927.

Lepsius, R. Der bilingue Dekret von Kanopus: In der Originalgrosse mit Übersetzung und Erklärung beider Texte. Berlin: Hertz, 1866.

Wallis Budge, E.A. The Decrees of Memphis and Canopus. New York: Frowde, 1904.

Wallis Budge, E.A. The Rosetta Stone in the British Museum. London: Religious Tract Society, 1929.

196 BCE: King Ptolemy V Epiphanes issued a decree in Memphis, Egypt, on a stele; it has three versions of the decree. The top text is in Egyptian using hieroglyphic script. The middle text is in Egyptian using demotic script. The bottom text is in Greek. Thus the Rosetta Stone was “key to deciphering the Egyptian scripts.” (“Rosetta Stone.” *Wikipedia*. 16 July 2023.)

The Rosetta Stone was “inscribed in 196 B.C. to honor King Ptolemy V Epiphanes for many benefactions he had made to Egyptian temples . . .” (Fitzmyer *Interpretation* 79)

decipherment

1799 (July 15): French soldiers found the Rosetta Stone in Rosetta (modern Rashid), a port city in the western Nile delta. (Fitzmyer *Scripture*, *the Soul* 12)

1822: “Its Greek text was read easily, but its chief hieroglyphic text and the Demotic text remained unread, until the former of these texts was deciphered in 1821-22 by the Frenchman Jean François Champollion.” (Fitzmyer *Interpretation* 79)

Finegan, Jack. *Light from the Ancient Past*: *The Archaeological Background of Judaism and Christianity*. 2 vols. Princeton: Princeton UP, 1974. 1.90, 133-34.

“It took about a half century more before that key unlocked the treasures of Egyptian literature.” (Fitzmyer *Scripture*, *the Soul* 12)

1866: “The decipherment of Egyptian hieroglyphs was perfected only with the work of the German scholar Karl Richard Lepsius, on the Decree of Canopus in 1866.” (Fitzmyer *Interpretation* 79)

“. . . in the last third of the nineteenth century, one began to read for the first time the literature of ancient Egyptians . . .” (Fitzmyer *Interpretation* 79)

Egyptian literature and the Bible

Old Testament “wisdom literature, and even some of its historical writings were then compared for the first time with their Egyptian counterparts.” (Fitzmyer *Scripture*, *the Soul* 12)

“. . . for the first time one was able to compare biblical texts with parallel literary genres. The historical, hymnic, ritual, mythical, and sapiential writings of ancient Egypt thus provided important parallels and counterparts for many similar OT passages.” (Fitzmyer *Interpretation* 79)

Bisitun Stone (Iran): Assyrian and Babylonian literature

Bisitun Stone

Hincks, E. *On the First and Second Kinds of Persepolitan Writing*. Dublin: Gill, 1846.

King, L.W., and R.C. Thomson. *The Sculptures and Inscription of Darius the Great on the Rock of Behistun in Persia*. London: British Museum, 1907.

Rawlinson, H.C. *The Persian Cuneiform Inscription at Behistun*. London: J.W. Parker, 1846.

522-486 BCE: during the Achaemenid era (c. 600-c. 300), Darius I the Great (r. 522-486) commissioned the Bisitun Stone (Behistun Stone, Bisutun Stone) on a cliff face (49 ft. by 82 ft.). (“Bisitun Inscripion.” *Wikipedia*. 16 June 2023.)

The cliff face is “along the old caravan [12] road from Babylon to Ecbatana (modern Hamadan, in northwestern Iran).” (Fitzmyer *Scripture*, *the Soul* 12-13)

“It still bears a sixth-century B.C. inscription, written in three languages, Old Persian, Elamite, and Babylonian [a variety of Akkadian]. These different forms of cuneiform record the victory of King Darius I over a rebel, Gaumata, and other of his regal achievements.” (Fitzmyer *Interpretation* 79)

It relates Darius’ 19 victories to quell rebellions early in his reign (though historians ha e concluded “that Darius was actually a usurper . . .”) (“Bisitun Inscripion.” *Wikipedia*. 16 June 2023.)

early 1900s: “an Aramaic version of the inscription was discovered among papyri from Elephantine in Egypt.” (Fitzmyer *Scripture*, *the Soul* 13 n 13)

Greenfield, J.C., and B. Porten. *The Bisitun Inscription of Darius the Great*: *Aramaic Version*. Corpus inscription um iranicarum series 1.5. London: Lund Humphries, 1982.

“An Aramaic translation of this inscription was found at Elephantine, Egypt, in the early part of the twentieth century . . .” (Fitzmyer *Interpretation* 80 n 24)

decipherment

The inscription helped in deciphering cuneiform. (“Bisitun Inscripion.” *Wikipedia*. 16 June 2023.)

1835: the Englishman Henry C. Rawlinson “was the first to climb up to the site and copy the inscription.” (Fitzmyer *Interpretation* 79)

“Rawlinson first deciphered the Old Persian text, and that led to the decipherment of the two other languages.” (Finegan *Light* 234-36.) (Fitzmyer *Scripture*, *the Soul* 13 n 13)

1839: “It was deciphered finally . . . by [79] Rawlinson, a German G.F. Grotefend, an Irishman Edward Hincks, and a Frenchman Jules Oppert.” (Fitzmyer *Interpretation* 79-80)

1846: G.F. Grotefend et al. deciphered the Akkadian cuneiform. (Fitzmyer *Scripture*, *the Soul* 13)

Deciphering the Bisitun Stone “unlocked the secret treasures of Assyrian and Babylonian literatures.” (Fitzmyer *Interpretation* 80)

Foster, B.R. *Before the Muses*: *An Anthology of Akkadian Literature*. 2 vols. Bethesda MD: Press, 1993.

Grayson, A.K. “Mesopotamia, History of.” *Anchor Bible Dictionary* 4.732-77.

Hallo, W.W., et al., eds. *The Bible in the Light of Cuneiform Literature*. Ancient Near Eastern Texts and Studies 8. Lewiston NY: Edwin Mellen, 1990.

Pritchard, J.B., ed. *The Ancient Near East*: *Supplementary Texts and Pictures Relating to the Old Testament*. Princeton: Princeton UP, 1969. Passim.

Assyrian and Babylonian literature and the Bible

With decipherment, “the literature of ancient Assyria and Babylonia became known to Old Testament scholars . . .” (Fitzmyer *Scripture*, *the Soul* 13)

“Then, for the first time, Israel’s law codes, historical writings, poetry, didactic, and sapiential texts could be studied in comparison with the literature of its neighbors to the east.” (Fitzmyer *Interpretation* 80)

1850-1900: Greek and Aramaic literature

Deissmann, A. *Light from the Ancient East*: *The New Testament Illustrated by Recently Discovered Texts of the Graeco-Roman World*. 2nd ed. London: Hodder and Stoughton; New York: Doran, 1927.

Greek literature

language

“. . . thousands of Greek papyri were uncovered in Egypt and shed new light on the language of the Septuagint and the NT. These papyrus texts showed that the Greek Bible, on which so much of the Christian tradition had depended for centuries, was written not in “the language of the Holy Ghost,” as many had tried to characterize the peculiar form of Greek in which biblical writings had been translated or composed, but in ordinary Hellenistic or Koine Greek current in the last three centuries B.C. and the first century A.D.” (Fitzmyer *Interpretation* 80)

literary forms

The “thousands of Greek papyri in Egypt brought to light forms of Greek literature, legal documents, and letters that radically affected the study of the Septuagint and the New Testament.” (Fitzmyer *Scripture*, *the Soul* 13)

Aramaic literature

Fitzmyer, Joseph A., SJ, and S.A. Kaufman. *An Aramaic Bibliography*, *Part I*: *Old*, *Official*, *and Biblical Aramaic*. Baltimore: Johns Hopkins UP, 1992.

“. . . many ancient Aramaic documents from numerous places in Egypt such as Elephantine, Saqqara, etc., . . . came to light . . .” (Fitzmyer *Scripture*, *the Soul* 13 n 14)

1929: Ugaritic literature

Pardee, D., and P. Bordreuil. “Ugarit: Texts and Literature.” Anchor Bible Dictrionary 6.706-21.

Smith, M.S. Untold Stories: The Bible and Ugaritic Studies in the Twentieth Century. Peabody MA: Hendrickson, 2001.

van der Meer, W., and J.C. de Moor. The Structural Analysis of Biblical and Canaanite Poetry. Journal for the Study of the Old Testament Supplements 74. Sheffield: Sheffield Academic, 1988.

Wyatt, N. Religious Texts from Ugarit: The Words of Ilimilku and His Colleagues. Sheffield: Sheffield Academic, 1998.

Ugarit is present-day Ras Shamra, Syria.

1929: “Hundreds of clay tablets were discovered by chance . . .” (Fitzmyer *Scripture*, *the Soul* 14 n 15)

The tablets are “in an alphabetic cuneiform script with a Northwest Semitic language related to Hebrew.” (Fitzmyer *Interpretation* 80)

Ugaritic literature “revealed important Canaanite parallels to Hebrew poetry, especially the Psalms.” (Fitzmyer *Interpretation* 80)

“. . . H. Bauer of Germany and E. Dhorme and C. Virolleaud of France” deciphered them almost immediately. (Finegan *Light* 171-74) (Fitzmyer *Scripture*, *the Soul* 14 n 15)

1947-1956: Dead Sea Scrolls

Fitzmyer, Joseph A., SJ. *Responses to 101 Questions on the Dead Sea Scrolls*. Mahwah: Paulist, 1992. 104-41.

Fitzmyer, Joseph A., SJ. *The Dead Sea Scrolls*: *Major Publications and Tools for Study*. SBLRBS 20. Atlanta: Scholars, 1990.

García Martínez, F., and W.G.E. Watson. *The Dead Sea Scrolls Translated*: *The Qumran Texts in English*. 2nd ed. Leiden: Brill; Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1996.

Vermes, Geza. *The Dead Sea Scrolls in English*.3rd ed. London: Penguin, 1987.

Vermes, Geza. *The Dead Sea Scrolls*: *Qumran in Perspective*. Rev. ed. Philadelphia: Fortress, 1981.

1947-1956: the Dead Sea Scrolls are discovered “near Qumran in the British Mandate of Palestine and in the Jordanian-controlled West Bank of what is now part of Israel.” (Fitzmyer *Interpretation* 80)

“. . . scrolls in eleven caves of the Qumran area . . . have contributed much to the critical study of the Old Testament text and to the historical study of the Palestinian Jewish culture in which Christianity and its New Testament find their matrix.” (Fitzmyer *Scripture*, *the Soul* 14)

all these discoveries: literary forms

“. . . for the first time the biblical writings of the OT could be read in the ancient context in which they had been composed.” (Fitzmyer *Interpretation* 4)

Clearly, the Bible “could no longer be interpreted without serious consideration of the similar and kindred literary forms” in the newly-discovered literatures. (Fitzmyer *Interpretation* 4)

The recovery of “ancient historical, legal, poetical, astronomical, and epistolary literature made it clear that the Old Testament . . . was part of the cultural heritage of the ancient Near East . . .” (Fitzmyer *Scripture*, *the Soul* 13)

“. . . it became clear how important it was to understand the Bible according to its ancient literary genres or literary forms.” (Fitzmyer *Interpretation* 80)

all these discoveries: historical-critical method vs. spiritual method

“The Fathers of the Church, the scholastic theologians, and even the scholars of the Renaissance knew nothing of these neighboring cultures . . .” (Fitzmyer *Scripture*, *the Soul* 14)

“These discoveries . . . explain why modern biblical interpreters must use the historical-critical method of interpretation and why they cannot be [80] restricted to the allegorical and fanciful exposition that characterized so much of the patristic and medieval understanding of the Bible.” (Fitzmyer *Interpretation* 80-81)

conservative reaction

Babel-Bibel controversy

“Unfortunately, some of these discoveries aided and abetted also the rationalist interpretation of the Bible inherited from the so-called Enlightenment. They gave rise to the notorious Babel-Bibel controversy in German-speaking lands, in which the law codes of Assyria and Babylonia were claimed to be the source of much Mosaic legislation, whereas previous generations of Christians and Jews had regarded it simply as divinely inspired.” (Fitzmyer *Interpretation* 81)

cultures and languages

Cardinal Louis Billot, SJ (1846-1931), was professor of dogmatic theology at the Pontifical Gregorian University in Rome and a consultor to the Holy Office. He “treated with ironic disdain the knowledge of ambient cultures and languages of the ancient Near East . . .” (Fitzmyer *Interpretation* 19)

literary genres

Billot “branded literary genres as “genera vanitatis” and concluded that the Bible’s genre was “unique, transcendent, and bearing no comparison with others”” (“singulare, transcendens, nullam cum aliis comparationem ferens”). (Fitzmyer *Interpretation* 20)

Gen 1-11 (the primordial history)

L. Murillo, “who rejected the possibility of popular traditions in Genesis 1-11, held out for their “perfectly historical character.”” (Fitzmyer *Interpretation* 20)

inerrancy in history

L. Fonck “argued that the Bible presents us with a series of historical books (as tradition attests); but history narrates facts in direct judgments. Hence the Bible enjoys a total historicity infallibly narrated; any liberty taken by the hagiographer would be irreconcilable with inspiration.” (Fitzmyer *Interpretation* 20)

liberal reaction

literary genres

1943: Pius XII in *Divino afflante Spiritu* “imposed on Catholic interpreters the obligation of studying the genres used in Scripture.” (Fitzmyer *Interpretation* 20)

Gen 1-11

Pius XII in *Divino afflante Spiritu* “frankly admitted in those chapters a mode of speaking adapted to the mentality of a people but little cultured, which gives a popular description of the origin of the human race and the Chosen People.” (Fitzmyer *Interpretation* 20)

inerrancy in history

Pius XII, in *Divino afflante Spiritu* and *Humani generis*, admits “that the historical narratives are not to be judged by modern critical methods or even by those of the ancient Greeks and Romans, although they do belong to a genre of history that is to be studied and determined by the exegete.” (Fitzmyer *Interpretation* 20)

Pius XII (*Divino afflante Spiritu* 11; Béchard, Dean P., SJ, ed. and trans. *The Scripture Documents* 121): “all these advantages which . . . our age has acquired are, as it were, an invitation and inducement to interpreters of sacred literature to make diligent use of this light, so abundantly given, to penetrate more deeply, [19] explain more clearly, and expound more lucidly the divine oracles.” (Qtd. in Fitzmyer *Interpretation* 19-20)

“These comparisons are not intended as an [20] accusation of scholars of yesterday, who were *bene meriti*, but only as concrete evidence of a change of direction in the path followed by Catholic interpreters.” (Fitzmyer *Interpretation* 20-21)

liberal: an early sign of change: Solomon as author of Qoheleth

“. . . a century ago Catholic and Protestant commentators agreed in considering Solomon the author of Qoheleth.” (Fitzmyer *Interpretation* 21)

1875: then “Delitzsch denied the Solomonic authorship . . .” (Fitzmyer *Interpretation* 21)

1900: the Catholic Albert Condamin, SJ, agreed. (Fitzmyer *Interpretation* 21)

1913: the Catholic Emmanuel Podechard agreed in *L*’*Ecclésiaste*. (Fitzmyer *Interpretation* 21)

1930: Alberto Vaccari, SJ, “another professor at the Biblical Institute,” agreed. (Fitzmyer *Interpretation* 21)

“Today, even the most conservative Catholic scholars” agree. (Fitzmyer *Interpretation* 21)

liberal: Marie-Joseph Lagrange, OP (1855-1938)

Braun, F.-M. *The Work of Père Lagrange*. Milwaukee: Bruce, 1963.

Braun, F.-M. *Père Lagrange*: *Personal Reflections and Memories*. New York: Paulist, 1985. 106-19.

Lagrange, M.-J., OP. *La méthode historique surtout à propos de l*’*Ancien Testament*. Paris: Lecoffre, 1903. Augmented ed.: Paris: Lecoffre, 1904. Rpt. *La méthode historique*: *La critique biblique et l*’*Église*. Introduction by Roland de Vaux. Paris: Cerf, 1966.

Lagrange, M.-J., OP. *Historical Criticism and the Old Testament*. London: Catholic Truth Society, 1905.

Montagnes, B. *Le Père Lagrange* (*1855-1938*): *L*’*exégèse catholique dans la crise moderniste*. Paris: Cerf, 1995.

Montagnes, B. “Père Lagrange.” *Blackfriars* 19 (1938) 397-411, 474-86.

Murphy-O’Connor, J. *The École Biblique and the New Testament*: *A Century of Scholarship* (*1890-1990*). Novum Testamentum et Orbis Antiquus 13. Göttingen: Vandenhoeck und Ruprecht, 1990. 6-9.

Vincent, L.-H. “Le Père Lagrange.” *RB* 47 (1938) 321-54.

Lagrange was a “great Scripture scholar who . . . suffered much from his contemporaries . . .” (Fitzmyer *Interpretation* 112)

1890: Lagrange founded “the Dominican École Biblique in Jerusalem . . .” (Fitzmyer *Interpretation* 63)

1893: Leo XIII’s encyclical *Providentissimus Deus* officially sanctioned the school’s studies. (“École Biblique.” *Wikipedia*. 19 Jan. 2022.)

Lagrange was also the founder “of the highly esteemed biblical periodical, the *Revue Biblique*.” (Fitzmyer *Interpretation* 113)

1903: His small book, *La méthode historique*, “argued that the method was in itself neutral.” So “the historical-critical method could be used rightly by orthodox interpreters of the Bible.” (Fitzmyer *Scripture*, *the Soul* 16)

*La méthode historique* caused “much concern among reactionary elements in the Catholic Church . . .” (Fitzmyer *Interpretation* 113)

Lagrange “suffered greatly” from the anti-Modernists. (Fitzmyer *Interpretation* 63)

“. . . Lagrange suffered much from the integrists . . .” (Fitzmyer *Scripture*, *the Soul* 16)

*La méthode historique* caused concern “from the Consistorial Congregation [now Dicastery for Bishops] of the Vatican itself.” (Fitzmyer *Interpretation* 113)

Consistorial Congregation for Bishops. “Decretum de quibusdam rei biblicae commentariis in Sacra Seminaria non admittendis.” *AAS* 4 (1912) 530-31.

“This decree was issued specifically against an OT introduction written by K. Holzhey, but it included a vague statement about writings of “similar spirit” of P. Lagrange (“ceu scripta plura P. Lagrange”), without further specification.” (Fitzmyer *Interpretation* 113 n. 49)

“The opposition to Lagrange was led above all . . . by a Belgian Jesuit, A.-J. Delattre . . .” (Fitzmyer *Interpretation* 113)

Delattre, A.-J., SJ. *Autour de la Question Biblique*: *Une nouvelle école d*’*exégèse et les autorités qu*’*elle invoque*. Liége: Dessain, 1904.

“. . . Lagrange replied in a pamphlet . . .” (Fitzmyer *Interpretation* 113 n. 50)

Lagrange, Marie-Joseph, OP. *Eclaircissement sur la Méthode Historique*: *À propos d*’*un livre du R*.*P*. *Delattre*, *S*.*J*. Paris: Lecoffre, 1905.

This “was printed in only two hundred copies and circulated privately, but never really published, because Lagrange’s superiors counseled against publication of it.” (Fitzmyer *Interpretation* 113 n. 50)

Delattre’s replies

Delattre, A.-J., SJ. *Le Criterium à l*’*usage de la nouvelle exégèse biblique*: *Réponse au R*.*P*. *M*.*-J*. *Lagrange*, *O*.*P*. Liége: Dessain, 1907.

Delattre, A.-J., SJ. “Une lumière sous le boisseau.” *Revue pratique d*’*apologétique*. 1908. This “also circulated in extract form [*non vidi*].” (Fitzmyer *Interpretation* 113 n. 50)

“. . . Lagrange was eventually forbidden by Vatican authorities to teach and publish further on the OT. So he turned to the study of the NT . . .” (Fitzmyer *Interpretation* 113)

But his many commentaries, “utilizing the historical-critical method, are recalled with gratitude today.” (Fitzmyer *Scripture*, *the Soul* 16)

“. . . his commentaries on the four Gospels remain today weighty tomes that are still consulted with profit, even though they may be a bit out of date.” (Fitzmyer *Interpretation* 113)

“Now that the cause for the beatification of Lagrange has been started and his life’s work is being reviewed, we realize not only how much Lagrange suffered, but also how much good he had done.” (Fitzmyer *Interpretation* 113)

conservative: Protestant fundamentalism

Bergant, Diane. “Fundamentalism and the Biblical Commission.” *Chicago Studies* 34 (1995) 209-21.

Brown, Raymond E., SS. “Biblical Fundamentalism: How Should Catholics Respond?” *St*. *Anthony*’*s Messenger* 98.1 (June 1990) 11-15.

Brown, Raymond E., SS. “The Fundamentalist Challenge: Suggestions for a Catholic Response.” *Catholic Update* 590 (May 1990) 1-4.

de Smidt, J.C. “Fundamentalism—Historical Survey.” *Scriptura* 64 (1998) 37-49.

Discherl, E. “Pluralität ja—Fundamentalismus nein! Vom Umgang mit der Bibel in ‘postmodernen’ Zeiten.” *Bibel und Liturgie* 70 (1997) 208-12.

Gross, W. “Rom gegen den Fundamentalismus.” *Theologische Quartalschrift* 174 (1994) 232-34.

Marrow, Stanley B. *The Words of Jesus*: *A Catholic Response to Fundamentalism*. New York: Paulist, 1979.

Schenker, A. “Der biblische Fundamentalismus und die katholische Kirche.” *Internationale Katholische Zeitschrift/Communio* 30 (2001) 507-12.

Fundamentalism is a “literalist reading of Scripture, a concentration on the letter of the Word . . .” (Fitzmyer *Scripture*, *the Soul* 57)

history

Reformation

Fundamentalism “grew out of a concern for the literal sense that developed at the time of the Reformation. In the time of the Reformers the literal sense was preferred to the multiple and allegorical senses often employed in the Middle Ages.” (Fitzmyer *Scripture*, *the Soul* 57)

In dependence on *sola scriptura*, “fundamentalism severs the interpretation of the Bible from the Spirit-guided tradition that genuinely grew out of it within the Christian faith-community. It is thus often anti-church, neglecting creeds, dogmas, and liturgical practices that are part of the ecclesiastical tradition.” (Fitzmyer *Scripture*, *the Soul* 59)

Princeton theology

After the Enlightenment “insistence on the literal sense became a safeguard against liberal Protestant interpretations of the Bible.” (Fitzmyer *Scripture*, *the Soul* 57)

“William Tennent Sr. of the Log College, Gilbert Tennent and William Tennent Jr. of the College of New Jersey, and Jonathan Edwards of Princeton University are considered predecessors to the Princeton theologians.” (“Princeton Theology.” *Wikipedia*. 29 May 2023.)

“The Princeton theology was a tradition of conservative Reformed and Presbyterian theology at Princeton Theological Seminary lasting from the founding of that institution in 1812 until the 1920s, after which, due to the increasing influence of theological liberalism at the school, the last Princeton theologians left to found Westminster Theological Seminary.” (“Princeton Theology.” *Wikipedia*. 29 May 2023.)

The primary Princeton theologians were Archibald Alexander (1772-1851), Charles Hodge (1797-1878), Archibald Alexander Hodge (1823-1886), and B.B. Warfield (1851-1921).

The Princeton theologians sought to blend “Old School Presbyterian Calvinist orthodoxy [with] a warm evangelicalism and a high standard of scholarship.” (“Princeton Theology.” *Wikipedia*. 29 May 2023.)

“In 1881 Warfield wrote a joint article with A.A. Hodge on the inspiration of the Bible. It drew attention because of its scholarly and forceful defense of the inerrancy of the Bible. In many of his writings, Warfield attempted to demonstrate that the doctrine of Biblical inerrancy was simply orthodox Christian teaching, and not merely a concept invented in the nineteenth century. His passion was to refute the liberal element within Presbyterianism and within Christianity at large.” (“B.B. Warfield.” *Wikipedia*. 2 July 2023.)

Ten of Warfield’s articles, written 1892-1915, were published in 1948 as *The Inspiration and Authority of the Bible*. (Rev. and enhanced ed. Phillipsburg NJ: P&R [formerly Presbyterian and Reformed], 2023.)

1875-97: American Bible Conference

The American Bible Conference (officially “Believers' Meeting for Bible Study”; it met every year from 1875 to 1897 [except 1884]) met at Niagara, New York. (“Niagara Bible Conference.” *Wikipedia*. 17 May 2023.)

1878: 14 “fundamental beliefs were established by evangelical pastors. The Niagara Creed does not explicitly affirm dispensationalism, but it refers to several key dispensationalist beliefs, including the reality of the millennium [and] the restoration of Israel . . .” (“Niagara Bible Conference.” *Wikipedia*. 17 May 2023.)

1895: “The name “fundamentalism” is traced directly to the American Bible Conference . . . in 1895, at which conservative evangelical theologians issued “Five Points of Fundamentalism,” by which they meant the verbal inerrancy of Scripture, the divinity of Christ, the virgin birth, the substitutionary theory of the atonement, and the bodily resurrection and second coming of Christ.” (Fitzmyer *Scripture*, *the Soul* 57)

literalist

“. . . insistence on the inspiration of the biblical text or on the authority of the written Word of God was accompanied by a literalist reading of the Bible to guarantee the fundamentals of Christian doctrine.” (Fitzmyer *Interpretation* 60)

Sometimes “a literalist or fundamentalistic understanding of Scripture [is] a concentration on the “letter” of the text that would exclude figurative language, metaphorical expression, parables, ironic statements, or even anthropomorphic descriptions of God.” (Fitzmyer *Scripture*, *the Soul* 57)

Sometimes “a literalist or fundamentalistic understanding of Scripture [is] . . . the “letter” of the text without regard of its contextual meaning, its relational meaning, or its form.” (Fitzmyer *Scripture*, *the Soul* 57)

inerrancy

Fundamentalists “were unified in upholding the truth of scripture—which they conceived primarily in terms of factual reliability—against the theories of higher criticism.” (Higher criticism is the historical-critical method, including source and form criticism.) (Harris, Harriet A. *Fundamentalism and Evangelicals*. Oxford: OUP, 1998. 1-2.)

Fundamentalism “insists unduly on the inerrancy of details, especially those dealing with historical or would-be scientific matters, and tends to regard as historical everything narrated in the past tense without regard for what might have been intended only as symbolic or figurative.” (Fitzmyer *Scripture*, *the Soul* 58)

Fundamentalism “tends to treat the biblical text as though it were dictated verbatim by the Spirit . . .” (Fitzmyer *Scripture*, *the Soul* 58)

It “has difficulty in admitting that God’s Word has been couched in *human* language and has been produced under divine inspiration by human authors with varied abilities and resources . . .” (Fitzmyer *Scripture*, *the Soul* 58)

“It and fails to recognize that God’s Word has been formulated in time-conditioned human language and phraseology.” (Fitzmyer *Scripture*, *the Soul* 58)

“It neglects the literary genres and modes of human thought . . .” (Fitzmyer *Scripture*, *the Soul* 58)

“For some biblical fundamentalists, inerrancy extends even to scientific and historical matters. [1] . . . We do not look upon the Bible as an authority for science or history.” (National Conference of Catholic Bishops 1-2)

Most evangelicals “perpetuated the fundamentalist doctrine of an error-free Bible . . .” (Harris, Harriet A. *Fundamentalism and Evangelicals*. Oxford: OUP, 1998. 1-2.)

Fundamentalism “became a refusal to analyze the text or to confront its problematic aspects. Problems were not admitted; harmonization of texts was pursued.” (Fitzmyer *Interpretation* 60)

Fundamentalism “is rooted in an ideology that is not biblical . . . an unquestioning, uncritical reading of the Bible as the sole source of teaching about Christian life and salvation.” (Fitzmyer *Scripture*, *the Soul* 58)

It can adopt “an antiquated biblical world-view that inhibits dialogue with a wider view of culture and belief.” (Fitzmyer *Scripture*, *the Soul* 58)

It often derives from biblical texts “political conceptions and social attitudes that are prejudiced, racist, and simply contrary to the Christian gospel itself.” (Fitzmyer *Scripture*, *the Soul* 59)

Fundamentalism “is an ideology that is itself not biblical and does not stem from the Bible. It often brings to the reading of the Bible a presupposition of divine dictation and a mode of understanding that prescinds from or fails to cope with the literary genres or forms in which God’s Word was formulated by human beings long ago.” (Fitzmyer *Interpretation* 83)

The Pontifical Biblical Commission was “rather critical of Fundamentalism.” (*The Interpretation of the Bible in the Church*. 1993. 69-72) (Fitzmyer *Interpretation* 83)

It separated “this literalist reading of the Bible from the methods and approaches in which it found value.” (Fitzmyer *Interpretation* 83)

“The English translation entitles section I:F as “Fundamentalist Interpretation,” whereas the original French version has as the title “Lecture fondamentaliste,” a title that was chosen expressly by the Commission in order not to grace such a mode of “reading” with the status of a method or approach.” (Fitzmyer *Interpretation* 83 n 33)

“As Christians, we must be interested in the *literal sense* of God’s written Word, but that is something quite different from a literalist reading of it, as if it were dictated by the Holy Spirit.” (Fitzmyer *Interpretation* 83)

liberal: 1893 (Nov. 18): Leo XIII’s encyclical *Providentissimus Deus* (*On the Study of Scripture*)

AAS 26 (1893-94) 279-92. DH 3280-94. Béchard, Dean P., SJ, ed. and trans. *The Scripture Documents*. 2002. 37-61.

Leo XIII “had to cope with the . . . Enlightenment and its . . . critical interpretation of ancient documents, such as the Bible, as it sought to be rid of dogma, revelation, or anything supernatural.” (Fitzmyer *Interpretation* 4)

“Leo XIII also recognized the tremendous historical, archaeological, and scientific discoveries of the nineteenth century, which profoundly affected the interpretation of the Bible . . .” (Fitzmyer *Interpretation* 4)

E.g., deciphering the Rosetta Stone revealed Egyptian literature.

E.g., deciphering the Bisitun Stone revealed Assyrian and Babylonian literature.

The 1800s discoveries (Egyptian, Assyrian, Babylonian, and Greek) and the Babel-Bibel controversy “were part of the reason why Pope Leo XIII issued his encyclical *Providentissimus Deus* (1893) to give guidance to Catholic biblical interpreters.” (Fitzmyer *Interpretation* 81)

*Providentissimus Deus* opposed rationalism. The causes of rationalism included:

“the critical spirit of the Enlightenment”

“German historicism”

“the *Babel-Bibel* disputes”

evolution

“All of this contributed to the Modernism that marked the end of the nineteenth and the beginning of the twentieth century in the Catholic Church.” (Fitzmyer *Interpretation* 4)

## 1900s

conservative: c. 1890-c. 1910: Modernism

justification of the dates

1893: Leo XIII’s *Providentissimus Deus*.

1908: closure of the *New York Review* (published from 1905 to 1908 by the Archdiocese of New York’s Saint Joseph’s Seminary). It was “suppressed for modernist tendencies.” (“Modernism in the Catholic Church.” *Wikipedia*. 12 June 2023.)

Modernism tried “to reconcile . . . the Bible and Catholic tradition in light of the historical-critical method and new philosophical and political developments of the late 19th and early 20th centuries.” (“Modernism in the Catholic Church.” *Wikipedia*. 12 June 2023.)

1907: Pius X’s encyclical *Pascendi Dominici gregis*

*Pascendi* condemned modernism as “the synthesis of all heresies.” (“Modernism in the Catholic Church.” *Wikipedia*. 12 June 2023.)

“The term *modernism* [used by opponents] . . . came to prominence” in *Pascendi*. (“Modernism in the Catholic Church.” *Wikipedia*. 12 June 2023.)

Fitzmyer calls anti-Modernists “integrists.” (Fitzmyer *Interpretation* 63) They are also called “integralists.”

“Integralism could be said to merely be the modern continuation of the traditional Catholic conception of Church-State relations . . .” E.g., Pius IX’s “Syllabus of Errors” (an appendix to his encyclical *Quanta cura*, 1864) “condemned the idea that the separation of Church and State is a moral good.” (“Integralism.” *Wikipedia*. 3 June 2023.)

“The fears of the period of Modernism . . ., however legitimate they might have been, . . . cast a dark cloud over much of Catholic biblical scholarship of the first part of the twentieth century. That cloud was lifted in the appearance of the encyclical of Pius XII in 1943, *Divino afflante Spiritu*, and that day has passed.” (Fitzmyer *Interpretation* 33)

“The fears of the period of Modernism . . ., however legitimate they might have been, . . . cast a dark cloud over much of Catholic biblical scholarship of the first part of the twentieth century.” (Fitzmyer *Interpretation* 33)

“The dark cloud of reaction that set in . . . during the period of Modernism . . . lifted” in 1943, with Pius XII’s encyclical *Divino afflante Spiritu*. (Fitzmyer *Interpretation* 63)

conservative: 1902-1943: the Pontifical Biblical Commission (PBC)

The *responsa*: *Enchiridion biblicum*. 4th ed. Naples: M. D’Auria, 1961. §§160-61, 181-84, 187-89, 276- 80, 324-40, 383-416, 496, 513-14.

The *responsa* in English: *Rome* *and* *the* *Study* *of* *Scripture*. Rev. ed. St, Meinrad: Grail, 1962 (“with the same marginal numbers as in *EB*”). (Fitzmyer *Scripture*, *the Soul* 15 n 18)

“For a convenient summary of them and their background, see”: *New Jerome Biblical Commentary* 1166-74. (Fitzmyer *Scripture*, *the Soul* 15 n 18)

1902: “The second factor that led up to *Divino afflante Spiritu* [in 1943] was the establishment of the Pontifical Biblical Commission by Pope Leo XIII in 1902 with his Apostolic Letter *Vigilantiae studiique*.” (AAS 35 [1902-03] 234-38. Béchard, Dean P., SJ, ed. and trans. *The Scripture Documents*. 2002. 62-66. *Enchiridion biblicum* §§538-69. *Rome* *and* *the* *Study* *of* *Scripture* §§137-48.) (Fitzmyer *Interpretation* 4)

“Ostensibly it was [14] to promote biblical studies in the Church in light of these new [archaeological] discoveries . . .” (Fitzmyer *Scripture*, *the Soul* 14-15)

“. . . but it was also to guard against excessive critical interpretations of the Bible. The latter were seen to stem from [rationalism]. The first word of Leo’s apostolic letter, *Vigilantiae*, set the tone for the activity of the Commission in the first third of the twentieth century.” (Fitzmyer *Scripture*, *the Soul* 15)

The Commission “had the task of a watchdog, or of vigilantes.” (Fitzmyer *Interpretation* 4)

responsa

The Commission “had to answer questions posed to it on biblical matters; its *responsa* dealt with such matters as the Mosaic authorship of the Pentateuch [4] (1906), the authenticity and historicity of the Johannine Gospel (1907), the historicity of Genesis 1-3 (1909).” (Fitzmyer *Interpretation* 4-5)

But many *responsa* “were negative reactions to proposals made by biblical interpreters using the historical-critical method: responses about the Mosaic authorship of the Pentateuch, the Synoptic Problem, and the historical character of the canonical Gospels.” (Fitzmyer *Scripture*, *the Soul* 15)

The Commission’s *responsa* (responses) are “often wrongly called “decrees” . . .” (Fitzmyer *Scripture*, *the Soul* 15)

1907: Pius X’s *motu proprio* *Praestantia Sacrae Scripturae* (on the decisions of the Biblical Commission)

*ASS* 40 (1907) 723-26; *EB* §§96-98; Béchard, Dean P., SJ, ed. and trans. *The Scripture Documents*. 2002. 78-79.

Pius X (*Praestantia Sacrae Scripturae*): decisions of the Biblical Commission “have proved very useful for the promotion and guidance of sound biblical scholarship in accordance with the established norms.” (Fitzmyer *Interpretation* 39 n 10)

“That formulated their utilitarian and practical aim or purpose.” (Fitzmyer *Interpretation* 39 n 10)

Pius X “required of Catholics the same submission to them [the *responsa*] as to similar papally approved decrees of other Roman congregations. The result was that the Commission’s *responsa* cast a dark cloud of fear and reactionary conservatism over Catholic clergy and biblical scholars . . .” (Fitzmyer *Interpretation* 5)

Pius X (*Praestantia Sacrae Scripturae*, italics in original): “all are bound in conscience to submit to the decisions of the Biblical Commission, which have been given in the past and shall be given in the future, *in the same way as the Decrees pertaining to doctrine issued by the Sacred Congregations and approved by the Sovereign Pontiff*.” (Qtd. in Fitzmyer *Interpretation* 39 n 10)

Pirot, L. “Commission biblique.” *DBSup* 2.111-13.

Siegman, E.F. “The Decrees of the Pontifical Biblical Commission.” *CBQ* 18 (1956) 23-29. (See 120-21 n. 25.) (A “later semi-official clarification of the value of the Commission’s . . . *responsa*,” Fitzmyer *Interpretation* 39 n 10.)

“That statement of Pius X was reiterated in the Commission’s *Responsum* of 27 February 1934.” (*EB* §519) (Fitzmyer *Interpretation* 39 n 10)

“Debate ensued among theologians whether the decisions of the Biblical Commission were disciplinary or doctrinal; most seemed to think that they were not merely disciplinary, but indirectly doctrinal.” (Fitzmyer *Interpretation* 39 n 10)

“There was also a discussion whether they were concerned with *veritas* (truth) or *securitas*.” (Fitzmyer *Interpretation* 39 n 10)

“. . . the *responsa* and other instructions of the Biblical Commission [are] not considered to be infallible (in the technical sense).” (Fitzmyer *Interpretation* 39 n 10)

the PBC and the historical-critical method

“The Commission never condemned the [historical-critical] method itself . . .” (Fitzmyer *Scripture*, *the Soul* 15)

But many *responsa* “were negative reactions to proposals made by biblical interpreters using the historical-critical method: responses about the Mosaic authorship of the Pentateuch, the Synoptic Problem, and the historical character of the canonical Gospels.” (Fitzmyer *Scripture*, *the Soul* 15)

The effect “was to cast a dark cloud of reaction and fear over Catholic biblical scholarship in the early part of the twentieth century.” (Fitzmyer *Scripture*, *the Soul* 15)

The PBC’s condemnations “deterred most Catholic interpreters from using the historical-critical method.” (Fitzmyer *Scripture*, *the Soul* 16)

major PBC documents prior to 1943 (*Divino afflante Spiritu*)

*On Implied Citations Contained in Sacred Scripture*. (13 Feb. 1905.) *ASS* 37 (1904-05) 666.

*Concerning Only Apparently Historical Narratives*. (23 June 1905.) *ASS* 38 (1905-06) 124.

*On the Authenticity of the Mosaic Authorship of the Pentateuch*. (27 June 1906.) *ASS* 39 (1906) 377.

*On the Authorship and Historical Truth of the fourth Gospel*. *ASS* 40 (1907) 383.

*On the Nature and Authorship of the Book of Isaiah*. (28 June 1908.) *ASS* 41 (1908) 613.

*Concerning the Historical Nature of the First Three Chapters of Genesis*. (30 June 1909.) *AAS* 1 (1909) 567-569.

*Regarding the Authorship and Times of the Composition of the Psalms*. (1 May 1910.) *AAS* 2 (1910) 354.

*On the Gospel according to Matthew*. (19 June 1911.) *AAS* 3 (1911) 294-296.

*On the Gospels according to Mark and Luke*. (26 June 1912.) *AAS* 4 (1912) 463-465.

*Concerning the Synoptic Question*. (June 26, 1912). *AAS* 4 (1912) 465.

*Questions Regarding the Acts of the Apostles*. (12 June 1913.) *AAS* 5 (1913) 291-292.

*Questions Regarding the Pastoral Letters of the Apostle Paul*. (12 June 1913.) *AAS* 5 (1913) 292-293.

*On the Letter to the Hebrews*. (24 June 1914.) *AAS* 6 (1914) 417-418.

*The Parousia in the Letters of Saint Paul*. (18 June 1915.) *AAS* 7 (1915) 357-358.

*On the False Interpretation of Two Biblical Texts*. (1 July 1933.) *AAS* 25 (1933) 344.

*Condemnation of the Work* “*Die Einwanderung Israels in Kanaan*.” (27 Feb. 1934.) *AAS* 26 (1934) 130.

*Regarding an Anonymously Written Denigratory Work*. (20 Aug. 1941.) *AAS* 33 (1941) 465-472.

conservative: 1900-1961: the preconciliar Church

G.P. Fogarty (*American Catholic Biblical Scholarship*: *A History from the Early Republic to Vatican II*. San Francisco: Harper and Row, 1989. 198): “The state of Catholic biblical scholarship in the United States at the end of the 1920s was bleak. Whatever scholarship there had been at the beginning of the century had either been destroyed in the wake of Modernism or had gone underground. . . . The type of neo-Thomism, formulated in the nineteenth century to combat rationalism, had become so pervasive that Catholic writers confused theology with doctrine. . . . Professors . . . took as their starting point, not the criticism of texts, but the declarations of the popes or the Biblical Commission. . . . In effect, integrism had become a habit of mind, even after Benedict XV had condemned it. The American church gave little indication that it was ready to undertake any type of scholarly endeavor.” (Qtd. in Fitzmyer *Scripture*, *the Soul* 15 n 19)

“The preconciliar Catholic Church in the twentieth century was a deeply eucharistic Church, in which most of the faithful had no idea of what the “Word of God” was all about. Catholic life was centered then on the Mass, and Catholics lived by the words of the Church: [2] occasional encyclicals of the Holy Father, pastoral instructions of their diocesan bishops, and the catechism in its various forms taught by priests and religious. Readings from the written Word of God or the Bible were used in the Mass, but that was celebrated usually in Latin, and the readings were not always used for the topic of the sermon. The result was that many Catholics at that time lived abiblical or nonbiblical lives.” (Fitzmyer *Interpretation* 2-3)

conservative: 1920: Benedict XV’s encyclical *Spiritus Paraclitus*

*AAS* 12 (1920) 385-422. *EB* §§440-95. Béchard, Dean P., SJ, ed. and trans. *The Scripture Documents* 81-111 esp. 90. DH 3650-54.

In Benedict XV’s *Spiritus Paraclitus* §7, “*genera* . . . *litterarum* is poorly translated as “kinds of literature” instead of “literary genres.”” (Fitzmyer *Interpretation* 81 n 30)

Benedict XV “could find no good in the study of the literary genres of the Bible . . .” (Fitzmyer *Interpretation* 81)

That was “misguided advice . . .” (Fitzmyer *Interpretation* 81)

liberal: Rudolf Bultmann (1884-1976)

Bultmann, Rudolf. “New Testament and Mythology.” In Bartsch, H.W., ed. *Kerygma and Myth*: *A Theological Debate*. London: SPCK, 1953. 1-44.

Bultmann, Rudolf. *Theology of the New Testament*. 2 vols. London: SCM, 1952, 1955.

Bultmann, Rudolf. *History of the Synoptic Tradition*. Oxford: Blackwell, 1963. 11-69.

Bultmann, Rudolf. “Is Exegesis without Presuppositions Possible?” *Existence and Faith*: *Shorter Writings of Rudolf Bultmann*. Ed. S.M. Ogden. London: Hodder and Stoughton, 1960. 289-96. (“Ist voraussetzungslose Exegese möglich?” *TZ* 13 (1957) 409-17. Rpt. in *Glauben und Verstehen*: *Gesammelte Aufsätze III*. Tübingen: Mohr (Siebeck), 1960. 142-50.

Bultmann, Rudolf. *Jesus and the Word*. New York: Scribner, 1958.

Bultmann, Rudolf. *Jesus Christ and Mythology*. New York: Scribner, 1958.

Dibelius, Martin. *From Tradition to Gospel*. New York: Scribner, 1935. 40-43.

Nineham, D.E. “Demythologization.” In Coggins, R.J., and J.L. Houlden, eds. *A Dictionary of Biblical Interpretation*. London: SCM; Philadelphia: Trinity Press International, 1990. 171-74.

Schmidt, K.L.

Taylor, Vincent. *Formation of the Gospel Tradition*. London: Macmillan, 1949. 130.

Kegley, C.W. *The Theology of Rudolf Bultmann*. London: SCM, 1966.

Macquarrie, John. *An Existentialist Theology*: *A Comparison of Heidegger and Bultmann*. New York: Macmillan, 1955.

Perrin, Norman. *The Promise of Bultmann*. Philadelphia: Fortress, 1969.

Though Bultmann used the historical-critical method (form criticism of the gospels), he had “demythologizing, existentialist presupposition[s] . . .” (Fitzmyer *Scripture*, *the Soul* 28)

Bultmann “associated the historical-critical method with philosophical and theological presuppositions . . .” (Fitzmyer *Scripture*, *the Soul* 27)

He used the historical-critical method (form criticism of the gospels) but had “demythologizing, existentialist presupposition[s] . . .” (Fitzmyer *Scripture*, *the Soul* 28)

Bultmann “linked historical criticism with a form of kerygmatic theology, which depended heavily on Luther’s justification by faith alone, Strauss’s mythical interpretation of the Gospels, and the early existentialist philosophy of M. Heidegger.” (Fitzmyer *Scripture*, *the Soul* 26)

kerygma

“The kerygma addresses us through the NT, and its Word is the basis as well as the object of our faith.” (Fitzmyer *Interpretation* 67)

“Bultmann was interested solely in what the gospel proclaims and how its preached Word affects the individual believer of today. He sought thus to subordinate event to word . . .” (Fitzmyer *Interpretation* 67)

disinterest in the historical Jesus

“Emphasis on the preached Word and justification *fide sola* resulted in Bultmann’s lack of interest in Jesus of Nazareth himself, or in what he did or said . . .” (Fitzmyer *Scripture*, *the Soul* 26)

“. . . the quest of the historical basis of the kerygma was for him a betrayal of the principle of faith alone.” (Fitzmyer *Interpretation* 67)

“Bultmann was uninterested in any continuity between Stage I and the later stages of the gospel tradition and emphasized only what the gospel proclaims and how its preached Word accosts the individual believer of today.” (Fitzmyer *Scripture*, *the Soul* 26)

“. . . NT theology began with the primitive kerygma—and not before it.” (Fitzmyer *Interpretation* 67)

“Hence Bultmann’s . . . unconcern about the lack of continuity between Stage II of the gospel tradition and Stage I. . . . Thus Bultmann was led to the demythologization of the event.” (Fitzmyer *Interpretation* 67)

“He thus sought to subordinate event to word; indeed, for him the word may be said to have generated the event.” (Fitzmyer *Scripture*, *the Soul* 26)

“Hence Bultmann’s lengthy treatment of the form he called an “apophthegm” . . .” (Fitzmyer *Interpretation* 67)

“Hence Bultmann’s favored treatment of the form called by him “apophthegm,” the narrative in the gospel tradition that was preserved because of the pronouncement that it enshrined.” (Fitzmyer *Scripture*, *the Soul* 26)

Bultmann called this form an “apophthegm.” (*History of the Synoptic Tradition*. Oxford; Blackwell, 1968. 11-69.) (Fitzmyer *Scripture*, *the Soul* 26 n 34)

Martin Dibelius called it a “paradigm.” (*From Tradition to Gospel*. New York: Scribner, 1935.) (Fitzmyer *Scripture*, *the Soul* 26 n 35)

Vincent Taylor “more accurately” called it a “pronouncement story.” (*The Formation of the Gospel Tradition*. London: Macmillan, 1949. 22-24. 29-30.) (Fitzmyer *Scripture*, *the Soul* 26 n 34)

A pronouncement story is “a narrative account that enshrines a punch-line saying of Jesus.” (Taylor *Formation* 130) (Fitzmyer *Interpretation* 67 n 21)

“The event narrated was unimportant so long as the reader was accosted by the apophthegm or punch-line enshrined in it.” (Fitzmyer *Interpretation* 67)

“Thus Bultmann was led to the demythologization of the event, and for him the quest for the historical basis of the kerygma was a betrayal of the principle of faith alone. Rather, New Testament theology begins with the primitive kerygma—and not before it.” (Bultmann *Theology* 3) (Fitzmyer *Scripture*, *the Soul* 27)

Bultmann (*Theology of the NT* 35): “the personality of Jesus has no importance for the kerygma either of Paul or of John or for the New Testament in general. Indeed the tradition of the earliest Church did not even unconsciously preserve a picture of his personality. Every attempt to reconstruct one remains a play of subjective imagination.” (Qtd. in Fitzmyer *Scripture*, *the Soul* 27 n 35)

Also: Bultmann, Rudolf. *Jesus and the Word*. New York: Scribner, 1958.

Bultmann, Rudolf. *Jesus Christ and Mythology*. New York: Scribner, 1958.

Bultmann, Rudolf. *Das Urchristentum im Rahmen der antiken Religionen*. Erasmus-Bibliothek. Zurich: Artemis, 1949. 2nd ed., 1954.

“The kerygma addresses us through the New Testament, and its Word is the basis as well as the object of our faith.” (Fitzmyer *Scripture*, *the Soul* 27)

The “preached Word has to be understood in a Heideggerian existentialist fashion, as it elicits from us a “yes,” the affirmation of one’s personal authentic existence. In reality, this authentic existence is a gift of God that comes from the opening of one’s self to the grace of forgiveness announced in the kerygma.” (Fitzmyer *Interpretation* 68)

Jaspert, B. *Rudolf Bultmanns Werk und Wirkung*. Darmstadt: Wissenschaftliche Buchgesellschaft, 1984.

Kegley, C.W. *The Theology of Rudolf Bultmann*. London: SCM, 1966.

Macquarrie, John. *An Existentialist Theology*: *A Comparison of Heidegger and Bultmann*. New York: Macmillan, 1955.

Perrin, Norman. *The Promise of Bultmann*. Philadelphia: Fortress, 1969.

Bultmann “thus associated the historical-critical method with philosophical and theological presuppositions that proved to be not universally acceptable.” (Fitzmyer *Interpretation* 68)

Ratzinger, Josef. “Foundations and Approaches of Biblical Exegesis.” *Origins* 17.35 (11 Feb. 1988) 593-602. Same article: “Biblical Interpretation in Crisis: On the Question of the Foundations and Approaches of Exegesis Today.” *This World* 22 (1988) 3-19.

The “pastoral thrust of Bultmann’s concern to make the NT message a challenge for people in the mid-twentieth century” is “laudable . . .” (Fitzmyer *Interpretation* 68

criticisms

Evangelical Theological Faculty of the University of Tübingen. *Für und wider die Theologie Bultmanns*. Sammlung gemeinverständlicher Vortrage und Schriften aus dem Gebiet der Theologie und Religionsgeschichte 198-99. Tübingen: Mohr [Siebeck], 1952.

Fascher, E. *Die formgeschichtliche Methode*. Beihefte zur Zeitschrift für die neutestamentliche Wissenschaft 2. Giessen: Töpelmann, 1924. 82-144.

Malevez, L. *The Christian Message and Myth*: *The Theology of Rudolf Bultmann*. London: SCM, 1958.

Vincent Taylor (*Formation of the Gospel Tradition*. London: Macmillan, 1949. 14): “Dibelius is liberal rather than radical; Bultmann is radical to the point of scepticism, and it is not strange that he has been looked upon as *Strauss redivivus*. If Bultmann is right, we have not only lost the Synoptic framework but also much the greater part of the material. The narratives are mainly legends and ideal constructions, and most of the sayings, while Palestinian in origin, are products of primitive Christianity which [27] puts back its own ideas and beliefs into the lips of Jesus.” (Qtd. in Fitzmyer *Scripture*, *the Soul* 27-28 n 37)

C.S. Lewis (“Modern Theology and Biblical Criticism.” *Christian Reflections*. Ed. W. Hooper. London: G. Bies, 1967. 152-66. 156): “So there is no personality of Our Lord presented in the New Testament. Through what strange process has this learned German gone in order to make himself blind to what all men except him see? . . . If anything whatever is common to all believers, and even to many unbelievers, it is the sense that in the Gospels they have met a personality. There are characters whom we know to be historical but of whom we do not feel that we have any personal knowledge—knowledge by acquaintance; such are Alexander, Attila, or William of Orange. There are others who make no claim to historical reality but whom, none the less, we know as we know real people: Falstaff, Uncle Toby, Mr Pickwick. But there are only three characters who, claiming the first sort of reality, also actually have the second. And surely everyone knows who they are: Plato’s Socrates, the Jesus of the Gospels, and Boswell’s Johnson . . .” (Qtd. in Fitzmyer *Scripture*, *the Soul* 28 n 37)

liberal: 1923: Jules Lebreton on a “chasm” between theology and popular piety in the 200s (Fitzmyer *Interpretation* 33)

Lebreton, Jules. “Le désaccord de la foi populaire et de la théologie savante dans l’église chrétienne du IIIe siècle.” *Revue de l*’*Histoire Ecclésiastique* 19 (1923) 481-506; 20 (1924) 5-37.

“. . . Lebreton had devoted a lengthy article to a third-century manifestation of such a chasm and its effect on the Church of that time.” (Fitzmyer *Interpretation* 33)

liberal: 1943 (Sept. 30): Pius XII’s encyclical, *Divino afflante Spiritu*

Cazelles, Henri, SS. “Anwendung und Erfahrungen mit der historisch-kritischen Methode in der katholischen Exegese.” In Riedlinger, H., ed. *Der historischkritische Methode und die heutige Suche nach einem lebendigen Verständnis der Bibel*. Freiburg im Breisgau: Katholische Akademie; Munich: Schnell und Steiner, 1985. 72-88

Donahue, John R., SJ. “A Journey Remembered: Catholic Biblical Scholarship 50 Years after *Divino afflante Spiritu*.” *America* 169 (1993) 6-11.

Hamilton, G.J. “*Divino afflante Spiritu*: Catholic Interpretation of Scripture.” *Canadian Catholic Review* [Saskatoon] 6 (1988) 171-76.

Martin-Achard, R. “Le renouveau biblique dans le catholicisme romain.” *Revue de théologie et de philosophie* 10 (1960) 285-97.

Stephenson, K.D. “Roman Catholic Biblical Scholarship: Its Ecclesiastical Context in the Past Hundred Years.” *Encounter* 33 (1972) 303-28.

Ruotolo brochure

Anonymous (Dolindo Ruotolo). *A Most Grave Danger for the Church*, *and for Souls*: *The Critical-scientific System of Studying and Interpreting Holy Scripture*, *Its Evil Misconceptions and Aberrations*.

This brochure “was part of the immediate background of Pius XII’s encyclical.” (Fitzmyer *Scripture*, *the Soul* 17 n 23)

It was “sent to Bishops and Superiors of Religious Congregations in Italy. It condemned the historical-critical method and advocated instead a type of exegesis called “meditative.”” Dolindo Ruotolo was “a priest who wrote under the pen name of Dain Cohenel.” (Fitzmyer *Scripture*, *the Soul* 17 n 23)

Because of the brochure, “the Biblical Commission addressed a letter to all the Bishops and Religious Superiors of Italy on 20 August 1941.” (*EB* §522-33; *RSS* §522-33) (Fitzmyer *Scripture*, *the Soul* 17 n 23)

Fitzmyer entitles the translated encyclical “On the Promotion of Biblical Studies.” (Fitzmyer *Interpretation* 3)

*Divino afflante Spiritu* was issued on the feast of St. Jerome. It “was composed to celebrate the fiftieth anniversary of Leo XIII’s letter.” (Fitzmyer *Interpretation* 4)

“. . . in the midst of the Second World War, when the minds of most people were preoccupied with other things than the interpretation of the Bible, Pope Pius XII had issued his encyclical *Divino afflante Spiritu* on the promotion of biblical studies. For that reason the revolution, which that encyclical was to cause in [*sic*] Catholic Church, was delayed for almost a decade, and even longer in the United States.” (Fitzmyer *Interpretation* 102)

“In its first part, Pius XII recalled the historical background of biblical studies in the Church (the encyclical of Leo XIII, various decisions of Popes Pius X and XI, the founding of the Ecole Biblique in Jerusalem [1890], the institution of the Biblical Commission).” (Fitzmyer *Interpretation* 5)

“In the second part, he built on the directives of Leo XIII, recalled the archaeological and historical discoveries, and stressed the need of recourse to the original languages of the Bible, from which all future vernacular translations for use in the Church henceforth were to be made.” (Fitzmyer *Interpretation* 5)

importance of the literal sense

Pius XII (*Divino afflante Spiritu* §23): “In the performance of this task let the interpreters bear in mind that their foremost and greatest endeavor should be to discern and define clearly that sense of the biblical words which is called literal. Aided by the context and comparison with similar passages, let them therefore by means of their knowledge of languages search out with all diligence the literal meaning of the words; all these helps indeed are wont to be pressed into service in the explanation [17] also of profane writers, so that the mind of the author may be made abundantly clear.” (Qtd. in Fitzmyer *Scripture*, *the Soul* 17-18)

literal vs. spiritual interpretation

“Although Pius XII never used the term “historical-critical method” in his encyclical, that term accurately describes what he was advocating . . .” (Fitzmyer *Interpretation* 102)

“. . . he insisted on the interpretation of the Bible according to its literal sense, “that the mind of the author may be made abundantly clear.”” (Fitzmyer *Interpretation* 5)

“. . . interpreters were henceforth to use it . . .” (Fitzmyer *Scripture*, *the Soul* 16)

“That encyclical made a major break from the often allegorical or fundamentalistic interpretation of Scripture that had been in vogue in Catholic interpretation from at least medieval times.” (Fitzmyer *Interpretation* 102)

“. . . though he never named the method, Pius XII advocated the proper use of the historical-critical method . . . to ascertain the literal sense . . .” (Fitzmyer *Interpretation* 5)

Pius XII “never uses the term “historical criticism,” yet his recommendations for the definitive understanding of the Bible clearly follow the principles of the method.” (Fitzmyer *Interpretation* 70)

“Even though Pius XII never used the name of the historical-critical method, his counsels clearly advocated the use of that method in expounding the literal sense of the Bible.” (Fitzmyer *Interpretation* 81)

*Divino afflante Spiritu* “eventually freed Catholic biblical interpretation from its own form of literalism, which had been inherited from the post-Tridentine era.” (Fitzmyer *Scripture*, *the Soul* 17)

“Pius XII also spoke of the “spiritual sense” of Scripture, but he used that term only in its traditional meaning, i.e., the christological sense of the OT. Besides the literal sense, the interpreter must explain this spiritual sense, “provided it is clearly intended by God.”” (Fitzmyer *Interpretation* 5)

“However, the “allegorical” sense, which was used often by patristic interpreters and even recommended by Leo XIII, was not mentioned by Pius XII. He admitted . . . that “figurative senses” of Scripture [5] might be useful in preaching, but he cautioned that such senses are “extrinsic to it and accidental” and “especially in these days, not free from danger.”” (Fitzmyer *Interpretation* 5-6)

*Divino afflante Spiritu* “freed Roman Catholic biblical interpretation from its own form of fundamentalism, inherited from the post-Tridentine era and the Counter-Reformation.” (Fitzmyer *Interpretation* 70)

Pius XII (*Divino afflante Spiritu* §27; Béchard, Dean P., SJ, ed. and trans. *The Scripture Documents* 132): “Let all the other sons of the Church bear in mind that the efforts of these resolute laborers in the vineyard of the Lord should be judged not only with equity and justice but also with the greatest charity. All, moreover, should abhor that intemperate zeal that imagines that whatever is new should for that very reason be opposed or suspected. . . . There are still many points, and some very important, in the discussion and explanation of which the skill and talent of Catholic exegetes can and should be freely exercised [33] so that each may contribute his part to the advantage of all, to the continued progress of the sacred doctrine, and to the defense and honor of the Church.” (Qtd. in Fitzmyer *Interpretation* 33-34)

“The cloud of negative reaction to this method of biblical interpretation was finally lifted . . .” (Fitzmyer *Scripture*, *the Soul* 16)

Pius XII insisted on (§40): (Fitzmyer *Scripture*, *the Soul* 16-17)

“(1) the study of the Bible in its original languages”

“(2) the proper use of textual criticism”

“(3) the interpretation of the Bible according to its ancient texts, and not merely the Latin Vulgate, which was to be understood to enjoy a juridical, not a critical, authenticity”

“(4) the interpretation of the Bible according to its literal sense”

“(5) the role of patristic [16] interpretation in the Church” (Fitzmyer *Scripture*, *the Soul* 16-17)

“(6) the character of the sacred human writer”

“(7) the proper regard for the ancient literary forms that the inspired human author had employed”

Pius XII corrected Benedict XVI’s “misguided advice . . .” (§20; Béchard, Dean P., SJ, ed. and trans. *The Scripture Documents* 115-39 esp. 128-29) (Fitzmyer *Interpretation* 81)

“He insisted . . . [on interpretation] according to the ancient literary genres or forms . . .” (Fitzmyer *Interpretation* 81)

Pius XII emphasized “the need to spell out the literal meaning of the sacred text . . . with due regard for the literary form in which it was composed.” (*Divino afflante Spiritu* §15; Béchard, Dean P., SJ, ed. and trans. *The Scripture Documents* 125) (Fitzmyer *Interpretation* 70)

“The encyclical’s primary emphasis fell on the interpretation of the Bible according to its “literary forms,” espousing an idea that Pope Benedict XV had rejected.” (Fitzmyer *Interpretation* 5-6)

“(8) the application to the biblical text of modern discoveries” (Fitzmyer *Scripture*, *the Soul* 17)

Pius XII (*Divino afflante Spiritu* §22; Béchard, Dean P., SJ, ed. and trans. *The Scripture Documents* 130): “whether in the domain of archaeology or ancient history or literature, . . . as well as their manner and art of reasoning, narrating, and writing.” (Qtd. in Fitzmyer *Interpretation* 70)

The encyclical expressed “the revolutionary direction that Pope Pius XII had given to Catholic biblical studies . . .” (Fitzmyer *Interpretation* 109)

It was “the springboard that prepared the Catholic Church for the Council . . .” (Fitzmyer *Interpretation* 109)

“. . . it also made Protestants aware of the way that Catholics were now interpreting their favorite book, the Bible—in a way quite similar to their own.” (Fitzmyer *Interpretation* 109)

“Pius XII, however, did not stop with insistence on the need to ascertain the literal sense of a biblical text, for he saw it clearly as related to the “theological doctrine in faith and morals of the individual books or texts.” [*Divino afflante Spiritu* 15; Béchard, Dean P., SJ, ed. and trans. *The Scripture Documents* 125] Such a theological exposition of Scripture would reduce to silence those who claim that “they scarcely ever find anything in biblical commentaries to raise their hearts to God, to nourish their souls or promote their interior life.” [*Divino afflante Spiritu* 16; Béchard, Dean P., SJ, ed. and trans. *The Scripture Documents* 125] This is precisely what the properly oriented use of the historical-critical method can and does achieve in the interpretation of the Bible . . .” (Fitzmyer *Interpretation* 70)

Pius XII (*Divino afflante Spiritu* §47): “in the immense matter contained in the sacred Books—legislative, historical, sapiential, and prophetical—there are but few texts whose sense has been defined by the teaching authority of the Church [and fewer still] about which the teaching of the Holy Fathers is unanimous.” (Qtd. in Fitzmyer *Interpretation* 6)

“The use of historical criticism in the interpretation of the Bible is not a temporary fad, because it has been advocated by the highest [69] authority in the Catholic Church.” (Fitzmyer *Interpretation* 69-70)

liberal: 1944-1958: the change in biblical strudies

From 1943 (Pius XII’s *Divino afflante Spiritu*) to 1958 (Pius XII’s message to the Congrès International Catholique des Sciences Bibliques [in Brussels]), there was “a remarkable change of direction in biblical studies, when they are compared with the preceding fifty years—not to mention previous centuries.” (Fitzmyer *Interpretation* 19)

“It was a “sleeper,” because its effects did not immediately see fruition, and it took a while for Catholic people to become aware of what it was all about. The main reason for the delayed reaction to this encyclical was that it was issued in 1943, during the Second World War, when the minds of most people in the countries involved in that war were preoccupied with things other than the interpretation of the Bible.” (Fitzmyer *Interpretation* 3)

*la nouvelle théologie*

“With the end of World War II, there emerged in Europe what was called *la nouvelle théologie* (especially in the 1950s). It was heavily dependent on a new way of reading, studying, and interpreting Scripture, . . . the way that Pope Pius XII had recommended.” (Fitzmyer *Interpretation* 3)

*Divino afflante Spiritu* and *la nouvelle théologie* “provided the background and stimulus for the Council.” (Fitzmyer *Interpretation* 3)

“I have always maintained that there never would have been a Second Vatican Council, if it were not for . . . *Divino afflante Spiritu* . . .” (Fitzmyer *Interpretation* 3)

liberal: 1944 on: the Pontifical Biblical Commission since 1943 (*Divino afflante Spiritu*)

The Biblical Commission “by the time of the Second Vatican Council had long since changed its image. It was no longer the watchdog commission of old, because after Pius XII’s encyclical of 1943 it had begun to issue positive teachings of considerable value.” (Fitzmyer *Interpretation* 10)

major PBC documents since 1943 (*Divino afflante Spiritu*)

Pontifical Biblical Commission. *Regarding the Sources of the Pentateuch and the Historical Value of Genesis 1-11*. (16 Jan. 1948.) *AAS* 40 (1948) 45-48.

Pontifical Biblical Commission. *Regarding Bernard Bonkamp*’*s Book* “*Die Psalmen*.” (9 June 1953). *AAS* 45 (1953) 432.

Pontifical Biblical Commission. *The Historicity of the Gospels*. (21 Ap. 1964.) *AAS* 56 (1964) 712-718.

Pontifical Biblical Commission. *On Sacred Scripture and Christology*. (1984.) Vatican City: Libreria Editrice Vaticana, 1984.

Pontifical Biblical Commission. *Unity and Diversity in the Church*. (11 Apr. 1988.) Vatican City: Libreria Editrice Vaticana, 1988.

Pontifical Biblical Commission. *The Interpretation of the Bible in the Church*. (15 Apr. 1993). Vatican City: Libreria Editrice Vaticana, 1993.

Pontifical Biblical Commission. *The Jewish People and Their Sacred Scriptures in the Christian Bible*. (24 May 2001.) Vatican City: Libreria Editrice Vaticana, 2001.

Pontifical Biblical Commission. *The Bible and Morality*: *Biblical Roots of Christian Conduct*. (11 May 2008.) Vatican City: Libreria Editrice Vaticana, 2008.

Pontifical Biblical Commission. *The Inspiration and Truth of Sacred Scripture*. (22 Feb. 2014.) Vatican City: Libreria Editrice Vaticana, 2014.

Pontifical Biblical Commission. “*What is Man*?” (*Ps 8*:*5*): *An Itinerary of Biblical Anthropology*. (30 Sept. 2019.) Rome: Libreria Editrice Vaticana, 2019.

1971: Paul VI “restructured the Commission . . .” (Fitzmyer *Interpretation* 106)

“Litterae apostolicae motu proprio datae: De Pontificia Commissione Biblica ordinanda novae leges statuuntur: *Sedula cura*.” *AAS* 63 (1971) 665-69. See *EB* §§722-39. Béchard, Dean P., SJ, ed. and trans. *The Scripture Documents* 147-50.

He was “getting rid of the cardinals, who had previously been the only members of the Commission, and bringing in as members twenty biblical scholars from across the world to advise him and the Vatican congregations in matters pertaining to the Bible. They were said to be persons “outstanding for their learning, prudence, and Catholic regard for the Magisterium of the Church.”” (Fitzmyer *Interpretation* 106)

1972-78: The group of twenty included Raymond E. Brown, SS. [106] Brown began a second term in 1996 but died in in 1998. (Fitzmyer *Interpretation* 106-07)

conservative: 1950: Pius XII’s encyclical *Humani generis*

*AAS* 42 (1950) 561-78; *EB* §§612-13; Béchard, Dean P., SJ, ed. and trans. *The Scripture Documents* 140-41 (§§21-22).

*Humani generis* “bemoans . . . deviations. [But] among the errors proscribed there are some more “theological” than “exegetical,” referring not to the interpretation of individual texts, but to principles of inspiration and hermeneutics (e.g., the sense of the formula “God Author of Scripture,” inerrancy, relation of Scripture to the magisterium, “spiritual” interpretation).” (Fitzmyer *Interpretation* 22)

“Historicity was treated in another paragraph, in which too lax an interpretation of the letter sent to Cardinal Suhard of Paris was deplored.” (*Humani generis* 38. *EB* §618. Béchard, Dean P., SJ, ed. and trans. *The Scripture Documents* 143) (Fitzmyer *Interpretation* 22)

*Humani generis* indicates “that there have been errors and abuses of the liberty of investigation.” (Fitzmyer *Interpretation* 23)

liberal: 1955: Pontifical Biblical Commission’s *responsa*, “De nova Enchiridii Biblici editione”

Miller, A. “Divino afflante Spiritu neue biblische Handbuch.” *Benediktinische Monatschrift* (Beuron) 31 (1955) 49-50.

Kleinhans, A. “De nova Enchiridii Biblici editione.” *Antonianum* 30 (1955) 63-65.

Siegman, E.F. “The Decrees of the Pontifical Biblical Commission: A Recent Clarification.” *CBQ* 18 (1956) 23-29.

Dupont, Jacques. “À propos du nouvel Enchiridion Biblicum.” *Revue Biblique* 62 (1955) 414-19.

Malina, B. “The Biblical Movement and the Decrees of the Biblical Commission.” *Clergy Review* 46 (1961) 399-405.

The *responsa* was “quasi-official explanations of the Secretary of the Biblical Commission and its Under-Secretary . . .” (Fitzmyer *Interpretation* 32)

“The message of the Secretary (A. Miller) and the Under-Secretary (A. Kleinhans) . . . was almost word-for-word the same despite the difference of languages (German and Latin) in which they wrote . . .” (Fitzmyer *Interpretation* 32 n 25)

A. Miller (“Divino afflante Spiritu neue biblische Handbuch.”; Béchard, Dean P., SJ, ed. and trans. *The Scripture Documents* 327): “As long as these [early twentieth-century] decrees [of the Biblical Commission] propose views that are neither immediately nor mediately connected with truths of faith and morals, it goes without saying that the interpreter of Sacred Scripture may pursue his scientific research with complete freedom and utilize the results of these investigations, provided always that he respects the teaching authority of the Church.” (Qtd. in Fitzmyer *Interpretation* 32 n 25)

“Most of the early *responsa* had nothing to do with “truths of faith and morals,” but dealt with historical and literary judgments (e.g., Moses as author of the Pentateuch, the apostle John as the author of the Fourth Gospel).” (Fitzmyer *Interpretation* 32 n 25)

“If modern scientific investigations conclude to “results” other than the *responsa*, the interpreter may adopt those “with complete freedom” (*mit aller Freiheit*; *plena libertate*).” (Fitzmyer *Interpretation* 32 n 25)

“This was an important issue, but it too was twisted and exploited by ultraconservative interpreters.” (Fitzmyer *Interpretation* 32 n 25)

“The booklet, *Rome and the Study of Scripture* (7th ed.; St. Meinrad, IN: Grail Publications, 1962) . . . twisted the meaning of this semi-official explanation by omitting the phrase, “with complete freedom” in its version of the explanation (note the omission on p. 175).” (Fitzmyer *Interpretation* 32 n 25)

1958: Pius XII, to the Congrès International Catholique des Sciences Bibliques, Brussels

conservative

“Three bishops at the Brussels Congress complained of the lack of competence and prudence displayed by popularizers . . .” (Fitzmyer *Interpretation* 23)

“. . . a priori, one can say that the number of errors will be greater there where the popularization has been more intense.” (Fitzmyer *Interpretation* 23)

“The statements of these bishops, together with *Humani generis*, indicate that there have been errors and abuses of the liberty of investigation.” (Fitzmyer *Interpretation* 23)

liberal

Among defenders, “the Bishop of Namur, in particular, stressed that the discussion of complex and delicate biblical questions should be left to professional exegetes, qualified to handle them.” (Fitzmyer *Interpretation* 23)

Bishop of Namur (*Sacra pagina* 1.78-79): “We know that [Catholic exegetes] apply themselves to their work with good will, with fervor and even with enthusiasm, and we think they measure up in general very well to the Church’s confidence in them. They err sometimes . . . But are we to believe that those who never err are always *eo ipso* the best collaborators of the hierarchy?. . . They [the exegetes] offer the hierarchy their good will, their labors, and the results of their research. And we can say that the hierarchy on its side looks for this collaboration with confidence and welcomes it with gratitude.” (Qtd. in Fitzmyer *Interpretation* 23)

“. . . the burden . . . of Pius XII to the Catholic exegetes gathered at Brussels from many lands [was:] the successors of the “strict” school in many principles, the successors of the “broadminded” school in many questions of method.” (Fitzmyer *Interpretation* 24)

liberal: 1961: Luis Alonso Schökel’s article “Where Is Catholic Exegesis Headed?”

Alonso Schökel, Luis, SJ. “Dove va l’esegesi cattolica?” *Civiltà Cattolica* 111.2645 (3 Sept. 1960) 449-60. (Trans.: “Où va l’exégèse catholique?” *L*’*Ami du clergé* 71 (1961) 17-22.)

“Luis Alonso Schökel, S.J., a young Spanish professor of the OT at the Pontifical Biblical Institute in Rome, wrote an article in 1960 entitled, “Where Is Catholic Exegesis Headed?” In twelve pages, he sought to answer the question that he put to himself in the title.” (Fitzmyer *Interpretation* 19)

“The first part of the article cites examples of the new direction that had been adopted in various areas of biblical studies. In each case, a striking contrast is seen, when one compares statements in the writings of Catholic scholars of the beginning of the century . . .” (Examples are given above.) (Fitzmyer *Interpretation* 19)

“The second part of the article makes three observations . . .” (Fitzmyer *Interpretation* 21)

“First, the change of direction did not come about like an unforeseen earthquake, for *Divino afflante Spiritu* merely crystallized and canonized the results of private study carried on by many interpreters. . . . There is thus a certain *continuity* with what preceded 1943.” (Fitzmyer *Interpretation* 21)

“Second, many points established and defended by older exegetes are still maintained, such as inerrancy and the exclusion of “historical appearances” and of other radical positions.” (Fitzmyer *Interpretation* 21)

“Third, [even] before 1943, along with a “strict” school of conservative interpreters, there also existed a broadminded group.” (Fitzmyer *Interpretation* 21)

“In some cases, certain individuals of the latter group erred, and their errors were rejected both by the Church’s authority and by the progress of biblical studies itself (e.g., “historical appearances,” defended by P.F. de Hummelauer; certain infelicitous formulations of P. M.-J. Lagrange).” (Fitzmyer *Interpretation* 21)

“Others of this school, however, legitimately counterbalanced the “strict” school, and the continuity between the directives of Pius XII and the positions of the former is evident. Hence, that present-day Catholic exegesis follows that of fifty years ago in many points does not surprise anyone; but that it is following a new path in other matters should not surprise anyone who has followed the [21] encyclicals.” (Fitzmyer *Interpretation* 21-22)

“Thus an answer is given, in part at least, to the initial question [“Where Is Catholic Exegesis Headed?”].” (Fitzmyer *Interpretation* 22)

“The third part of the article attempts to explain where Catholic exegesis has been heading since 1943.” (Fitzmyer *Interpretation* 22)

“When Pius XII published his encyclical, he was aware that he was opening a door to innovations in exegesis that might excite conservative minds; for he dedicated a paragraph of the encyclical to the defense of the liberty of [exegetes].” (Fitzmyer *Interpretation* 22)

Pius XII (*Divino afflante Spiritu* §47; Béchard, Dean P., SJ, ed. and trans. *The Scripture Documents* 132): “Let all the other sons of the Church bear in mind that the efforts of these resolute laborers in the vineyard of the Lord should be judged not only with equity and justice but also with the greatest charity. All, moreover, should abhor that intemperate zeal that imagines that whatever is new should for that very reason be opposed or suspected. Let them bear in mind above all that in the rules and laws promulgated by the Church there is question of doctrine regarding faith and morals, and that in the immense matter contained in the sacred Books—legislative, historical, sapiential, and prophetical—there are but few texts whose sense has been defined by the authority of the Church; nor are those more numerous about which the teaching of the holy Fathers is unanimous. There are still many points, and some very important, in the discussion and explanation of which the skill and talent of Catholic exegetes can and should be freely exercised [33] so that each may contribute his part to the advantage of all, to the continued progress of the sacred doctrine, and to the defense and honor of the Church.” (Fitzmyer *Interpretation* 33-34)

“It was an act of confidence on the part of Pius XII immediately in Catholic interpreters and indirectly in the Holy Spirit who guides the Church.” (Fitzmyer *Interpretation* 22)

“. . . though Pius XII had accorded liberty of scientific investigation to interpreters, he did so with certain limits and cautions (e.g., the analogy of faith, a prudence based on solid and honest scientific research). To pass judgment on the historicity of a biblical passage without sufficient evidence is a dangerous procedure, for it can compromise data important for the history of salvation and create serious doubts and trouble.” (Fitzmyer *Interpretation* 22)

“Thus, whoever would affirm the entire historicity of the Book of Judith puts the reader in serious difficulties from the very first verses; whoever would deny all historicity to Matthew 16 would create serious difficulties for the primacy of Peter.” (Fitzmyer *Interpretation* 22)

“The present crisis stems from some exegetes who treat the problem of historicity with insufficiently grounded arguments and from popularizers who delight in launching immature and [22] undigested results of research among the general public.” (Fitzmyer *Interpretation* 22-23)

“. . . in fact, charity makes demands that transcend the liberty or [*sic*] research or exposition.” (Fitzmyer *Interpretation* 23)

“In conclusion, Catholic exegesis is proceeding along the path traced for it by Pius XII in *Divino afflante Spiritu* . . . Questions that have been resolved by now have been incorporated calmly into biblical science; new problems continue to arise and engage the exegetes. Certainly, errors and deviations have occurred. This is because the exegetes, though guided in their research by the light of revelation and aided by the methods of their science, are not endowed with infallibility. The danger of deviation from the path is always present, but the guidance of the magisterium and serious scientific [23] work are sufficient to cope with it.” (Fitzmyer *Interpretation* 23-24)

“This was the burden of the address of Pope John XXIII to the Pontifical Biblical Institute on the occasion of its jubilee . . .” (Fitzmyer *Interpretation* 24)

“It is recognized that the article of Alonso Schökel, calmly considered, aimed at bringing together within a few pages many things that have been known . . . The only way to explain the “new direction” has been to sketch the matrix in which it had its origin. This Alonso Schökel did, and in general he achieved it with laudable success, despite a few oversimplifications that a brief article of twelve pages might inevitably contain. The article was an effort of a competent biblical interpreter who knew whereof he was speaking.” (Fitzmyer *Interpretation* 24)

## Conservative: The Romeo-Biblical Institute Affair

introduction

“. . . it has been the lot of dedicated Scripture scholars to be the target of well-meaning critics who . . . claim that their work undermines Christian faith.” (Fitzmyer *Interpretation* 17)

Msgr. Antonino Romeo’s response to Alonso Schökel

Romeo, Antonino. “L’Enciclica ‘*Divino afflante Spiritu*’ e le ‘opiniones novae.’” *Divinitas* 4.3 (1960) 385-456.

Romeo was “a domestic prelate from Reggio Calabria [and] professor of Scripture at the Lateran University in Rome . . .” [24] He was “associated with some of the Vatican congregations . . .” [29] (Fitzmyer *Interpretation* 24, 29)

Divinitas

“Divinitas was founded in 1954 by Monsignor Antonio Piolanti, rector of the Pontifical Lateran University and advisor to the Roman Curia and continued by Msgr. Brunero Gherardini member of the Pontifical Academy of Theology and head of the Pontifical Academy of St. Thomas Aquinas.” (*Divinitas*.*online*. 2021.)

**“His Eminence Raymond Leo Cardinal Burke [is] Honorary Director of *Divinitas* and contributor . . .”** (*Divinitas*.*online*. 2021.)

**“**The church needs now more than ever, erudite theologians, bastions of orthodoxy against the tides of error and confusion of modernity.” (*Divinitas*.*online*. 2021.)

Romeo “published a seventy-page article entitled “The Encyclical ‘Divino afflante Spiritu’ and the ‘New Opinions’” . . .” (Fitzmyer *Interpretation* 24)

The “Romeo-Biblical Institute affair [manifested a] chasm . . . between [32] popular piety and scholarly theology.” (Fitzmyer *Interpretation* 32-33)

“Introductory pages are devoted to a denunciation of “il progressismo cattolico moderno,” a pernicious spirit that must be understood to comprehend the tendency of Alonso Schökel’s article, touching, as it does, “the essence of our religion, the legitimacy of the faith that we owe to the Word of God as supreme and immutable apostolic magisterium of the Church” (p. 391).” (Fitzmyer *Interpretation* 25)

“The main part of the article is “a severe criticism of Alonso Schökel’s article.” (Fitzmyer *Interpretation* 24)

““The reader of Romeo’s criticism soon realizes that it was motivated by something more than the explanations of Alonso Schökel, which were only part of the “New Opinions.” What the real motivation was remains obscure.” (Fitzmyer *Interpretation* 24)

“Romeo mentions that Alonso Schökel was the author of some “aggressive” book reviews.” (Fitzmyer *Interpretation* 24 n 14)

Alonso Schökel, Luis. Review of B. Mariani, *Introductio in libros sacros Veteris Testamenti* (Rome: Herder, 1958). *Biblica* 39 (1958) 499-502. Also *Verbum Domini* 36 (1958) 116-17

But “many other Catholic reviewers” were in “substantial agreement . . .” (Fitzmyer *Interpretation* 24 n 14)

Alonso Schökel, Luis. Review of F. Spadafora, A. Romeo, and D. Fragipane. *Il libro sacro 1*: *Introduzione generale*. Padua: Mesaggero, 1958. *Verbum Domini* 38 (1960) 310.

Alonso Schökel on “Romeo’s contribution on biblical inspiration” (*Verbum Domini* 38 [1960] 310): “I cannot recommend the treatise on inspiration to either lay people or students because of its polemics against Catholics who think differently.” (Qtd. in Fitzmyer *Interpretation* 24 n 14)

Since Romeo had “a significant position,” his “severe criticism . . . raised the question: . . . Was this a reaction of Roman congregations to the “new direction” in biblical studies . . .? Was this the start of a political move of the Lateran University against the Biblical Institute?” (Fitzmyer *Interpretation* 24)

Romeo’s article denies “that the encyclical *Divino afflante Spiritu* is responsible for any new direction in Catholic interpretation, because such is impossible in an exegesis that is closely bound up with tradition. The “new” exegesis is opposed rather to the directives of the magisterium and constitutes a danger for the faith that has been handed down to us, not to mention the pernicious effect on young clerics who have come to Rome for their education and formation.” (Fitzmyer *Interpretation* 25)

“According to Romeo, the very title of Alonso Schökel’s article attracted much attention . . .” (Fitzmyer *Interpretation* 25)

Romeo (“L’Enciclica” 387): “Several bishops, who represent the authentic magisterium of Catholic exegesis, have been perplexed by the question [in the title], because they know better than anyone else where Catholic exegesis should be headed; they would not wish that it be impelled by some group in a direction inconsistent with the traditional doctrine and rich interpretation of the sacred books bequeathed to us by the Fathers and Doctors of the Church and by the “illustrious interpreters of past ages,” who “penetrate to the intimate depths of the divine word,” nor that it sail too near the subversive or at least adventuresome winds of the “criticism” unleashed by rationalism, which is always of its very nature “intransigent and arrogant.”” (Qtd. in Fitzmyer *Interpretation* 25)

“Romeo insists that he does not “doubt the good faith and the good intentions of Fr. Alonso and of those who are engaged with him in the reform campaign in the area of Catholic exegesis.” [“L’Enciclica” 393]” (Fitzmyer *Interpretation* 25)

“Alonso Schökel’s viewpoint in the article is said to be explained by his background and his other writings; these are found to be “in agreement with the position that is hostile to tradition and the ‘conservatives’” (p. 394).” (Fitzmyer *Interpretation* 26)

“There follows a detailed criticism of many points made by Alonso Schökel in his article. This critique is so extensive that it is impossible to detail it here. The burden of it is summed thus: “No change of direction was perceived in 1943” (p. 409), a flat denial of the *Civiltà Cattolica* article of 1960.” (Fitzmyer *Interpretation* 26)

Romeo quotes an article published by Cardinal A. Bea, SJ when *Divino afflante Spiritu* appear, “as an “official” interpretation of the encyclical; long excerpts from it are given with footnotes to indicate to what extent Alonso Schökel has disagreed with the mentality of Pius XII and of those responsible for the encyclical (pp. 412-20).” (Fitzmyer *Interpretation* 26)

“The last part of Alonso Schökel’s article is subjected to similar criticism (pp. 420-42).” (Fitzmyer *Interpretation* 26)

Romeo (“L’Enciclica” 425): “Either he [Alonso Schökel] does not know the facts, and therefore is an incompetent who should not dare to write for the public on questions treated by a lofty pontifical document, passing judgment on and contradicting affirmations of the Pope, of the great Pius XII, who lavishly endorses, at least as it is attributed to him, the . . . liberation of Catholic exegesis. Or else he knows the facts, and then we must necessarily be concerned to hinder the systematic defamation or sleight-of-hand treatment (*escamotage*) of the two great encyclicals of the great Pius XII.” (Qtd. in Fitzmyer *Interpretation* 26)

“The next-to-last part of Romeo’s article (pp. 443-50) is devoted to a digression, a complaint attributed to various cardinals, apostolic nuncios, archbishops, bishops, and prelates of the Roman curia, that at present “in various Catholic exegetical circles throughout the whole world the edge of heresy is being grazed and sometimes there is thoroughgoing disbelief.” Footnotes 129 and 130 give references to articles [26] in American and French biblical and theological magazines (among them *Theological Studies* and the *Catholic Biblical Quarterly*) that are, in Romeo’s opinion, evidence of this tendency. This is supposed to reveal the “undeniable fact of pressure exerted on all the clergy by a group that is working indefatigably *to open* even wider breaches in the superhuman edifice of Catholic faith” (p. 444 [his emphasis]). The entire situation has its roots in the double myth of human liberty and human progress, characteristic of the “new age” (*tempi nuovi*) of the second half of the twentieth century.” (Fitzmyer *Interpretation* 26-27)

“The article ends with two observations: Today there does not exist in the bosom of the Catholic Church any danger of obscurantism, fear, or timidity vis-à-vis science or scientific learning. Today’s grave and frightening danger is rather that there are manifest within the Church theories and tendencies that threaten to subvert the foundations of Catholic doctrine, over which Pius XII expressed such anxiety, even in the very title of his encyclical *Humani generis* . . .” (Fitzmyer *Interpretation* 27)

Romeo (“L’Enciclica” 454): “A whole swarm of termites working away incessantly in the shadows, at Rome and in all parts of the world, forces one to take note of the execution of a massive plan of buzzing about and gnawing away at the doctrines that form and nourish our Catholic faith. Ever more numerous signs from various quarters give evidence of the gradual unfolding of a widespread and progressive maneuver, directed by very clever minds, apparently quite pious, which aims at doing away with the Christianity taught up to now and lived for nineteen centuries, in order to substitute for it the Christianity of “the new times.”” (Qtd. in Fitzmyer *Interpretation* 27)

Alonso Schökel’s article “was clearly only an occasion for Romeo. What had disturbed him was not simply that article in *Civiltà Cattolica* but the existence of *a group of exegetes* who seemed to be pushing Catholic interpretation of the Bible in a direction with which he did not agree. In addition to Alonso Schökel’s article, he introduced frequent quotations from the writings and lectures of other Catholic exegetes to substantiate his contentions.” (Fitzmyer *Interpretation* 27)

Max Zerwick, SJ

Max Zerwick, “a German [27] Jesuit and likewise professor at the Biblical Institute in Rome, had addressed a group of some fifty Italian Scripture professors at a meeting in Padua (15-17 September 1959); about a hundred mimeographed copies of his talk were distributed, entitled “Literary Criticism of the NT in the Catholic Exegesis of the Gospels.” (“Critica letteraria del N.T. nell’esegesi cattolica dei Vangeli”) (Fitzmyer *Interpretation* 27-28)

Zerwick “summarized the conclusions of three other exegetes, A. Vögtle, P. Benoit, O.P., and A. Descamps.” (Fitzmyer *Interpretation* 28)

Benoit, Pierre. “La mort de JuDivino [*sic*] afflante Spiritu.” *Synoptische Studien Alfred Wikenhauser zum siebzigsten Geburtstag* . . . Munich: Zink, 1953. 1-19.

Descamps, A. “La structure des récits évangeliques de la résurrection.” *Biblica* 40 (1959) 726-41.

Vögtle, A. “Messiasbekenntnis und Petrusverheissung: Zur Komposition von Mt 16, 13-23.” *Biblische Zeitschrift* 1 (1957) 252-72; 2 (1958) 85-103.

Romeo on Zerwick’s address (“L’Enciclica” 436 n 116): “The denial of the historicity of this passage of the first Gospel [Matt 16:16-18] is clear.” (Qtd. in Fitzmyer *Interpretation* 28)

“The summary character of Zerwick’s address is, however, passed over in silence by Romeo.” (Fitzmyer *Interpretation* 28 n 15)

“The president of the Italian Biblical Association thought it wise to issue certain clarifications about the Padua meeting . . .” (“Clarificazioni sul Convegno di Padova (a proposito di un recente articolo) a cura del Presidente dell’Associazione.” Appendix to *Atti e Conferenze della Settimana Biblica 1960*. RomeL 1961.) (Fitzmyer *Interpretation* 28 n 15)

“This is but one example of a number of accusations directed against Zerwick throughout the article.” (Fitzmyer *Interpretation* 28)

Jean Levie, SJ

Levie, Jean, SJ. *The Bible*: *Word of God in Words of Men*. New York: Kenedy, 1962. (*La Bible*: *Parole humaine et message de Dieu*. Museum Lessianum, section biblique 1. Paris/Louvain: Desclée de Brouwer, 1958.)

“The other Catholic exegete frequently referred to in the footnotes in Jean Levie, a Belgian Jesuit, professor of NT studies at Collège Philosophique et Théologique S.J. de Louvain (Eegenhoven) and for many years the editor of *La Nouvelle Revue Théologique*.” (Fitzmyer *Interpretation* 28)

Levie’s *La Bible*: *Parole humaine et message de Dieu* “was acclaimed widely by reviewers . . .” (Fitzmyer *Interpretation* 28)

J.E. Bruns(*Theological Studies* 20 [1959] 282-84): “Without a doubt we have here one of the finest works on Scripture to appear in the last ten years.”

L.A. Bushinski (*Catholic Biblical Quarterly* 21 [1959] 245-47): “If this reviewer were asked to recommend a book which would give a thorough understanding of the present state of Catholic scholarship, he would unhesitatingly recommend this one.”

*Angelicum* 36 (1959) 449.

*Biblica* 40 (1959) 1025.

*Ephemerides Theologicae Lovanienses* 35 (1959) 824.

*New Testament Abstracts* 4 (1959) 83-84.

A “laudatory non-Catholic reaction”: *Journal of Biblical Literature* 79 (1960) 173-75.

“Romeo found Levie’s book . . . to be “tremendamente eversivo” (tremendously upsetting [p. 444 n. 130]).” (Fitzmyer *Interpretation* 28)

Romeo claimed that Levie believes that “All of Christianity is to be made over” (p. 455 n. 150).” (Fitzmyer *Interpretation* 28)

Romeo (“L’Enciclica” 395): “P. Levie exerted notable influence on P. Alonso, whose professor he seems to have been.” (Qtd. in Fitzmyer *Interpretation* 28)

Stanlislaus Lyonnet

Romeo also mentions “a close collaborator of P. Alonso,” who has been identified as [Stanlislaus] Lyonnet.” (Fitzmyer *Interpretation* 28)

Lyonnet was also a professor at the Biblical Institute. (Fitzmyer *Interpretation* 28 n 17)

He had reinterpreted Paul on original sin in Rom 5:12. (Fitzmyer *Interpretation* 28 n 17)

Lyonnet, Stanlislaus. “Le péché originel et l’exégese de Rom. 5, 12-14.” *RSR* 44 (1956) 63-84.

Lyonnet, Stanlislaus. “Le sens de *eph*’ *hô* en Rom 5, 12 et l’exégèse des Pères grecs.” *Biblica* 36 (1955) 436-56.

Criticized by: Spadafora, F. “Rom. 5, 12: Esegesi e riflessi dogmatici.” *Divinitas* 4 (1960) 289-98. (Lyonnet’s reinterpretation is “scientifically without foundation, not to mention untenable” (“scientificamente infondata, per non dire insostenibile”) (p. 298).

See also: Mariani, B. “La persona di Adamo e ii peccato originale secondo San Paolo: Rom. 5, 12-21.” *Divinitas* 2 (1958) 486-519.

Lyonnet “faced a milder form of criticism” from Romeo. (Fitzmyer *Interpretation* 28 n 17)

other conspiratorial exegetes

Romeo mentions in his footnotes other religious “who make up the group”: Ceslaus Spicq, OP; Pierre Teilhard de Chardin, SJ; and David Stanley, SJ. (Fitzmyer *Interpretation* 28)

“Romeo’s article was not just an attack on Alonso Schökel, Zerwick, or the Biblical Institute, but on the whole movement spread widely throughout the Catholic Church of that time. Dedicated Scripture scholars were working seriously in many quarters to further that movement, but their aim was not the destruction of the foundations of Christian faith or the traditions of the Church.” (Fitzmyer *Interpretation* 32)

Romeo and W.F. Albright

“Immediately after his lengthy critique, the same issue of *Divinitas* carried an Italian translation of two chapters that W.F. Albright had contributed to . . . *The Old Testament and Modern Study* . . .” (Fitzmyer *Interpretation* 28)

Albright, William Foxwell. “The Old Testament and the Archaeology of Palestine.” In Rowley, H.H., ed. *The Old Testament and Modern Study*: *A Generation of Discovery and Research*. Oxford: Clarendon, 1951. 1-26.

Albright, William Foxwell. “The Old Testament and the Archaeology of the Ancient Near East.” In Rowley, H.H., ed. *The Old Testament and Modern Study*: *A Generation of Discovery and Research*. Oxford: Clarendon, 1951. 27-47.

Albright, William Foxwell. “La Bibbia illustrata dall’archeologia.” *Divinitas* 4 (1960) 457-505.

For the translation of Albright, Romeo wrote “a preface of six pages in italics, which was written to introduce the American Albright to Italian readers, but which ended with a series of references to ecclesiastical documents . . . The last footnote of that preface quoted the *finis* (purpose) of the Biblical Institute, as set forth by Pius X.” (Fitzmyer *Interpretation* 28)

Pius X (*AAS* 1 [1909] 448, Romeo’s emphasis): “The purpose of the Institute is to defend, promulgate, and promote sound teaching about the Sacred Books, in thorough conformity with the norms set up or to be set up by this Holy Apostolic See, against opinions, especially of more recent [writers], which are false, erroneous, rash, and heretical.” (Instituti fine continetur ut sanam de Libris sacris doctrinam, normis ab hac S. Sede Apostolica statutis vel statuendis omnino conformem, *adversus opiniones*, *recentiorum maxime*, *falsas*, *erroneas*, *temerarias atgue haereticas defendat promulget*, *promoveat*.)

Thus the purpose of the preface “was an indirect comparison of what a non-Catholic biblical scholar and archaeologist had to say about the Bible with what the Biblical Institute was supposed to be teaching about it.” (Fitzmyer *Interpretation* 28)

“Such a use of the Italian translation [28] of those chapters was completely unauthorized.” (Fitzmyer *Interpretation* 28-29)

“The separate printing of the offprints of Romeo’s article, which were circulated widely, even went so far as to put the names of Romeo and Albright together on the cover with the title only of Romeo’s article.” (Fitzmyer *Interpretation* 29)

liberal: reactions to Romeo in Rome

The rector of the Biblical Institute, E. Vogt, “a Swiss Jesuit who had worked in southern Brazil, wrote to the editor of *Divinitas*, A. Piolanti, asking for a retractation and for equal space to answer the critique in that magazine.” Piolanti refused. (Fitzmyer *Interpretation* 29)

1961: *Verbum Domini* article

P.I.B. (Pontificium Institutum Biblicum). “Pontificium Institutum Biblicum et recens libellum R.mi D.ni A. Romeo.” *Verbum Domini* 39 (1961) 3-17.

The Pontifical Biblical Institute replied to Romeo in a 15-page article in *Verbum Domini*: “The Pontifical Biblical Institute and a Recent Booklet of Msgr. A. Romeo.” (Fitzmyer *Interpretation* 29)

The Institute “complained of the violations of charity involved in the damage done to its reputation through the “very serious . . . accusations leveled against two professors of this Institute, and this not in private (as has occurred for years now against the Institute), but publicly, and indeed not in an obscure place, but in a magazine that glories in the name *Divinitas*.” (P.I.B. 3-4) (Fitzmyer *Interpretation* 29)

“The article indicated . . . Romeo’s methods of “interpreting” his sources . . .” (Fitzmyer *Interpretation* 29)

It refuted “the most serious accusations”: “that the professors were opponents of tradition and the magisterium, corruptors of young clerics, teachers of a “double biblical truth,” and hypocrites.” (Fitzmyer *Interpretation* 29)

Sacred Congregation of Studies and Universities

“. . . the prefect of the Sacred Congregation of Studies and Universities let it be known at the beginning of February that that article had been published without the knowledge of himself or of the Congregation’s secretary and that it represented no more than the ideas of the writer. Moreover, since its tone was so personal, it could in no way be regarded as an official view.” (Fitzmyer *Interpretation* 29)

“On 2 March 1961, the *Osservatore Romano* carried the news that the rector of the Biblical Institute, E. Vogt, S.J., had been named a consultor to the Pontifical Theological [29] Commission of the coming Vatican Council II.” (Fitzmyer *Interpretation* 29-30)

“I do not make public the text . . ., since I have no authority to do so; though [it has] been circulated widely.” (See the references in “The Close of a Controversy.” *CBQ* 23 (1961) 269.) (Fitzmyer *Interpretation* 30 n 22)

Pontifical Biblical Commission’s reaction

“Finally, a letter was sent by A. Miller, O.S.B., the secretary of the Pontifical Biblical Commission, in the name of all the consultors of the Commission who had assembled in the Vatican, to the rector of the Biblical Institute, deprecating the attacks of Msgr. Romeo (mentioned by name) and reaffirming publicly their unshakable solidarity with the Biblical Institute.” (Fitzmyer *Interpretation* 30)

“I do not make public the text . . ., since I have no authority to do so; though [it has] been circulated widely.” (See the references in “The Close of a Controversy.” *CBQ* 23 (1961) 269.) (Fitzmyer *Interpretation* 30 n 22)

“The Biblical Commission came out in favor of the Biblical Institute in this controversy *in globo*; it reaffirmed its confidence in the professorial staff of that Institute.” (Fitzmyer *Interpretation* 32)

With “the professors of the Biblical Institute, . . . the Biblical Commission earlier expressed its solidarity.” (Fitzmyer *Interpretation* 35)

That does not mean that it necessarily “agreed with every detail of what was written by the professors in the articles criticized.” (Fitzmyer *Interpretation* 32)

The Pontifical Biblical Commission “has always been looked upon as a guardian of the faith in matters biblical . . . [That it] sided with the Biblical Institute against the accusations of a Roman monsignor with important connections in various Vatican circles is of much more importance in indicating an official view than any critique of seventy pages.” (Fitzmyer *Interpretation* 32)

“Exegetes throughout the world sighed with relief at the news of the reaction of the Biblical Commission to the controversy, for it indicated that official Roman views had not changed since [the Biblical Commission’s 1955 *responsa*].” (Fitzmyer *Interpretation* 32)

See above: “1955: Pontifical Biblical Commission’s (PBC’s) *responsa*, “De nova Enchiridii Biblici editione.”

liberal: reactions to the controversy throughout the world

“Reactions to the controversy appeared in various journals throughout the world.” (Fitzmyer *Interpretation* 30)

1961 (March): *Herder Korrespondenz*

*Herder Korrespondenz* “was dismayed at the insulting tone of the polemics directed against a biblical confrère, whose orthodoxy was questioned; at the appeal for a censure (as if Rome and the episcopacy were asleep); and at the casting of suspicion on other scholars such as J. Levie, P. Teilhard de Chardin, as well as on American, French, and German journals:

*Herder Korrespondenz* (16.6 [Mar. 1961] 287): Romeo’s article, “which is by now certainly known to theologians within and without the Church, is arousing the worst fears of *rabies theologica* [theological witch-hunt]; one would have thought that such a thing did not exist any more. At the present moment this is most regrettable, especially since it originates in Rome itself.” (Qtd. in Fitzmyer *Interpretation* 30)

1961 (March): *Études*

“Rome: ombres et lumières.” *Études* 308.3 (Mar. 1961) 401.

This article “contrasted an optimistic article of C. Boyer [“Il Concilio e l’unità cristiana.” *Osservatore Romano* (21 Jan. 1961) 3], in which the author stressed that, thanks to the Council, “Protestants who are nourished on the Bible will see better how the Roman Church is bound to Sacred Scripture and how it is assured of the assistance of the Holy Spirit to interpret it correctly,” with the attack conducted at Rome at present by “tout un clan” against the biblical movement and its scientifically assured results. “If this attack were to succeed and if Catholic exegetes were to lose a sane liberty of research, all hope of useful dialogue with Protestantism would be ruined, perhaps for several decades” (p. 401).” (Fitzmyer *Interpretation* 30)

1961 (April): *Études*

“J.M. Le Blond in the following issue of *Études* took up an issue for which Romeo had criticized J. Levie. Le Blond regretted the concern for “security” that has been substituted openly for that of truth . . .” (Fitzmyer *Interpretation* 30)

J.M. Le Blond (“L’Eglise et l’histoire.” *Études* 309.1 [1961] 85-88. 85): “This is the normal mark of integralism; an unquestionably sincere attachment to the Church is compromised by fear, as if the Church had to be afraid of scientific research and the impartial quest for truth. Such “pragmatism” can become very serious and in addition can scarcely offer any confidence to those of our separated brothers whom the proclamation of a council has been leading to look in our direction with greater attention.” (Qtd. in Fitzmyer *Interpretation* 31)

“Le Blond was much more concerned about the position that the Church was expected to adopt vis-à-vis the “new times” according to Romeo. He takes some of Romeo’s statements (such as “The Church has never accommodated herself to what Levie calls history” [456 n. 152]) and contrasts them with statements of Pius XII [and John XXIII . . .” (Fitzmyer *Interpretation* 31)

Pius XII. Christmas Message, 23 December 1956. *AAS* 49 [1957] 12.

John XXIII (“Allocution to the Students of the Greek College at Rome.” 14 June 1959): “The Church must adapt herself, since there has been so much evolution in the modern world among the faithful and in the manner of life that they must lead. When she realizes that, she will then turn to her separated brothers and say to them: “See what the Church is, what she has done, how she presents herself.” And when the Church appears thus modernized, rejuvenated, she will be able to say to our separated brothers, “Come to us.”” (Qtd. in Fitzmyer *Interpretation* 31)

1961: E. Galbiati

“Msgr. E. Galbiati, of the Theological Faculty of Milan, found Romeo’s article to be a “polemical reply,” and since some readers of *Scuola Cattolica* were disturbed by the controversy, he showed how both sides had been trying to remain faithful to the demands of Christian faith.” (Fitzmyer *Interpretation* 31)

E. Galbiati (“Un dissidio tra gli esegeti? A proposito di una recente polemica.” *Scuola Cattolica* 89 [1961] 50-53. 53): “If at times his [Romeo’s] adversaries have given the impression of an excessive security, devoid of any concern about clarifying how their unusual exegesis is nevertheless in accord with or not only in discord with revealed principles, then let it be shown how their security is without foundation [31] and how it cannot be reconciled with the principles admitted by all. The scholarly world expects nothing more than this. But such a hope has been disappointed, for as a result of the violent polemical tone the heart of the matter was never touched, nor was any new light shed on the point at issue.” (Fitzmyer *Interpretation* 31-32)

conclusion

“Though it ensued between two groups of professional exegetes, it was but another manifestation of the regrettable chasm that existed between [32] popular piety and scholarly theology.” (Fitzmyer *Interpretation* 32-33)

## Conservative: 1961 (June 20): The Holy Office’s Monitum (Warning)

introduction

Sacred Congregation of the Holy Office. [*Monitum*.] (20 June 1961.) *Osservatore Romano* (22 June 1961). *AAS* 53 (1961) 507. Béchard, Dean P., SJ, ed. and trans. *The Scripture Documents* 225.

“The name of the Holy Office was changed later to the Congregation of the Doctrine of the Faith.” (Fitzmyer *Interpretation* 37 n 3)

“As an aftermath of the Romeo affair, rumors circulated about the preparation by the Holy Office . . . of a *monitum* on biblical matters.” (Fitzmyer *Interpretation* 34)

text of the *monitum*:

“Despite the commendable progress that has been made in the study of the Bible, there are now circulating in various places opinions and affirmations that call into question the genuine historical and objective truth of Sacred Scripture—not only of the Old Testament (as the Sovereign Pontiff Pius XII already deplored in his encyclical *Humani generis*) but also of the New Testament, and even with regard to the words and actions of Jesus Christ.

“Such opinions and affirmations create anxieties in the minds of pastors and the faithful. For this reason, the eminent Fathers charged with protecting the doctrine on faith and morals issue a warning to all those who work with the sacred books either orally or in writing. They are to handle such an important issue with the proper degree of prudence and reverence, always keeping in view the teaching of the holy Fathers and the mind and Magisterium of the Church. Otherwise, the consciences of the faithful will be disturbed, and the truths of the faith will suffer harm.

“This warning is given with the consent of the eminent Fathers of the Pontifical Biblical Commission. Sebastianus Masala, *Secretary*)” (Qtd. in Fitzmyer *Interpretation* 34)

interpretation

The *monitum* “inculcates respect for the interpretation of the Fathers, the *sensus ecclesiae* and its magisterium . . . the intention of the warning is clear.” (Fitzmyer *Interpretation* 35)

But “As a “warning,” it is not an instruction or a decree advocating or condemning any specific view. The first and last clauses of its second paragraph express its predominantly pastoral concern.” (Fitzmyer *Interpretation* 35)

Holy Office (*monitum*, 20 June 1961): “Such opinions and affirmations create anxieties in the minds of pastors and the faithful.”

Holy Office (*monitum*, 20 June 1961): “Otherwise, the consciences of the faithful will be disturbed, and the truths of the faith will suffer harm.”

“As a *monitum*, it cannot be regarded as a condemnation of the so-called new direction in biblical studies . . . It would be an error to equate modern biblical studies, which are praised in the first clause, with the circulating “views and opinions”; the caricatures and popularizations of the serious study of Scripture are far more responsible for the problem than solid exegetical work itself.” (Fitzmyer *Interpretation* 35)

“Nor is the *monitum* an accusation leveled specifically against *exegetes*, much less against a “group of *exegetes*” (Romeo’s phrase), not to mention the professors of the Biblical Institute, with whom the Biblical Commission earlier expressed its solidarity. It is a warning addressed to “all those who deal with the sacred books either orally or in writing.”” (Fitzmyer *Interpretation* 35)

The *monitum* does not advocate fundamentalism.

“It likewise would be an error to isolate the expression *germana veritas historica et obiectiva Scripturae Sacrae* (the genuine historical and objective truth of Sacred Scripture) and argue that the Holy Office was advocating a fundamentalistic approach to the Bible. . . . the Holy Office has not said that *germana veritas* is to be identified with fundamentalistic literalness.” (Fitzmyer *Interpretation* 35)

“The word *germana* (genuine, proper) has been chosen to express the recognition of the kind of truth that is found in Scripture and to allow for its formulation according to various literary genres employed by the sacred writers. . . . It is but a brief formulation of what Pius XII wrote about the genres in his encyclical of 1943. The excesses that call such a [scriptural] truth into question were the object of the Holy Office’s warning.” (Fitzmyer *Interpretation* 35)

“Finally, it is apparent that the *monitum* is not to be regarded as a confirmation of Romeo’s position. At the end of the text, it is made clear that the warning has been issued with the agreement of the cardinals of the Biblical Commission. That same Commission sided earlier with the Biblical Institute against Romeo. Consequently, there is no reason to look upon the *monitum* as an attempt to change the “new direction” in biblical studies. It is a warning to *all* to treat the Bible with the prudence and reverence required and to respect the usual sources of the Church’s teaching authority.” (Fitzmyer *Interpretation* 36)

But the *monitum* “was quite negative in character and tone and shed no light on the problem.” (Fitzmyer *Interpretation* 37)

## The Pontifical Biblical Commission’s

## *Instruction on the Historical Truth of the Gospels* (1964)

### Introduction

The PBC affirmed “again the historicity of the Gospels . . .” (Fitzmyer *Interpretation* 70)

*AAS* 56 (1964) 712-18. DS §3999-99e.

Latin and English: *CBQ* 26 (1964) 299-312.

Translation with commentary: Fitzmyer, Joseph A., SJ. *A Christological Catechism*: *New Testament Answers*: *New Revised and Expanded Edition*. Mahwah: Paulist, 1991. 119-62 (appendix).

The instruction “did not merely reaffirm the historicity of the canonical Gospels . . . [It gave] a nuanced, enlightened discussion of the three stages of the gospel tradition.” (Fitzmyer *Scripture*, *the Soul* 18)

PBC (*Instruction* par. 10): “Unless the exegete pays attention to all these things [the three stages of the gospel tradition], which pertain to the origin and composition of the Gospels, and makes proper use of all the laudable achievements of recent research, he will not fulfill his task of probing into what the sacred writers intended and what they really said.” (Fitzmyer *Interpretation* 70)

### Exegesis

introduction

PBC (*Instruction* §XI): “the Catholic exegete can and must freely exercise his skill and genius so that each [may] contribute his part . . .” (Qtd. in Fitzmyer *Interpretation* 55)

PBC (*Instruction* §XIII): “As for new opinions already solidly established, they [preachers] may explain them, if need be, but with caution and due care for their listeners.” (Qtd. in Fitzmyer *Interpretation* 56)

The *Instruction on the Historical Truth of the Gospels* is against fundamentalism.

PBC (*Instruction* §IV): “Let the Catholic exegete . . . profit from all . . . earlier interpreters, especially the holy Fathers and Doctors of the Church . . .” (Qtd. in Fitzmyer *Interpretation* 51)

But also see PBC (*Instruction* §IV): “Let the Catholic exegete . . . adhere to the norms of rational and Catholic hermeneutics.” (Qtd. in Fitzmyer *Interpretation* 51)

rational

“. . . apparently, . . . “rational” hermeneutics is the generally admitted norms of criticism, which prevail in all branches of literature. Such would be the norms of literary and historical criticism that guide any philologian or interpreter of ancient documents or literature.” (Fitzmyer *Interpretation* 40)

Catholic

“Catholic” “defines further norms that must guide the Catholic interpreter (e.g.,

“that the Bible is a collection of inspired writings,

“that revelation is contained in them,

“that a certain number of texts have a traditional meaning resolving the “open,” indecisive sense that at times is all that can be arrived at by philological analysis,

“etc.).” (Fitzmyer *Interpretation* 40)

And see PBC (*Instruction* §IV): “the Catholic exegete . . . will diligently employ the new exegetical aids, above all those which the historical method, taken in its widest sense, offers to him—a method which carefully investigates sources and defines their nature and value, and makes use of such helps as textual criticism, literary criticism, and the study of languages.” (Qtd. in Fitzmyer *Interpretation* 51)

historical method

The norms for the study of history apply to all historical studies.

textual criticism

This is the study of the manuscripts of an ancient text to establish its most original form.

literary criticism

“Literary criticism” sometimes means the study of historical texts.

“Literary criticism” sometimes means a subset of methods for the study of history, “the historical-critical method.” The latter usually means “the new exegetical aids” which developed in the later 1800s and earlier 1900s: source, form, and redaction criticism.

“Literary criticism” sometimes means the study of literary texts, *belles-lettres* (beautiful letters). These are “the more artistic and imaginative forms of literature, . . . as opposed to more pedestrian and exact studies.” (“*Belles-lettres*.” *Encyclopædia Britannica* 11th ed..)

source, form, and redaction criticism

The *Instruction* also gives “official sanction to many of the new trends in biblical studies.” (Fitzmyer *Interpretation* 48)

Exegetes are “enjoined to study the literary forms and encouraged to pursue the form-critical method . . .” (Fitzmyer *Interpretation* 46)

source criticism

PBC (*Instruction* §IV): “Let the Catholic exegete . . . employ . . . the historical method . . . a method which carefully investigates sources sources and defines their nature and value . . .” (Qtd. in Fitzmyer *Interpretation* 51)

form criticism

“Among the “laudable achievements” (*Sancta Mater Ecclesia* par. X) was form criticism (par. V). (Fitzmyer *Scripture*, *the Soul* 18)

But the Commission distinguished form criticism from “the presuppositions with which it had sometimes been used.” (Fitzmyer *Scripture*, *the Soul* 19)

Form criticism studies “the history of the literary form and its genesis . . .” (Fitzmyer *Interpretation* 44)

PBC (*Instruction* §IV): “Let the Catholic exegete . . . “examine . . . the literary form” . . .” (Quoting Pius XII *Divino afflante Spiritu* §38.) (Qtd. in Fitzmyer *Interpretation* 51)

Literary forms in the gospels include catecheses, stories, prayers (these three are mentioned in *Instruction* IV); but also (for example) “genealogies, parables, miracle stories, and midrash.” (Fitzmyer *Interpretation* 43)

PBC (*Instruction* §V): “the interpreter may examine what reasonable elements are contained in the “form-critical method” that can be used for a fuller understanding of the Gospels.” (Qtd. in Fitzmyer *Interpretation* 52)

The *Instruction* encourages exegetes “to pursue the form-critical method in the interpretation of the Gospels . . .” (Fitzmyer *Interpretation* 46)

redaction criticism

Redaction criticism studies “the “redactional history” of an episode: how the evangelist-compiler has edited or made use of the inherited material in his composition.” (Fitzmyer *Interpretation* 44)

three stages

The “three stages of tradition [*tria tempora traditionis*] in gospel material . . . emerged from the form-critical study of the Gospels.” (Fitzmyer *Interpretation* 38)

PBC (*Instruction* §VI): “the interpreter should pay diligent attention to the three stages of tradition by which the doctrine and life of Jesus have come down to us.” (Qtd. in Fitzmyer *Interpretation* 52)

The three stages are: (Fitzmyer *Scripture*, *the Soul* 24) (Fitzmyer *Interpretation* 49)

c. “1-33” CE: the setting in Jesus’ ministry

c. “33-65”: the setting in the early Church (preaching the traditions)

c. “65-95”: the setting in a gospel (compiling and editing the traditions)

the three stages and source, form, and redaction criticism

Sources were used in the second and third stages.

Literary forms were shaped in all three stages.

Compiling and editing was done in the second and third stages.

But we only have the third stage (the written gospels); so source, form, and redaction criticism apply directly only to the third stage. (Exegetes can nevertheless try to infer sources and forms in the first two stages, based on clues remaining in the written gospels.)

stage one

“. . . what Jesus of Nazareth did and said . . .” (Fitzmyer *Scripture*, *the Soul* 24)

The setting in Jesus’ ministry “is the stage of the *ipsissima verba Jesu* [the very words of Jesus] . . .” (Fitzmyer *Interpretation* 42)

“. . . the Commission did not insist in any way that what we have in the Gospels is a record of this first stage of the tradition.” (Fitzmyer *Interpretation* 42)

stage two

“. . . what disciples preached about him . . .” (Fitzmyer *Scripture*, *the Soul* 24)

PBC (*Instruction* §VIII): “The *apostles* . . . passed on to their listeners what was really said and done by the Lord [but] with that fuller understanding that they enjoyed, having been instructed by the glorious events of the Christ and taught by the light of the Spirit of Truth.” (Qtd. in Fitzmyer *Interpretation* 53)

PBC (*Instruction* §VIII): “the apostles were “taking into account in their method of preaching the circumstances in which their listeners found themselves.” (Qtd. in Fitzmyer *Interpretation* 53)

stage three

“. . . what evangelists wrote about him, having culled, synthesized, and explicated the tradition that preceded them, each in his own way and in a manner suited to his own literary and religious purpose” (Fitzmyer *Scripture*, *the Soul* 24)

PBC (*Instruction* §IX): “This primitive instruction . . . was committed to writing by the *sacred authors* in four Gospels for the benefit of the Churches, with a method suited to the peculiar purpose that each set for himself.” (Qtd. in Fitzmyer *Interpretation* 53)

PBC (*Instruction* §IX): “From the many things handed down, they selected some things, reduced others to a synthesis, others they explicated as they kept in mind the situation [53] of the Churches.” (Qtd. in Fitzmyer *Interpretation* 53-54)

why there are differences among the gospels

preaching, not reporting

PBC (*Instruction* §X): “the doctrine and life of Jesus were not simply reported for the sole purpose of being remembered, but were “preached” so as to offer the Church a basis of faith and of morals.” (Qtd. in Fitzmyer *Interpretation* 54)

each evangelist’s overall purpose

PBC (*Instruction* §IX): each evangelist’s “method [was] suited to the peculiar purpose which each one set for himself. . . . ” (Qtd. in Fitzmyer *Interpretation* 53)

PBC (*Instruction* §IX): the evangelists “selected the things that were suited . . . to the purposes that they had in mind, and adapted their narration of them to the same . . . purpose.” (Qtd. in Fitzmyer *Interpretation* 53-54)

their audience’s situations

PBC (*Instruction* §IX): “they selected some things, reduced others to a synthesis, (still) others they explicated as they kept in mind the situation [53] of the Churches.” (Qtd. in Fitzmyer *Interpretation* 53-54)

PBC (*Instruction* §IX): they “selected the things that were suited to the various situations of the faithful . . . and adapted their narration of them to the same situations . . .” (Qtd. in Fitzmyer *Interpretation* 53-54)

“. . . accommodation to the needs of the audiences . . . must have often made the apostles rephrase sayings and recast their stories. Certainly, some of the differences in the Synoptic tradition are owing to this sort of accommodation . . .” (Fitzmyer *Interpretation* 43)

preachers and popular writers

PBC (*Instruction* §XIII): “Let them [preachers] above all pass on doctrine . . . As for new opinions already solidly established, they may explain them, if need be . . .” (Qtd. in Fitzmyer *Interpretation* 56)

“. . . the recognition that the Biblical Commission gives to literary forms, and especially to the form-critical method of Gospel interpretation, would put interpretations based on this method among those solidly established “new opinions,” which may be explained to the faithful.” (Fitzmyer *Interpretation* 47)

PBC (*Instruction* §XIV): popular writers “should indeed exploit all the real advances of biblical science, which the diligence of recent (scholars) has produced, but they are to avoid entirely the rash remarks of innovators.” (Qtd. in Fitzmyer *Interpretation* 56)

the PBC’s *Instruction* and *Dei Verbum* (1965)

Dupont, Jacques. “Storicità dei vangeli e metodo storico dell’esegesi nella constituzione dogmatica ‘Dei Verbum.’” In *A venti anni dal Concilio*: *Prospettive teologiche e giuridiche*: *Atti del convegno di studi* “*Il Concilio Vaticano II venti anni dopo*” *Catania 21-22 aprile 5-6 maggio 1983*. Palermo: Edizioni 0 F Te S, 1984. 51-73.

Gnilka, J. “Die biblische Exegese im Lichte des Dekretes über die göttliche Offenbarung (*Dei Verbum*).” *Münchener theologische Zeitschrift* 36 (1985) 5-19.

*Dei Verbum*:

*AAS* 58 (1966) 826-27.

Abbott, Walter M. *The Documents of Vatican II*. New York: Herder and Herder and Association Press, 1966. 124.

An English translation of §19: Fitzmyer, Joseph A., SJ. *A Christological Catechism*: *New Testament Answers*: *New Revised and Expanded Edition*. Mahwah: Paulist, 1991. 163-64 (appendix).

Vorgrimler, H., ed. *Commentary on the Documents of Vatican II*. 5 vols. London: Burns and Oates, 1967-69. 3.252-61.

Semmelroth, O., and Max Zerwick. *Vaticanum II über das Wort Gottes*: *Die Konstitution* “*Dei Verbum*”: *Einführung und Kommentar*, *Text und Übersetzung*. Stuttgarter Bibelstudien 16. Stuttgart: Katholisches Bibelwerk, 1966. 44-50.

“. . . the substance of the Instruction was taken up” in Vatican II’s *Dei Verbum* (constitution *On Divine Revelation*, §19). (Fitzmyer *Interpretation* 71)

*Dei Verbum* §19 “begins with “Holy Mother Church,” using the same words with which the Biblical Commission’s Instruction begins.” (Fitzmyer *Interpretation* 71 n 33)

*Dei Verbum* “even bears a footnote (n. 35) that refers to the Biblical Commission’s Instruction.” (Fitzmyer *Interpretation* 11)

### Two Special Problems in Exegesis

synoptic problem

The Commission says nothing about the synoptic problem. (Fitzmyer *Interpretation* 48)

“The Instruction has left the debate on this issue open . . .” (Fitzmyer *Interpretation* 48)

“It seems rather obvious that the Commission did not want to take sides in the debate about the solution of this problem (whether one follows the classic Two-Source theory, or a modified form of it, or even the less likely Griesbach hypothesis or theories of oral tradition).” (Fitzmyer *Interpretation* 48)

“How can one discuss the problem of the historical value of the gospel tradition without assuming some position on the Synoptic Problem?” (Fitzmyer *Interpretation* 48)

The Commission “apparently thought it could give directives in a generic enough fashion that would not tend to close the debate about the solution to the Problem.” (Fitzmyer *Interpretation* 48)

reinterpretations of Jesus’ sayings

introduction

The Commission says nothing about reinterpretations of Jesus’ words. (Fitzmyer *Interpretation* 49)

Many maintain “that the evangelists put on the lips of Jesus a fuller form of his sayings than the *ipsissima verba* . . .” (Fitzmyer *Interpretation* 49)

Many maintain that whole verses are “redactional additions . . .” (Fitzmyer *Interpretation* 49)

examples

Matthean additions to the beatitudes

Dupont, Jacques. *Les Beatitudes*. Vol. 1. Bruges: Abbaye de saint André, 1958. Vol. II. Etudes bibliques. Paris: Gabalda, 1969.

Luke: “Blessed are you poor.” Matthew: “Blessed are the poor in spirit.”

Luke: “Blessed are you that hunger now.” Matthew: “Blessed are those who hunger and thirst for righteousness.”

Etc.

“phrases of the Matthean form of the “Our Father” . . .” (Fitzmyer *Scripture*, *the Soul* 24)

The Matthean additions are “inspired and . . . have been inherited from the early Church’s tradition about Jesus, which is a Spirit-guaranteed heritage destined by God as a means of building up the spiritual lives of Christians. The inspired Matthean form of the “Our Father” passes on to Christians of all generations a true understanding of Jesus, one expressive of what his word to all of us really is, one expressive of our relation to God the Father.” (Fitzmyer *Scripture*, *the Soul* 24)

“the “exceptive” clauses in the divorce texts” (Matt 5:32; 19:9)

Benoit, Pierre. *L*’*Evangile selon saint Matthieu*. La Bible de Jérusalem. 3rd ed. Paris: Cerf, 1961. 121.

Fitzmyer, Joseph A., SJ. “The Matthean Divorce Texts and Some New Palestinian Evidence.” *TS* 37 (1976) 197-226, esp. 207-11. Rpt. in *To Advance the Gospel*: *New Testament Studies*. New York: Crossroad, 1981. 79-111, esp. 87-89.

Richards, H.J. “Christ on Divorce.” *Scripture* 11 (1959) 22-32.

Matt 16:16b-19

Matt 16:16-19, “Simon Peter answered, “You are the Messiah, the Son of the living God.” 17 And Jesus answered him, “Blessed are you, Simon son of Jonah! For flesh and blood has not revealed this to you but my Father in heaven. 18 And I tell you, you are Peter, and on this rock I will build my church, and the gates of Hades will not prevail against it. 19 I will give you the keys of the kingdom of heaven, and whatever you bind on earth will be bound in heaven, and whatever you loose on earth will be loosed in heaven.””

Brown, Raymond E., et al., eds. *Peter in the New Testament*. Minneapolis: Augsburg; New York: Paulist, 1973. 83-101.

Sutcliffe, E.F. “St. Peter’s Double Confession in Mt. 16:16-19.” *Heythrop Journal* 3 (1962) 31-41.

Vögtle, Anton. “Messiasbekenntnis und Petrusverheissung: Zur Komposition Mt 16, 13-23 Par.” *Biblische Zeitschrift* 1 (1957) 252-72; 2 (1958) 85-102.

“. . . the Commission has not come out against such views . . .” (Fitzmyer *Interpretation* 49)

“The Commission has admitted the redactional activity of the evangelists (par. IX) . . .” (Fitzmyer *Interpretation* 49)

“The Commission . . . may even be hinting at the *kind* of redaction that this question of the reinterpretation of the words of Jesus calls for, when it says [§IX] “[sometimes] they explicated as they kept in mind the situation of the Churches.”” (Fitzmyer *Interpretation* 49)

The Commission is “not explicit enough to say that it expressly countenanced the assertion of such redactional activity [reinterpreting Jesus’ sayings] on the part of evangelists; but it is not excluded either. Its silence, therefore, on this issue—which is really crucial today—is eloquent.” (Fitzmyer *Interpretation* 49)

conclusion

“. . . if one can determine by the historical-critical method that Jesus of Nazareth did not utter some of the words attributed to him in the Gospels . . ., that does not mean that the . . . additions are unimportant or have no relevance for the spiritual life of Christian readers . . .” (Fitzmyer *Scripture*, *the Soul* 24)

Vatican Council II on Biblical Interpretation

### 1965: Vatican II, Dogmatic Constitution *Dei Verbum*

introduction

*AAS* 58 (1966) 817-36. DH 4201-35. Béchard, Dean P., SJ, ed. and trans. *The Scripture Documents* 19-33.

Dulles, Avery. “The Constitution on Divine Revelation in Ecumenical Perspective.” *AER* 154 (1966) 217-31.

In English, *Dei Verbum* is sometimes entitled *The Word of God*, sometimes *On Divine Revelation*.

“The teaching of the Second Vatican Council about Scripture and its role in the life of the Church sanctioned, confirmed, and at times extended the efforts of two great Popes of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries [Leo XIII and Pius XII] who strove to promote the proper veneration and study of the Bible in order to enhance the spiritual lives of the Catholic faithful.” (Fitzmyer *Interpretation* 16)

1962: first draft

After Pius XII in *Divino afflante Spiritu* gave Catholic exegetes freedom to use the historical-critical method, “attempts were made in conservative ecclesiastical circles (in Rome and elsewhere) to commit the Catholic interpretation of the Gospel narratives to a fundamentalistic reading of them.” (Fitzmyer *Interpretation* 48)

So the “first draft of the schema prepared for the Second Vatican Council, *De fontibus revelationis*, . . . leveled anathemas against those who would call in question the genuine historical and objective truth of the words and deeds of Jesus . . .” (Fitzmyer *Interpretation* 48 n 19)

But that schema was replaced by the schema that became *Dei Verbum*.

overview of *Dei Verbum*

ch. 1: revelation

“After a short prologue, the Constitution defines revelation as the way God makes known himself and his will through creation and especially through his son Jesus Christ for the salvation of mankind . . .” (Fitzmyer *Interpretation* 6)

“Revelation is, then, not simply a communication of knowledge but a dynamic process by which the divine persons invite human beings to enter into a relation [6] of fellowship (chap. 1).” (Fitzmyer *Interpretation* 6-7)

ch. 2: scripture and tradition

“. . . that self-revelation of God is transmitted to all generations through the gospel of Christ preached by the apostles and their successors with the help of the Holy Spirit . . .” (Fitzmyer *Interpretation* 7)

Revelation “is expressed in Tradition and Scripture, a single deposit of the Word of God. [*Dei Verbum* ch. 2] thus emphasizes the inseparability of Scripture and Tradition and avoids saying that there are any revealed truths transmitted solely by Tradition.” (Fitzmyer *Interpretation* 7)

ch. 3: inspiration

“The Constitution likewise affirms the inspiration of Scripture, teaching that it has God as its author, who speaks through human agents and in human fashion so that one must attend to the literary forms used and to the unity of Scripture in order to ascertain the intention of the inspired writers and to realize that the sacred books teach firmly, faithfully, and without error the truth that God wanted to be recorded for the sake of our salvation (chap. 3).” (Fitzmyer *Interpretation* 7)

ch. 4: Old Testament

“The Constitution then describes the OT as the preparation for the salvation of all humanity in the choice of a people to whom divine promises were entrusted gradually and as a preparation for the coming of Christ, stressing that these OT books have meaning even for Christians (chap. 4).” (Fitzmyer *Interpretation* 7)

ch. 5: New Testament

“. . . the Word of God, which is God’s power for the salvation of believers, is set forth in the writings of the NT, preeminently in the four Gospels of apostolic origin, but also in other writings . . .” (Fitzmyer *Interpretation* 7)

ch. 6: scripture in the life of the Church

“. . . Scripture plays a role in the life of the Church, by being, along with Tradition, the supreme rule of faith, because in it our heavenly Father speaks to and meets his children; for this reason easy access to Scripture should be available to the Christian faithful in accurate vernacular translations.” (Fitzmyer *Interpretation* 7)

on the historicity of the gospels

Vatican II (*Dei Verbum* ch. 5 §19, Béchard, Dean P., SJ, ed. and trans. *The Scripture Documents* 27-28): “Holy Mother Church has firmly and constantly held and continues to hold that the four Gospels just named, whose historicity the Church affirms without hesitation, faithfully hand on what Jesus, the Son of God, while he lived among men and women, actually did and taught for their eternal salvation, until the day when he was taken up (cf. Acts 1:1-2). For, after the ascension of the Lord, the apostles handed on to their hearers what Jesus had said and done, and they did this with that fuller understanding they now enjoyed, having been instructed by the glorious events of Christ and taught by the light of the Spirit of truth. In composing the four Gospels, the sacred writers selected certain of the many traditions that had been handed on either orally or already in written form; others they summarized or explicated with an eye to the situation of the churches. Moreover, they retained the form and style of proclamation but always in such a fashion that they related to us an honest and true account of Jesus. For their intention in writing was that, either from their own memory and recollections or from the testimony of those “who from the beginning were eyewitnesses and ministers of the Word” we might know “the truth” concerning the things about which we have been instructed (cf. Luke 1:2-4).” (Qtd. in Fitzmyer *Interpretation* 10)

### *Dei Verbum* ch. 6: Scripture in the Life of the Church

introduction

*Dei Verbum* ch. 6 discusses “the role of Sacred Scripture in the life of the Church.” (Fitzmyer *Interpretation* 12)

scripture and the Eucharist as Word of God

Vatican II (*Dei Verbum* §21): “the Church has always venerated the Divine Scriptures just as she venerates the Body of the Lord, never ceasing to offer to the faithful, especially in the sacred liturgy, the bread of life, received from the one table of God’s Word and Christ’s Body.” (Qtd. in Fitzmyer *Interpretation* 12)

“Here “the bread of life” is given a double [meaning], simultaneous sustenance from the Word and the Sacrament.” (Fitzmyer *Interpretation* 12)

“. . . the liturgy of the Word [is] not just a preliminary part of the Catholic Mass, something that could really be dispensed with, but of basically equal value with the liturgy of the Eucharist, because the Church, as the body of Christ, is also the community of the Logos, and is fed by both his word and his flesh and blood.” (Fitzmyer *Interpretation* 12)

That “had been taught in the Constitution on the Liturgy . . .” (Fitzmyer *Interpretation* 12)

“*Dei Verbum* was joined at the Second Vatican Council with another important document, *Sacrosanctum Concilium* on the Divine Liturgy, and the two of them have made a tremendous difference in the life of the Catholic Church. If the Church in the preconciliar days was deeply eucharistic in its life, the ecumenical council added a new factor in *Dei Verbum*.” (Fitzmyer *Interpretation* 16)

translations

Vatican II (*Dei Verbum* §22): “easy access to the Sacred Scriptures should be available to the Christian faithful . . . the Church with motherly concern sees to it that suitable and accurate translations are made into various languages, especially from the original texts of the sacred Books.” (Qtd. in Fitzmyer *Interpretation* 13)

This echoes Pius XII. (Fitzmyer *Interpretation* 13)

Vatican II (*Dei Verbum* §22): “If it should happen, provided the opportunity arises and the authorities of the Church agree, that these translations are also produced in cooperation with the separated brethren, then all Christians will be able to use them.” (Qd. in Fitzmyer *Interpretation* 13)

“We have seen that happen in the use of the *Revised Standard Version* of the Bible in the English-speaking countries of the world.” (Fitzmyer *Interpretation* 13)

what it meant and what it means

“. . . the revealing God still addresses Christians of the twenty-first century as he did during the millennium in which the two Testaments originally came into being, and precisely through the same words . . .” (Fitzmyer *Interpretation* 13)

Vatican II (*Dei Verbum* §21): “so great is the force and power of God’s Word that it remains the sustaining life-force of the Church, the strength of faith for her children, the nourishment for the soul, and the pure and lasting source of spiritual life.” (Qtd. in Fitzmyer *Interpretation* 13)

“What is behind [this statement from §21] is the distinction often applied to Scripture between *what it meant* to the sacred author and *what it means* to Christians today.” (Fitzmyer *Interpretation* 14)

“The Word of God encapsulated in the words of the ancient human author revealed to him thoughts and words that were important . . . also for believers throughout the ages . . . God spoke through the Scriptures to his people of old, the contemporaries of the sacred writers; but he . . . also speaks through the same inspired words to his people of today.” (Fitzmyer *Interpretation* 14)

“Consequently, then, there must be a homogeneity between what it meant and what it means. What it means cannot be so diverse or different from what it meant, because then God’s Word as revelation would not continue to be passed on.” (Fitzmyer *Interpretation* 14)

study of the Bible among clergy, religious, and laity

“Toward the end of chap. 6, *Dei Verbum* addresses priests and bishops about their obligations:” (Fitzmyer *Interpretation* 15)

Vatican II (*Dei Verbum* ch. 6 §25): “Therefore all clerics, especially priests of Christ and others who are officially engaged as deacons and catechists in the ministry of the Word, must hold fast to the Scriptures through diligent spiritual reading and careful study. This obligation must be fulfilled lest any of them become “an empty preacher of the Divine Word outwardly, who is not a listener inwardly,” [Augustine *Sermons* 179.1] when they ought to be sharing with all the faithful committed to their care the abundant riches of the Divine Word, especially in the sacred liturgy. The sacred Synod strongly and explicitly urges all the Christian faithful, as well, and especially religious, to learn by frequent reading of the Divine Scriptures “the supreme good of knowing Jesus Christ” (Phil 3:8), “For ignorance of the Scriptures is ignorance of Christ” [Jerome *Comm*. *in Isaiam* 1.1 Prologue].” (Qtd. in Fitzmyer *Interpretation* 15)

Vatican II (*Dei Verbum* ch. 6 §26, final paragraph): “In this way, therefore, let “the Word of God speed forward and be glorified” (2 Thess 3:1), and let the treasure of revelation entrusted to the Church fill human hearts ever more and more. Just as from constant participation in the [15] eucharistic mystery the life of the Church draws strength, so we may hope for a new surge of spiritual vitality from a greater veneration of the Word of God, which “stands forever” (Isa 40:8; cf. 1 Pet 1:23-25).” (Qtd. in Fitzmyer *Interpretation* 15-16)

### The Effects of the Renewal in Biblical Studies

1961-2000: effects of *Divino afflante Spiritu*

“As a result of *Divino afflante Spiritu*, “the interpretation of the Bible by Catholic scholars in the second half of the twentieth century began to rival that of their Protestant and Jewish peers.” (Fitzmyer *Interpretation* 6)

“It also invigorated the study of Catholic theology, for it provided it with a solid biblical basis.” (Fitzmyer *Interpretation* 6)

Protestants “gradually realized that Catholics were now venerating and interpreting Scripture the way that they had been.” (Fitzmyer *Interpretation* 6)

“This change led . . . to the Second Vatican Council . . .” (Fitzmyer *Interpretation* 6)

“This change led . . . to the ecumenical openness of the Catholic Church . . .” (Fitzmyer *Interpretation* 6)

Biblical Interpretation after Vatican Council II

## Scripture in Ecumenism

introduction

John 17:6, 20-23, “I revealed your name to those whom you gave me out of the world. . . . 20 I pray not only for them, but also for those who will believe in me through their word, 21 so that they may all be one, as you, Father, are in me and I in you, that they also may be in us, that the world may believe that you sent me. 22 And I have given them the glory you gave me, so that they may be one, as we are one, 23 I in them and you in me, that they may be brought to perfection as one, that the world may know that you sent me, and that you loved them even as you loved me.”

“. . . the ecumenical movement is a phenomenon of the twentieth century . . .” (Fitzmyer *Scripture*, *the Soul* 93)

The ecumenical movement “began among various Protestant denominations. In time, Orthodox churches joined it. After the Second World War and especially during the Second Vatican Council Roman Catholics became actively engaged in it.” (Fitzmyer *Scripture*, *the Soul* 93)

Vatican II (*Decree on Ecumenism* §3): Orthodox and Protestant Christians through faith in Christ and baptism are “brought into a certain, though imperfect, communion with the Catholic Church. . . . have by no means been deprived of significance and importance in the mystery of salvation.” (Abbott, W.M., ed. *The Documents of Vatican II*. New York: Herder and Herder, and Association Press, 1966. 345.) (Qtd. in Fitzmyer *Scripture*, *the Soul* 93)

Vatican II (*Decree on Ecumenism* §21): “a love, veneration, and near cult of the sacred Scriptures lead our brethren to a constant and expert study of the sacred text. . . . Calling upon the Holy Spirit, they seek in these sacred Scriptures God as He speaks to them in Christ. . . .” (Qtd. in Fitzmyer *Scripture*, *the Soul* 94)

Vatican II (*Decree on Ecumenism* §21): they “think differently from us . . . about the relationship between the Scriptures and the Church . . . nevertheless, in dialogue itself, the sacred utterances are precious instruments in the mighty hand of God for attaining that unity which the Savior holds out to all.” (Qtd. in Fitzmyer *Scripture*, *the Soul* 94)

historical-critical method and ecumenism

Brown, Raymond E., SS. “The Contribution of Historical Biblical Criticism to Ecumenical Church Discussion.” In Neuhaus, Richard J., ed. *Biblical Interpretation in Crisis*: *The Ratzinger Conference on Bible and Church*. Encounter Series 9. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1989. 24-49. German trans. (“drastically abbreviated”): Ratzinger, Josef, ed. *Schriftauslegung im Widerstreit*. Quaestiones Disputatae 117. Freiburg im Breisgau: Herder, 1989. 81-97. (Fitzmyer *Interpretation* 73 n 36)

Curtin, T.R. *Historical Criticism and the Theological Interpretation of Scripture*: *The Catholic Discussion of a Biblical Hermeneutic 1958-1983*. Rome: Gregorian University, 1987.

“The use of this method by Catholic interpreters since 1943 had much to do with the preparation of the Church for the developments at the Second Vatican Council. On the heels of that Council emerged the ecumenical dialogue with many Christian ecclesial communities. No little reason for that emergence was precisely the fact that Catholic interpreters of the Bible were using the same kind of interpretation of the Bible that was current among many non-Catholic interpreters. That was not a direct consequence of historical criticism of the Bible, but it was an aspect of it that should not be overlooked.” (Fitzmyer *Interpretation* 73)

Would the varied bilateral consultations be where they are today, if it were not for the use of the historical-critical method of biblical interpretation in the Catholic Church?” (Fitzmyer *Interpretation* 73)

The historical-critical method is “widely used by Catholic, Jewish, and Protestant interpreters . . .” (Fitzmyer *Interpretation* 59)

Fitzmyer’s involvement in ecumenical dialogues

Presbyterian

international

1983-1988: Fitzmyer “took part in the second phase of international dialogue between the Reformed Churches and the Catholic Church, which had been set up by the World Alliance of Reformed Churches and the Vatican Secretariate for Promoting Christian Union.” (Fitzmyer *Scripture*, *the Soul* 95)

national

“. . . I was a member of the Catholic team in dialogue with the Presbyterian and Reformed Churches in the United States.” (Fitzmyer *Scripture*, *the Soul* 94)

Lutheran

international

“. . . the Catholic and Lutheran “working group” that met in Strasbourg in 1965 and 1966 and paved the way for the formal international dialogue that began in 1967.” (Fitzmyer *Scripture*, *the Soul* 98)

“In 1967 I was appointed to the first phase of the Study Commission set up by the Vatican Secretariat for Promoting Christian Unity for dialogue on the international level with the Churches represented by the Lutheran World Federation. That phase of dialogue lasted for five years (1967-1971) and issued a pioneer document, the so-called Malta Report . . .” (Fitzmyer *Scripture*, *the Soul* 94)

1972: Malta Report

*Report of the Joint Lutheran-Roman Catholic Study Commission on* “*The Gospel and the Church*” (*Malta Report*). 1972. <christianunity.va/content/unitacristiani/en/dialoghi/sezione-occidentale/lu terani/dialogo/documenti-di-dialogo/en4.html>.

English: *Worship* 46 (1972) 326-51.

English: *Lutheran World* 19 (1972) 259-73.

*Il Vangelo e la Chiesa* (*Rapporto di Malta*).

Meyer, H., ed. *Evangelium-Welt-Kirche*: *Schlussbericht und Referate der römisch-katholisch*/*evangelisch-lutherischen Studienkommission* “*Das Evangelium und die Kirche*”, *1967-1971*. Frankfurt am Main: Lembeck/Knecht, 1975. German: 7-32. English: 33-58. (“The book also contains the position papers that were discussed.” (Fitzmyer *Scripture*, *the Soul* 94 n 4)

Note: there is another, Anglican Malta Report.

1967-68: “Three meetings were conducted by the Anglican–Roman Catholic Joint Preparatory Commission (ARCJPC) . . . The first preparatory meeting was . . . on the place of scripture in England and culminating in a meeting in Malta culminating in the Malta Report.” (“Anglican–Roman Catholic International Commission.” *Wikipedia*. 27 Mar. 2023.)

1969: establishment of the Anglican–Roman Catholic International Commission.

national

1965-1973: Raymond E. Brown, S.S., was biblical consultant for the national Lutheran-Catholic dialogue in the United States. (Fitzmyer *Scripture*, *the Soul* 95)

1973-1993: Fitzmyer replaced Brown. (Fitzmyer *Scripture*, *the Soul* 95)

1993: “that dialogue reached a term in its relations.” (Fitzmyer *Scripture*, *the Soul* 95)

1973: “the national dialogue . . . was just finishing its work on the fifth topic, Papal Primacy and the Universal Church. I was thus actively engaged in the dialogue rounds that debated Teaching Authority & Infallibility in the Church; Justification by Faith; the One Mediator, the Saints, and Mary; and the Word of God: Scripture and Tradition.” (Fitzmyer *Scripture*, *the Soul* 95)

“I was also a member of the two task forces of American Catholic and Protestant biblical scholars who were assembled to discuss the topics, Peter in the New Testament and Mary in the New Testament. The results of that collaborative discussion were published as two books . . ., . . . though they were not officially part of the dialogue proper.” (Fitzmyer *Scripture*, *the Soul* 95)

Brown, Raymond E., SS, et al., eds. *Peter in the New Testament*: *A Collaborative Assessment by Protestant and Roman Catholic Scholars*. Minneapolis: Augsburg; New York: Paulist, 1973.

“Those involved were: P.J. Achtemeier, M.M. Bourke, P.S. Brown, R.E. Brown, Joseph A. Burgess, K.P. Donfried, J.A. Fitzmyer, K. Froehlich, R.H. Fuller, G. Krodel, and J. Reumann.” (Fitzmyer *Scripture*, *the Soul* 98 n 9)

That “book turned out to be so successful that it was translated into six foreign languages, Dutch, French, German, Italian, Japanese, and Spanish.” (Fitzmyer *Scripture*, *the Soul* 99)

Brown, Raymond E., SS, et al., eds. *Mary in the New Testament*: *A Collaborative Assessment by Protestant and Roman Catholic Scholars*. Philadelphia: Fortress; New York: Paulist, 1978.

“Those involved were the same except for Joseph A. Burgess. Two others were added to the group: J.L. Martyn and E.H. Pagels.” (Fitzmyer Scripture, *the* Soul 99 n 9)

*Mary in the New Testament* was translated into German and Spanish. (Fitzmyer *Scripture*, *the Soul* 99 n 11)

### Scripture and Ecumenism

introduction

“When one reflects on Scripture as the written Word of God and the role that it plays as 5 in the Church’s life, teaching, worship, and theology, it becomes obvious that the Christian Church, in its present sadly divided forms, cannot ignore the influence that the written Word of God can provide for the modern ecumenical movement. Even if all the Churches engaged in this movement do not accord an authority in a univocal sense or understand its relation to the Church in the same way, it

For “all Mainline Protestant Churches” and the Catholic Church, the Bible is the “the *norma normans non normata* . . . the ultimate norm . . .” (Fitzmyer *Scripture*, *the Soul* 96)

“. . . all Mainline Protestant Churches and the Catholic Church “also recognize that genuine dogmatic Tradition, represented by ancient creeds, councils, and confessional writings, also plays a realistic role in church life. Yet that Tradition functions not independently of the Bible, but along with it as the *norma normata*, normed by Scripture itself.” (Fitzmyer *Scripture*, *the Soul* 96)

“. . . the Second Vatican Council’s Decree on Ecumenism restricted . . . sacramental sharing . . . but recommended that Catholics . . . “join in prayer with their separated brethren,” as in prayer services ‘for unity’ and during ecumenical gatherings. [*Decree on Ecumenism* §8. *Code of Canon Law* (1983) §844, §1365.] In fact, this has normally taken place in common services of the Word of God or Scripture Services.” (Fitzmyer *Scripture*, *the Soul* 97)

“The Ecumenical Institute at Bossey, near Geneva, Switzerland, has been well known for decades for its ecumenical Bible study, largely dominated by the French woman, Suzanne de Diétrich,7 and her colleague Hendrik Kraemer.” (Fitzmyer *Scripture*, *the Soul* 97)

de Diétrich, Suzanne. *God*’*s Unfolding Purpose*: *A Guide to the Study of the Bible*. Philadelphia: Westminster, 1960.

the historical-critical method

“. . . adoption of the historical-critical method of interpreting the Bible by Roman Catholics in recent decades has enabled them to become deeply involved in that [ecumenical] movement.” (Fitzmyer *Scripture*, *the Soul* 97)

1943: Pius XII’s encyclical *Divino afflante Spiritu*

“. . . one of the major pre-council factors that contributed to the work of the Second Vatican Council was the of Pius XII on the promotion of biblical studies.” (Fitzmyer *Scripture*, *the Soul* 97)

“. . . it was largely responsible for the shaping of Catholic theological thinking in the period between 1945 and 1962.” (Fitzmyer *Scripture*, *the Soul* 97)

Pius XII “never used the term “historical-critical method” [but] urged Catholic interpreters to make a proper use of it.” (Fitzmyer *Scripture*, *the Soul* 97)

The Study Commission set up by the Vatican Secretariat for Promoting Christian Unity and the Lutheran World Federation lasted from 1967-1971 and issued the Malta Report. [94] “Significantly, all the biblical scholars who were chosen as members of the Study Commission were practitioners of the historical-critical method: H. Conzelmann, G. Strecker, H. Schürmann, A. Vögtle, and myself. The same has to be said of K. Stendahl and K.-H. Schelkle, who attended some sessions as consultants.” (Fitzmyer *Scripture*, *the Soul* 98)

Malta Report (§4, Meyer *Evangelium-Welt-Kirche* 36): “The [Study Commission’s] first session [in 1967] dealt with "Gospel and Tradition". The reason for choosing to start with this biblical-theological question of the gospel and its transmission in the New Testament was . . . that the chances of agreement would be particularly great in biblical-exegetical discussions. Further, the report of the joint working group had pointed out that the “development of modern biblical scholarship has modified the traditional formulations of the respective positions and opened a new approach to the confessional differences.”

See “Joint Report of the Roman Catholic/Lutheran Working Group.” *Lutheran World* 13 (1966) 436-38. 437.

“. . . the task force that engaged in the collaborative assessment of Peter in the New Testament . . . acknowledged in the first sentence of the book their use of “methods common in contemporary biblical criticism” . . . in its quest for the historical Peter, the task force clearly made it its [98] primary concern “to trace how the historical facts about this companion of Jesus have been developed into the New Testament portrait of the best known of the Twelve Apostles.” (Brown *Peter in the New Testament* 1973 9) (Fitzmyer *Scripture*, *the Soul* 98-99)

### Ecumenical Translations of the Bible

Catholic translations

“. . . Jerome consulted Jewish scholars in his effort to translate the *hebraica veritas* into Latin.” (Fitzmyer *Scripture*, *the Soul* 100)

“. . . Western Christians used either the Latin Vulgate or translations of the Bible made from it . . .” (Fitzmyer *Scripture*, *the Soul* 100)

Even after the Reformation, “Catholics continued to use either the Vulgate or versions based on it, such as the English Douay-Rheims translation or that of Ronald Knox.” (Fitzmyer *Scripture*, *the Soul* 100)

1943: Pius XII in the encyclical *Divino afflante Spiritu* urged “that Catholics make use of the Bible in its original languages . . .” (Fitzmyer *Scripture*, *the Soul* 100)

“In English that resulted in the Confraternity of Christian Doctrine version, and its successor, the New American Bible. Yet it was still a Catholic Bible.” (Fitzmyer *Scripture*, *the Soul* 100)

ecumenical Bibles

1966: “. . . Archbishop Gordon J. Gray of St. Andrews and Edinburgh in Scotland gave his imprimatur to a form of the RSV: *The Holy Bible*: *Revised Standard Version Containing the Old and New Testaments*: *Catholic Edition*.” (Fitzmyer *Scripture*, *the Soul* 100)

It was “Prepared by the Catholic Biblical Association of Great Britain (London: Catholic Truth Society, 1966).” (Fitzmyer *Scripture*, *the Soul* 100 n 12)

“See my review of the separate printing of the New Testament (Collegeville, MN: St. John’s Abbey, I 965), *TS* 26 (1975) 672- 75.” (Fitzmyer *Scripture*, *the Soul* 100 n 13)

“It was called a Catholic edition because British scholars made 66 changes in the New Testament, most of them of little significance: e.g., “brethren” for “brothers”; “send her away” instead of “divorce her” (Matt 1: 19); “full of grace” instead of “O favoured one” (Luke 1:28). The result was that, though Catholics and Protestants were using the same English version, there was still a difference between the *form* of the RSV used by Catholics and that by Protestants.” (Fitzmyer *Scripture*, *the Soul* 100)

1965: *The Oxford Annotated Bible with the Apocrypha*: *Revised Standard Version*

May, H.G., and B.M. Metzger. *The Oxford Annotated Bible with the Apocrypha*: *Revised Standard Version*. New York: OUP, 1965.

Fitzmyer, Joseph A., SJ. [Review.] *Theological Studies* 28 (1967) 173.

“. . . Richard Cardinal Cushing of Boston gave his imprimatur [100] . . . Cushing was dependent on more enlightened advisors (P.J. King, W. Van Etten Casey, and E.H. Maly), and no changes were made in the text . . .” (Fitzmyer *Scripture*, *the Soul* 100-01)

“. . . Catholics could read the same text of the Bible as their Protestant neighbors . . ., but [they were] using a Protestant Bible.” The RSV and NRSV are revisions of the Authorized Version of 1611, “commonly called the King James Version.” (Fitzmyer *Scripture*, *the Soul* 101)

After Vatican II, “. . . Catholics were taken onto the translation board of the Standard Bible, myself included for several years . . .” (Fitzmyer *Scripture*, *the Soul* 101)

“. . . various “Common Bibles” use the NRSV; they “order the books differently and even admit the title “Deuterocanonical” for various books among those that were earlier called in the tradition the “Apocrypha.”” (Fitzmyer *Scripture*, *the Soul* 101)

“But there is as yet no English ecumenical translation of the Bible.” (Fitzmyer *Scripture*, *the Soul* 101)

French ecumenical Bible

“Such a translation does exist in other modern languages. For instance, there is the justly famous *Traduction oecuménique de la Bible*, on which French Catholic and Protestant biblical scholars worked together. It is also an annotated version, which has sought in its notes to strike a balance between confessional differences in interpretation.” (Fitzmyer *Scripture*, *the Soul* 101)

*Traduction oecuménique de la Bible*. Edition intégrale in 2 vols. Ed. J. Potin. Paris: Cerf/Les Bergers et les Mages, 1975. Rpt. 1985.

German ecumenical Bible

*Die Bibel*: *Einheitsübersetzung der Heiligen Schrift*, *Altes und Neues Testament*. Ed. O. Knoch et al. Stuttgart: Katholisches Bibelanstalt/Deutsche Bibelstiftung, 1979-80.

“The latest form of it is a revision of a joint Protestant-Catholic translation first launched in 1962, and it has been approved by the episcopal conferences of Germany, Austria, Switzerland, Luxemburg, and Liège . . .” (Fitzmyer *Scripture*, *the Soul* 102)

Italian ecumenical Bible

*La Bibbia concordata*: *Tradotta dai testi originali*, *con introduzione e note*. Ed. S. Cipriani et al. Milan: Mondadori, 1968.

“It is the work of Catholic, Jewish, Orthodox, and Protestant members of the Società Biblica Italiana . . .” (Fitzmyer *Scripture*, *the Soul* 102)

“. . . but it is uneven in its results and has been no little criticized.” (Fitzmyer *Scripture*, *the Soul* 102)

### scripture in the Catholic-Lutheran dialogue in the United States

introduction

This is “the Lutheran-Roman Catholic Dialogue . . .” (Hannah)

1960s: “. . . Dr. Paul C. Empie, then the executive director of the national Lutheran Council in New York . . . consulted Bishop (later Cardinal) John Wright of Pittsburgh and Lawrence Cardinal Shehan of Baltimore about the possibility of Catholic and Lutheran theologians engaging in serious discussion . . .” (Fitzmyer *Scripture*, *the Soul* 102)

1965 (July): the Status of the Nicene Creed as Dogma of the Church

*The Status of the Nicene Creed as Dogma of the Church*. Published jointly by representatives of the U.S.A. National Committee of the Lutheran World Federation and the Bishops’ Commission for Ecumenical Affairs, 1965. 31-32.

Burgess, Joseph A., and Jeffrey Gros, eds. *Building Unity*: *Ecumenical Dialogues with Roman Catholic Participation in the United States*. Ecumenical Documents IV. New York: Paulist, 1989. 88-89.

In Baltimore, 8 Lutherans and 9 Catholics met. The creed “was deliberately chosen as a topic on which there would be little disagreement in order to break the ice . . .” (Fitzmyer *Scripture*, *the Soul* 103)

The result was a “brief two-page Summary Statement . . .” (Fitzmyer *Scripture*, *the Soul* 103)

Burgess and Gros (*The Status of the Nicene Creed* 88-89): “the Nicene Faith, grounded in the biblical proclamation about Christ and the trinitarian baptismal formulas used in the Church, is both doxology to God the Father and dogma about God the Son. . . . different understandings of the movement from kerygma to dogma obtain in the two communities. Full inquiry must therefore be made into two topics: first, the nature and structure of the teaching authority in the Church; and, secondly, the role of Scripture in relation to the teaching office of the Church.” (Qtd. in Fitzmyer *Scripture*, *the Soul* 103)

1966: round 2: One Baptism for the Remission of Sins

Empie, Paul C., and W.W. Baum, eds. *One Baptism for the Remission of Sins*. New York: National Lutheran Council, 1966; Washington DC: National Catholic Welfare Council, 1967.

Also in Burgess, Joseph A., and Jeffrey Gros, eds. *Building Unity*: *Ecumenical Dialogues with Roman Catholic Participation in the United States*. Ecumenical Documents IV. New York: Paulist, 1989. 90.

This topic was also thought to be noncontroversial. “A very brief Joint Statement, signed by the two co-chairmen, Bp. T. Austin Murphy and Dr. Paul C. Empie, was issued along with the texts of four position papers.” (Fitzmyer *Scripture*, *the Soul* 104)

Empie and Baum (*One Baptism* 85): “although we use the same words with somewhat different meanings, we also upon occasion have different ways of saying the same things.” (Qtd. in Fitzmyer *Scripture*, *the Soul* 104)

“. . . Lutheran systematic theologian Warren A. Quanbeck, who had been an observer at the Second Vatican Council in Rome and who had to react to the biblical papers on the topic prepared by Raymond E. Brown and Krister Stendahl, recognized that they “came to substantial agreement on what the New Testament says about baptism.” (*One Baptism* 72) (Fitzmyer *Scripture*, *the Soul* 104)

Both Brown and Stendahl’s “papers were interpretations of the New Testament data according to the historical-critical method.” (Fitzmyer *Scripture*, *the Soul* 104)

J.W. Baker (Catholic; *One Baptism* 80): “There was no disagreement on the biblical presentations.” (Fitzmyer *Scripture*, *the Soul* 104 n 22)

1967: round 3, the Eucharist as Sacrifice

*The Eucharist as Sacrifice*. Lutherans and Catholics in Dialogue 3. New York: National Committee of the Lutheran World Federation; Washington DC: National Catholic Welfare Council, I 967.

Also in Burgess, Joseph A., and Jeffrey Gros, eds. *Building Unity*: *Ecumenical Dialogues with Roman Catholic Participation in the United States*. Ecumenical Documents IV. New York: Paulist, 1989. 91-101.

“Three papers were presented . . .” (Fitzmyer *Scripture*, *the Soul* 104)

Gärtner, Bertil E. (Lutheran New Testament scholar and now a bishop in Sweden). “The Eucharist as Sacrifice in the New Testament.”

Gärtner, Bertil E. “The Words of Institution.”

Quinn, Jerome D. (Catholic). “Propitiation.”

The Common Statement noted [187] “a remarkable “growing consensus” on the Lord’s Supper . . .” (Fitzmyer *Scripture*, *the Soul* 105)

*The Eucharist as Sacrifice* (188): “Lutherans and Roman Catholics alike acknowledge that in the Lord’s supper ‘Christ is present as the Crucified who died for our sins and who rose again for our justification, as the once-or-all sacrifice for the sins of the world who gives himself to the faithful.’” (Qtd. in Fitzmyer *Scripture*, *the Soul* 105)

*The Eucharist as Sacrifice* (192): “we affirm that in the sacrament of the Lord’s supper Jesus Christ, true God and true man, is present wholly and entirely, in his body and blood, under the signs of bread and wine.” (Qtd. in Fitzmyer *Scripture*, *the Soul* 105)

“Here the degree of unanimity was unexpected.” (Fitzmyer *Scripture*, *the Soul* 105)

“. . . there was also a noteworthy clarification of what Catholics understand today by “offering Christ” . . .” (Fitzmyer *Scripture*, *the Soul* 105)

“. . . there was not complete agreement about transsubstantiation or the offering of the sacrifice “for the living and the dead” . . .” (Fitzmyer *Scripture*, *the Soul* 105)

1970: round 4, Eucharist and Ministry

*Eucharist and Ministry*. Lutherans and Catholics in Dialogue 4. New York: National Committee of the Lutheran World Federation; Washington DC: National Catholic Welfare Council, 1970.

It dealt with the controversial matter of the validity of Lutheran orders.” (Fitzmyer *Scripture*, *the Soul* 105)

“. . . only one explicitly biblical paper was discussed . . .” (Quinn, J.D. (Catholic). “Ministry in the New Testament.”) (Fitzmyer *Scripture*, *the Soul* 105)

“But in the statement of Common Observations on Eucharistic Ministry, paragraphs 7-11 dealt with the pertinent biblical [105] material: ministry in the context of God’s act in Christ, ministry of the people of God, and the special Ministry.” (7-33, esp. 9-10.) (Fitzmyer *Scripture*, *the Soul* 105-06)

Also in Burgess, Joseph A., and Jeffrey Gros, eds. *Building Unity*: *Ecumenical Dialogues with Roman Catholic Participation in the United States*. Ecumenical Documents IV. New York: Paulist, 1989. 102-24.

“But the topic itself involved many more issues associated with the tradition that had grown out of such New Testament data

Many issues “were of divisive nature. This fourth round in the dialogue on Eucharist and Ministry has proved to be the one most controverted

“. . . at times it [the fourth dialogue] has been especially criticized.” (Fitzmyer *Scripture*, *the Soul* 106)

“Especially the boldface paragraph toward the end of the reflections of the Catholic participants.” (Fitzmyer *Scripture*, *the Soul* 106 n 27)

*Eucharist and Ministry* (31-32): “As Roman Catholic theologians, we acknowledge in the spirit of Vatican II that the Lutheran communities with which we have been in dialogue are truly Christian churches, possessing the elements of holiness and truth that mark them as organs of grace and salvation. Furthermore, in our study we have found serious defects in the arguments customarily used against the validity of the eucharistic Ministry of the Lutheran churches. In fact, we see no persuasive reason to deny the possibility of the Roman Catholic church recognizing the validity of this Ministry. Accordingly we ask the authorities of the Roman Catholic church whether the ecumenical urgency flowing from Christ’s will for unity may not dictate that the Roman Catholic church recognize the validity of the Lutheran Ministry and, correspondingly, the presence of the body and blood of Christ in the eucharistic celebrations of the Lutheran churches.” (Qtd. in Fitzmyer *Scripture*, *the Soul* 106 n 27)

1973: round 5, Papal Primacy and the Universal Church

Empie, Paul C., and T.A. Murphy, eds. *Differing Attitudes Toward Papal Primacy*. Lutherans and Catholics in Dialogue 5. Minneapolis: Augsburg, 1974. (“The common statement and the Lutheran and Catholic reflections are found on pp. 9-38 . . .” Fitzmyer *Scripture*, *the Soul* 107 n 28)

Also in Burgess, Joseph A., and Jeffrey Gros, eds. *Building Unity*: *Ecumenical Dialogues with Roman Catholic Participation in the United States*. Ecumenical Documents IV. New York: Paulist, 1989. 125-59.

The “subsidiary task force . . . published *Peter in the New Testament* . . .” (Fitzmyer *Scripture*, *the Soul* 107)

“That task force, consisting of eleven New Testament scholars, had met fifteen times, from October 1971 to March 1973, and studied every passage in the New Testament relating to Peter.” (Fitzmyer *Scripture*, *the Soul* 107)

“The results of that collaborative study were taken up by the dialogue members and are duly summarized in paragraphs 9-13 of the Common Statement.” (*Papal Primacy* 13-16) (Fitzmyer *Scripture*, *the Soul* 107)

“In this round the biblical data entered more fully into the discussion than in previous rounds and made a contribution that was truly telling. Yet when one looks for an explicitly biblical position paper in the volume finally [106] published, there is none.” (Fitzmyer *Scripture*, *the Soul* 106-07)

The “different aspects or images of Ministry associated with him [Peter] in reference to the Church as a whole . . . develop from earlier to later images. Such a development “does not constitute papacy in its later technical sense, but one can see the possibility of an orientation in that direction.” (*Papal Primacy* 15-16) (Fitzmyer *Scripture*, *the Soul* 107)

*Papal Primacy* (11 [§4], italics in original): “Although we are aware of the danger of attributing to the church in New Testament times a modern style or model of universality, we have found it appropriate to speak of a Petrine function, using this term to describe *a particular* [107] *form of Ministry exercised by a person*, *officeholder*, *or local church with reference to the church as a whole*.” (Qtd. in Fitzmyer *Scripture*, *the Soul* 107-08)

“This recognition of a Petrine function in the Christian church . . . is a noteworthy advance in ecumenism . . .” (Fitzmyer *Scripture*, *the Soul* 106-08)

1973-78: round 6, Teaching Authority and Infallibility in the Church

Empie, Paul C., T.A. Murphy, and Joseph A. Burgess, eds. *Teaching Authority and Infallibility in the Church*. Lutherans and Catholics in Dialogue 6. Minneapolis: Augsburg, 1980. (“The common statement and the reflection papers are found on pp. 11-68.” Fitzmyer *Scripture*, *the Soul* 108 n 33)

Also in Burgess, Joseph A., and Jeffrey Gros, eds. *Building Unity*: *Ecumenical Dialogues with Roman Catholic Participation in the United States*. Ecumenical Documents IV. New York: Paulist, 1989. 160-216.

Four of the 26 position papers “were devoted to biblical aspects . . .” (Fitzmyer *Scripture*, *the Soul* 108)

Fitzmyer wrote one on “the office of teaching in the Christian Church according to the New Testament,” with “a response by Lutheran J. Reumann . . .” (Fitzmyer *Scripture*, *the Soul* 108)

J.D. Quinn wrote two, “on the biblical *loci* pertaining to infallibility and on the terminology of faith, truth, teaching, and the Spirit in the Pastoral Letters.” (Fitzmyer *Scripture*, *the Soul* 108)

“. . . most of the time was [spent] on the philosophical nature of language and utterances and the possibility of infallible statements, on the history of the dogma of infallibility, and on the papal exercise of infallibility in the definition of two Marian dogmas, the Immaculate Conception (1854) and the Assumption [108] (1950).” (Fitzmyer *Scripture*, *the Soul* 108-09)

The Common Statement included “a fresh look at the biblical data, which was devoted to the treatment of Jesus Christ as authority, the gospel and its authority, especially as proclaimed by witnesses, recorded in the New Testament, summarized in *regulae fidei*, served by Ministers, and made alive by the work of the Spirit.” (Fitzmyer *Scripture*, *the Soul* 109)

There was a “list of eleven points of convergence . . .” (Fitzmyer *Scripture*, *the Soul* 109)

*Teaching Authority* (31): one is the Church’s “indefectibility, i.e. its perseverance in the truth of the gospel, in its mission, and in its life of faith.” (Qtd. in Fitzmyer *Scripture*, *the Soul* 109)

*Teaching Authority* (31): one is “Ministries and structures charged with the teaching of Christian doctrine and with supervision and coordination of the ministry of the whole people of God . . . their task includes the mandate for bishops or other leaders to ‘judge doctrine and condemn doctrine that is contrary to the Gospel.’” (Qtd. in Fitzmyer *Scripture*, *the Soul* 109)

“And yet among the eleven points of convergence “infallibility” never appears. That term does not occur in the Bible, and its use in traditional theology is different from the inerrancy of the Bible, an issue that had to be clarified in the course of the discussions of this round.” (Fitzmyer *Scripture*, *the Soul* 109)

1978-83: round 7, Justification by Faith

Reumann’s preparation of biblical materials

Reumann, John, Joseph A. Fitzmyer, SJ, and Jerome D. Quinn. *Righteousness in the New Testament*: *Justification in the United States Lutheran-Roman Catholic Dialogue*. Philadelphia: Fortress; New York: Paulist, 1982. (Reumann’s material: 1-192. Fitzmyer’s response: 193-227. Quinn’s response: 229-38.) (“Comments from the Lutheran side were also made by Joseph A. Burgess.” Fitzmyer *Scripture*, *the Soul* 110)

“Scripture played a still more important role . . .” (Fitzmyer *Scripture*, *the Soul* 109)

This was “*the* Reformation topic.” (Fitzmyer *Scripture*, *the Soul* 109)

Reumann, “a Lutheran New Testament scholar, was assigned the task of summarizing the biblical data on this important topic in this round. Although the New Testament data alone on this topic are far more numerous than those on Peter, so that they might have been assigned to a [109] similar subsidiary task force for study and analysis, it was not done so in this case. It was rather thought that the biblical material was so important to this round of discussion that the whole dialogue team had to engage in the common discussion of it.” (Fitzmyer *Scripture*, *the Soul* 109-10)

“. . . Reumann’s presentation stretched over three semi-annual sessions (1980-1981) . . .” Since Reumann’s material “could not all be used in the common statement to be prepared . . . it was decided that he should publish it separately.” (Fitzmyer *Scripture*, *the Soul* 110)

1985: *Justification by Faith*

Anderson, H. George, T.A. Murphy, and Joseph A. Burgess, eds. *Justification by Faith*. Lutherans and Catholics in Dialogue 7. Minneapolis: Augsburg, 1985.

Also in Burgess, Joseph A., and Jeffrey Gros, eds. *Building Unity*: *Ecumenical Dialogues with Roman Catholic Participation in the United States*. Ecumenical Documents IV. New York: Paulist, 1989. 217-90.

The biblical material “is not used in the history of the question (part I), where it might have been expected, but rather as the first section in part III, Perspectives for Reconstruction (§§122-49). The reasons for such a use of the biblical material were many, but one major factor was that “in recent decades developments in the study of Scripture have brought Catholics and Lutherans to a fuller agreement about the meaning of many passages controverted at least since the sixteenth century.” (*Justification by Faith* 58, §122.) (Fitzmyer *Scripture*, *the Soul* 110)

example: “the righteousness of God”

*Justification by Faith* (60-61, §131): “Recent biblical scholarship sees the righteousness of which Paul speaks both as a gift from God and, in some passages, as an attribute or quality of God, a power exercised on behalf of sinful humanity to save and justify (*heilsetzende Macht*). This widespread consensus in the modern understanding of *dikaiosynē theou*, according to which it is an attribute, but also his power present to his gift, should help us to go beyond the divisive issues of the sixteenth century.” (Qtd. in Fitzmyer *Scripture*, *the Soul* 111)

*Justification by Faith* ends with a lengthy “Declaration” (§§161-64). The “Declaration” ends: “We believe that we have reached such a consensus.” (Fitzmyer *Scripture*, *the Soul* 110-11)

disagreement

“The one area in which the Catholic and Lutheran participants did not fully agree was on the idea of justification by faith as a criteriological principle, i.e., that it is the *articulus stantis et cadentis ecclesiae*, “the article by which the church stands or falls.” This is an article of Lutheran systematic theology, which maintains that all Church life, practices, and preaching must be normed and governed by the article of justification by faith.” (Fitzmyer *Scripture*, *the Soul* 111)

“As such, this criteriological use of justification by faith is not found in the New Testament.” (Fitzmyer *Scripture*, *the Soul* 111)

“It may be regarded as a theological extension of the biblical teaching, an example of a Lutheran *norma normata*.” (Fitzmyer *Scripture*, *the Soul* 111)

“There is certainly a sense in which the principle would be acknowledged by Catholics, viz., that all Church life, practices, and preaching have to be normed by the gospel, but the Catholic members hesitated to identify that gospel solely with justification by faith.” (Fitzmyer *Scripture*, *the Soul* 111)

Peter, C.J. “Justification by Faith and the Need of Another Critical Principle.” *Justification by Faith* 304-15.

1983-90: round 8, the One Mediator, the Saints, and Mary

Anderson, H. George, J.F. Stafford, and Joseph A. Burgess, eds. *The One Mediator*, *the Saints*, *and Mary*. Lutherans and Catholics in Dialogue 8. Minneapolis: Augsburg, 1992. (Common statement: Catholic reflections: 117-24. Lutheran reflections: 125-32.)

The “criteriological aspect of justification led to the choice of the topic for the eighth round . . .” (Fitzmyer *Scripture*, *the Soul* 111)

“This was the round of longest duration and dealt with issues that were not as basic as justification by faith, but that have in reality caused more division than anything else ever since the appearance of the *Augsburg Confession* (1530).” (Fitzmyer *Scripture*, *the Soul* 112)

“Out of 43 position papers prepared and discussed in this round, three treated biblical topics . . .” (Fitzmyer *Scripture*, *the Soul* 112)

Reumann, John. “How Do We Interpret 1 Timothy 2:1-5?”

Burgess, Joseph A. “Three Reflections.”

Fitzmyer, Joseph A., SJ. “Biblical Data on the Veneration, Intercession, and Invocation of Holy People.”

But there is also the subsidiary task force’s work, *Mary in the New Testament*. (Fitzmyer *Scripture*, *the Soul* 112)

“Since the New Testament data on Mary had been prepared separately, my own position paper concentrated on the saints or holy people.” (Fitzmyer *Scripture*, *the Soul* 112)

“The results of the task force’s work were summarized by Reumann and myself and were used in the second part of the common statement, Biblical and Historical Foundations, esp. in paragraphs 143-55.” (Fitzmyer *Scripture*, *the Soul* 112)

“But the summary of those results caused some problems, because some Catholic members of the dialogue objected to the treatment of New Testament passages about Mary that seemed to them too negatively interpreted (Mark 3:20-35; Matt 13:53-58; and John 2:1-11).” (“Compare, for instance, §§143-55 with corresponding passages in *Mary in the New Testament*.” 112 n 42) (Fitzmyer *Scripture*, *the Soul* 112, 112 n 42)

“In this case, it was the reluctance of systematic theologians to accept the interpretation [112] of their biblical colleagues. It was not a confessional difference between Lutheran and Catholic exegetes, but a difference between Catholic systematic theologians and exegetes in general, and it brought home to us that systematicians still prefer to do exegesis as it was done in the good old days.” (Fitzmyer *Scripture*, *the Soul* 112-13)

“One issue that emerged prominently in this round was the question of the “theological extension” of the meaning of biblical passages.” Can 1 Tim 2:1-6 be extended to intercessions by saints in heaven? (Fitzmyer *Scripture*, *the Soul* 113)

1 Tim 2:1-6, “First of all, then, I urge that supplications, prayers, intercessions, and thanksgivings be made for everyone, 2 for kings and all who are in high positions, so that we may lead a quiet and peaceable life in all godliness and dignity. 3 This is right and acceptable before God our Savior, 4 who desires everyone to be saved and to come to the knowledge of the truth. 5 For there is one God; there is also one mediator between God and humankind, Christ Jesus, himself human, 6 who gave himself a ransom for all—this was attested at the right time.”

1 Tim 2:5-6 are “a clear affirmation of the unique mediation of Christ Jesus, a verse that figures prominently in the *Augsburg Confession* (§21), on “the Cult of the Saints.”” But 1 Tim 2:1-2 urge that “supplications, prayers, intercessions, and thanksgivings be made for everyone, for kings and all who are in high positions.” “Clearly, the author was addressing persons still in this life (living saints), urging them to address prayers to God on behalf of other living human beings. Moreover, he saw no conflict between such intercession for others and his own teaching about the unique mediation of Jesus Christ. [113] Hence the question had to be asked: How legitimate would it be to extend theologically the author’s recommendation of supplications and prayers for others to persons who have died (deceased saints)? Could not the invocation of departed saints (that they pray for all of us) be considered a theological extension of l Tim 2: 1-2? This was treated in my paper, and an answer from the Lutheran side came in Reumann’s paper.” (Fitzmyer *Scripture*, *the Soul* 113-14)

1990-92: round 9, Scripture and Tradition

Skillrud, Harold C., et al., eds. *Scripture and Tradition*. Lutherans and Catholics in Dialogue 9. Minneapolis: Augsburg, 1995.

“Theological extension” “is one way of explaining the growth and development of a tradition related to and rooted in Scripture. Hence the topic for the ninth round of dialogue . . .” (Fitzmyer *Scripture*, *the Soul* 114)

“At issue is the relation of [scripture and tradition] to each other and to “the Word of God” . . .” (Fitzmyer *Scripture*, *the Soul* 114)

“For Roman Catholics the topic touches on whether Scripture and Tradition form one or two fonts of revelation . . .” (Fitzmyer *Scripture*, *the Soul* 114)

For Lutherans “it touches on the sense of *sola Scriptura*, and the problem that the ancient Creeds and their Confessional Books create with reference to it.” (Fitzmyer *Scripture*, *the Soul* 114)

1995-2004: round 10, The Church as Koinonia of Salvation: Its Structures and Ministries

*The Church as Koinonia of Salvation*: *Its Structures and Ministries*.

2010: round 11, The Hope of Eternal Life

Almen, Lowel G., and Richard J. Sklba. *The Hope of Eternal Life*. Lutherans and Catholics in Dialogue 11.

conclusions

“. . . if the attitude toward the Bible and its interpretation had not changed in the Catholic Church [114] since the encyclical of Pius XII in 1943, there would undoubtedly have been no Second Vatican Council, no Decree on Ecumenism, and no bilateral consultations.” (Fitzmyer *Scripture*, *the Soul* 114-15)

“Even though the Lutheran-Catholic dialogue has taken up more controversial issues than other bilateral consultations, and more that have been closely related to Scripture, other consultations have also touched at times on biblical issues.44” (Fitzmyer *Scripture*, *the Soul* 114-15)

Reumann, John, and Joseph A. Fitzmyer, SJ. “Scripture as Norm for Our Common Faith.” *Journal of Ecumenical Studies* 30 (1993-94) 81-107.

Complaints Against the Historical-Critical Method

conservatives

The historical-critical method “has come under fire in recent years.” (The articles cited here are 1974-1999.) (Fitzmyer *Interpretation* 59)

Ayres, L., and S.E. Fowl. “(Mis)reading the Face of God: *The Interpretation of the Bible in the Church*.” *Theological Studies* 60 (1999) 513-28.

Answered by: Murphy, Roland E., O.Carm. “Quaestio Disputata: Is the Paschal Mystery the Primary Hermeneutic Principle?” *Theological Studies* 61 (2000) 139-46.

Couve de Murville, M. “The Catholic Church and the Critical Study of the Bible.” *Epworth Review* 13 (1986) 76-86.

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Patterson, P., and N. James. “The Historical-critical Study of the Bible: Dangerous or Helpful?” *Theological Educator* 37 (1988) 45-74.

Smith, B.D. “The Historical-Critical Method, Jesus Research, and the Christian Scholar.” *Trinity Journal* 15 (1994) 201-20.

Catholic scholars using the method have been attacked in the *Wanderer*, *U*.*S*. *National Catholic Register*, and *Catholicism in Crisis*. (Fitzmyer *Interpretation* 59)

American integralists have called the method “Modernist or Neo-Modernist, because they have seen it as emphasizing the human elements in the Bible and not paying sufficient attention to the Bible as “the Word of God.” . . . [They] would have all return to the precritical mode of exposition in vogue in the Church at least since the sixteenth century.” (Fitzmyer *Interpretation* 59)

liberals

(Sheehan, Thomas. “Revolution in the Church.” *New York Review of Books* (14 June 1984) 35-38.

Sheehan is a left-leaning philosophy professor at Loyola University of Chicago. (Fitzmyer *Interpretation* 59)

He says practitioners of the method are a “liberal consensus”; they include such exegetes as “Benoit, Brown, Fitzmyer, Meier, Murphy, Pesch, and Stanley—and such theologians as Kasper, Küng, Schillebeeckx, and Tracy, who [use] the biblical scholars’ work.” (Fitzmyer *Interpretation* 59)

Thomas Sheehan (“Revolution in the Church” 35-38): the liberal consensus is “bringing the Church to what can be called the end of Catholicism.” (Qtd. in Fitzmyer *Interpretation* 59)

Thomas Sheehan (“Revolution in the Church” 35-38): the consensus is the “most vigorous intellectual [movement] [59] since the high Middle Ages . . . [They have] awakened from a long hibernation.” (Fitzmyer *Interpretation* 59-60)

Having adopted advanced techniques from mainly Protestant scholars, they used them for “a radical rethinking of the faith” and “have been dismantling traditional Roman Catholic theology.” Their work has brought them to conclusions that “conflict with traditional Catholic doctrines,” for they have been raising doubts about the divinity of Christ, the virgin birth, the resurrection of Christ, the infancy narratives, and the Gospel accounts of the claims Jesus supposedly made.” (Fitzmyer *Interpretation* 60)

Ralph McInerny called Sheehan’s article “a “breathless paean to the winning side” . . .” (Fitzmyer *Interpretation* 60)

The consensus “stood in opposition to the “folk religion of most practicing Catholics,” which was still living on the prerevolutionary fare generally served up from local pulpits—“and especially from the one currently occupied by the conservative Pope John Paul II.”” (“Revolution in the Church” 35) (Fitzmyer *Interpretation* 60)

biblical theologians

Some biblical theologians “castigated the method for being overly preoccupied with the prehistory of the text, and consequently neglecting its final form, its literary features, its canonical setting, and especially the religious or theological meaning of the sacred text.” (Fitzmyer *Interpretation* 60)

THE PONTIFICAL BIBLICAL COMMISSION’S

*Bible et christologie* (1984)

introduction

Pontifical Biblical Commission. *Bible et christologie*. Ed. Henri. Cazelles. Paris: Cerf, 1984. 13-109. “The text was issued only in French (the original language) and Latin (on facing pages) . . .” English: Fitzmyer, Joseph, SJ. “The Biblical Commission and Christology.” *Theological Studies* 46 (1985) 407-79. 408-43. Also Fitzmyer, Joseph, SJ. *Scripture and Christology*: *A Statement of the Biblical Commission with a Commentary*. Mahwah: Paulist, 1986. 3-53.

*Bible et christologie* “discusses eleven different approaches to Christology in modern times and points out the risks that each one runs; then it gives an overview of the biblical testimony to Jesus the Christ.” (Fitzmyer *Interpretation* 71)

“It is a lengthy document that names names, mentioning scholars who are representatives of the various approaches: from traditional manual Christology based on the Councils of Nicaea and Chalcedon and medieval scholastic theologians to such modern theologians as Rahner, Schillebeeckx, and Küng.” (Fitzmyer *Interpretation* 71)

*Bible et christologie* and historical-critical method

The PBC does not “speak of the historical-critical method, but in its effort to present an overview of “integral Christology” (the total testimony of the Bible to Jesus Christ) it insists time and again on “the demands of biblical criticism” (e.g., in 1.2.7.2), which it clearly distinguishes from “critical hypotheses . . . always subject to revision” (1.2.10).” (Fitzmyer *Interpretation* 71)

PBC (*Bible et christologie* 1.3.3): “Indeed, many problems still remain obscure about the composition process of the sacred writings that finally emerged from their inspired authors. As a result, those who would dispense with the study of problems of this sort would be approaching Scripture only in a superficial way; wrongly judging that their way of reading Scripture is “theological,” they would be setting off on a deceptive route. Solutions that are too easy can in no way provide the solid basis needed for studies in biblical theology, even when engaged in with full faith.” (Fitzmyer *Interpretation* 71)

the Spirit and exegesis

To engage in historical criticism does not “deny the guidance and assistance of the Spirit in Church life.” (Fitzmyer *Interpretation* 72)

But, since the closure of revelation, “that Spirit is never conceived of as a revealer. The Spirit guides the Church through the centuries into a fuller and deeper understanding of the historical revelation once given in Christ Jesus.

John 14:26, “But the Advocate, the Holy Spirit, whom the Father will send in my name, will teach you everything and remind you of all that I have said to you.”

John 16:13, “When the Spirit of truth comes, he will guide you into all the truth, for he will not speak on his own but will speak whatever he hears, and he will declare to you the things that are to come.”

“. . . historical criticism assists the Church in its ongoing life, by helping it to uncover the essence of the revelation once given to it—the meaning of the Word of God in ancient human words.” (Fitzmyer *Interpretation* 72)

Zenger, E. “Von der Unverzichtbarkeit der historischkritischen Exegese: Am Beispiel des 46. Psalms.” *Bibel und Liturgie* 62 (1989) 10-20.

Historical criticism “has been extended from the Bible to teachings of the Church’s magisterium itself. Thus *Mysterium ecclesiae* admitted the need to recognize the historical, time-conditioned character of Church pronouncements: though the Church can teach infallibly, its exposition of revelation may involve language of a given time, may be expressed at first incompletely, may be limited in character, and may involve conceptions of a given period.” (*AAS* 65 (1973) 116-17; DH 4539) (Fitzmyer *Interpretation* 72 n 35)

## On the PBC’S *The Interpretation of the Bible in the Church* (1993)

bibliography

“It was published simultaneously by the same publisher [Libreria Editrice Vaticana] in English, French, German, Italian, Portuguese, and Spanish.” (Fitzmyer *Interpretation* 14 n 23)

But WorldCat quotes from the jacket: “Under date of April 15, 1993, the Pontifical Biblical Commission published in French a document on the interpretation and use of the Bible in the Church. The English translation of the original French document, “The Interpretation of the Bible in the Church”, appeared on November 18, 1993.”

Preface by Cardinal Joseph Ratzinger, President of the Biblical Commission.

Pontificia Commissio Biblica. *L*’*Interprétation de la Bible dans l*’*Eglise*. (21 Sept. 1993.) Vatican City: Libreria Editrice Vaticana, 1993. Rpt. in *Biblica* 74 (1993) 451-528.

Pontifical Biblical Commission. “The Interpretation of the Bible in the Church.” *Origins* 23.29 (6 Jan. 1994) 497-524. Rpt. Rome: Pontificio Istituto biblico, 1995. (Available from the United States Catholic Conference, Washington DC. Available as a pamphlet from St. Paul Books and Media, Boston.)

Béchard, Dean P., SJ, ed. and trans. *The Scripture Documents*: *An Anthology of Official Catholic Teachings*. Collegeville: Liturgical, 2002. 244-317.

See: Fitzmyer, Joseph, SJ. *The Biblical Commission*’*s Document* “*The Interpretation of the Bible in the Church*”: *Text and Commentary*. Subsidia biblica 18. Rome: Biblical Institute; Chicago: Loyola UP, 1995. (For details about the contents of this document, see pp. 77-84 *infra*.)

Murphy, Roland E. “Reflections on ‘Actualization’ of the Bible.” *Biblical Theology Bulletin* 26 (1996) 79-81.

introduction

“Quotations in this essay are drawn from the Vatican’s English form (*The Interpretation*) and reference to my book will be added as “JAF, *Text*.”” (Fitzmyer *Interpretation* 77 n 17)

“It is a remarkable document, which has been highly praised by Catholic, Jewish, and Protestant scholars.” (Fitzmyer *Interpretation* 14)

“These remarks will be made under four headings: (1) the historical-critical method of interpreting Scripture; (2) other approaches to Scripture; (3) the senses of Scripture; and (4) the actualization of the literal sense of Scripture.” (Fitzmyer *Interpretation* 77)

Fitzmyer’s remarks on *The Interpretation of the Bible in the Church* are in the appropriate sections elsewhere in this document. See the table of contents.

## Davies’s *Whose Bible Is It Anyway?* (1995)

Davies’s argument

Davies, P.R. *Whose Bible Is It Anyway*? *Journal for the Study of the Old Testament* Supplements 204. Sheffield: Sheffield Academic, 1995. (Professor of biblical studies, U of Sheffield.)

Davies (*Whose Bible* 11-12): Davies evaluates biblical writings “from a disinterested perspective . . . [as a] critical observer . . .” (Qtd. in Fitzmyer *Interpretation* 74)

Davies (*Whose Bible* 12): “Do religious writings make any sense to any reader who does not accept the reality of the deities they refer to? . . . Do those who claim a religious affinity with a certain body of writings have a better instinct for the meaning of those writings?” (Qtd. in Fitzmyer *Interpretation* 74)

“Davies seeks rigorously to distinguish a confessional approach to the Bible from a nonconfessional approach. For him both approaches may claim to be critical, but they are “so fundamentally divergent” as “to imply separate disciplines.”” (*Whose Bible* 13) (Fitzmyer *Interpretation* 74)

“As exemplars of such nonconfessional interpretation, Davies names Dante, Blake, and Eliot.” (Fitzmyer *Interpretation* 74) (Aren’t these confessional interpretations?—Hahn)

Davies “insists that there is no realistic hope of imposing an ecclesial interpretation on readers “outside the ecclesial domain,” because such a domain “cannot claim jurisdiction over how bibles are to be defined and read outside its own bounds.”” (*Whose Bible* 14) (Fitzmyer *Interpretation* 74)

“For Davies there is in reality no Bible, only “bibles” recognized by different communities . . .” (Fitzmyer *Interpretation* 74)

“Biblical text” “means no more than a text found in some bible. . . . “No bible ever had an author or writer.” “Biblical” only tells us that the work “was taken up later into someone’s canon.”” (*Whose Bible* 15) (Fitzmyer *Interpretation* 74)

Davies says his work is “nonconfessional . . .” . . . his stance toward the Bible [is] “humanist”; [74] he is “agnostic about deities.” (*Whose Bible* 16) (Qtd. in Fitzmyer *Interpretation* 74-75)

Davies says “he does not write “because of some atheist prejudice . . .”” (Fitzmyer *Interpretation* 75)

In his book “the deity is treated . . . as a character in a story *because that is how the writers of these texts wanted it to be*.” (*Whose Bible* 15, his italics) (Qtd. in Fitzmyer *Interpretation* 75)

Davies (*Whose Bible* 15): “Whether their private beliefs about deities corresponded exactly to what they wrote depends on whether or not we treat them seriously as creative writers. I see no reason to insist that biblical storytellers, any more than modern ones, feel obliged to write only what they themselves hold to be true.” (Qtd. in Fitzmyer *Interpretation* 75)

“Nevertheless, Davies maintains that his stance does not “diminish one’s joy in reading a bible.”” (*Whose Bible* 16) (Fitzmyer *Interpretation* 75)

“Although Davies says he recognizes a confessional approach, he is nevertheless more concerned to advance “nonconfessional scholarship,” and that is the purpose of his book.” (Fitzmyer *Interpretation* 75)

There would be no Bible “were it not for the faith-communities, the people of Israel of old and the early Christians. There would be no “Bible” for such “nonconfessional scholarship.”” (Fitzmyer *Interpretation* 84-85)

“Moreover, when Davies tries to tell us that the authors of the writings that are found in our differing “bibles” did not seek to get us to reverence Yahweh or Elohim as the God of the Universe, he is simply missing the point of the Bible entirely. He may protest that he has as much of an instinct for the meaning of such writings as those who claim a *religious* affinity with them, but in so protesting he fails to see the pertinence of such writings to his own life.” (Fitzmyer *Interpretation* 85)

refutation of Davies

“The answer to Davies’ question [*Whose Bible Is It Anyway*?] for the normal Christian would be, “The Church’s Bible . . .” (Fitzmyer *Interpretation* 75)

Davies, P.R. *Whose Bible Is It Anyway*? *Journal for the Study of the Old Testament* Supplements 204. Sheffield: Sheffield Academic, 1995. (Professor of biblical studies, U of Sheffield.)

Perkins, Pheme. “The New Testament—the Church’s Book??!” *Proceedings of the Catholic Theological Society of America* 40 (1985) 36-53. (“I do not agree with the views of P. Perkins,” Fitzmyer *Interpretation* 75 n 12.)

Response to Perkins: Sanders, J.A. *Proceedings of the Catholic Theological Society of America* 40 (1985) 54-63.

“The obvious reason for saying this is that there was no “Bible” before a faith-community decided what writings passed on an authoritative message to its constituent members and to successive generations of them. . . . a faith-community decided which writings were “divinely inspired and profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, and for training in uprightness” (2 Tim 3:16).” (Fitzmyer *Interpretation* 75)

Jewish canon

“For a Jew, the answer would be: the Hebrew Scriptures belong to the Jewish people, to God’s Chosen People in the pre-Christian age and to their counterparts today.” (Fitzmyer *Interpretation* 75 n 13)

“In ancient Israel, Jews . . . recognized which books authoritatively transmitted their religious outlook on life and best reflected their relations with Yahweh or Elohim.” (Fitzmyer *Interpretation* 75)

“. . . Jews recognized the authority of “Moses and the Prophets,” i.e., of the Pentateuch and of the Former and Latter Prophets.” (Fitzmyer *Interpretation* 75)

Jews “normally have divided their sacred writings: *Tôrāh*, *Nĕbî*’*îm*, *and Kĕtûbîm*, “Law, Prophets, and Writings,” abbreviated as *Tĕnāk*.” (Fitzmyer *Interpretation* 75 n 14)

In the Dead Sea Scrolls, God commands the Qumran community “through Moses and through all his servants the Prophets.” (Qtd. in Fitzmyer *Interpretation* 76)

“See the rule books of the Qumran community (1QS 1:3; cf. 1QS 8:15; CD 5:21-6:1), which use the same phrase.” (Fitzmyer *Interpretation* 76 n 15)

NT writers picked up from “Palestinian Judaism the authoritative phrase, “Moses and the Prophets.”” (Luke 16:29, 31; 24:27; Acts 28:23) (Fitzmyer *Interpretation* 76)

“. . . no Jewish writer ever composed a book in order that it might become a “biblical” or “canonical” text. In this regard, I agree with Davies.” (Fitzmyer *Interpretation* 76)

Prophetic oracles, “even inspired by God, were uttered by God’s mouthpieces to direct and guide Israel in its relation to Yahweh in varied circumstances.” (Fitzmyer *Interpretation* 76)

They “were not compiled in order to become part of the Jewish canon of Scripture. . . . They were written down only subsequently to preserve those directives for generations in Israel to come. In such a written form, they gradually acquired authoritative status . . .” (Fitzmyer *Interpretation* 76)

“. . . the Bible is the Church’s book [because] . . . It is the collection of authoritative ancient writings that the faith-community of early Christians has passed on to subsequent generations . . .” (Fitzmyer *Interpretation* 76)

If not for “acts of recognition and acknowledgment by Jewish and Christian faith-communities, there would be no Bible for “nonconfessional scholarship” to study.” (Fitzmyer *Interpretation* 76)

T.S. Eliot’s “assessment of the literary criticism of the Bible” (*Selected Essays*: *New Edition*. New York: Harcourt, Brace, 1950. 344-45): “While I acknowledge the legitimacy of this enjoyment, I am acutely aware of its abuse. The persons who enjoy these writings *solely* because of their literary merit are essentially parasites; and we know that parasites, when they become too numerous, are pests. I could fulminate against the men of letters who have gone into ecstacies over ‘the Bible as literature,’ the Bible as ‘the noblest monument of English prose.’ Those who talk of the Bible as a ‘monument of English prose’ are merely admiring it as a monument over the grave of Christianity. . . . just as the work of Clarendon, or Gibbon, or Buffon, or Bradley would be of inferior literary value if it were insignificant as history, science and philosophy respectively, so the Bible has had a *literary* influence upon English literature *not* because it has been considered as literature, but because it has been considered as the report of the Word of God. And the fact that men of letters now discuss it as ‘literature’ probably indicates the end of its ‘literary’ influence.” (Qtd. in Fitzmyer *Interpretation* 64 n 16)

The Bible is not “esteemed by humanists and agnostics . . . because of its humanist or literary merits. It has been given that status, because it has been recognized as the written Word of God, who is not just a “character” in the narrative tales of the “biblical storytellers.” The authors of the texts that make up the OT not only regarded Yahweh or Elohim as their God, but also sought to get others so to acknowledge him.” (Fitzmyer *Interpretation* 76-77)

## The Future

“I have said little about the future of biblical interpretation, except to maintain that it can never dispense with the historical-critical method. . . . We have seen recently the beginning of such prognostication . . .” (Fitzmyer *Interpretation* 115)

Johnson and Kurz

Johnson, Luke Timothy, and W.S. Kurz. *The Future of Catholic Biblical Scholarship*: *A Constructive Conversation*. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2002.

Johnson and Kurz’s book “has evoked already further discussion of the topic . . .” (Fitzmyer *Interpretation* 115)

Matera, Frank J. “The Future of Catholic Biblical Scholarship: Balance and Proportion.” *Nova et Vetera* 4.1 (2006) 12-32.

In fact, Matera’s article is only one of a symposium that deals with the book of Johnson and Kurz.” (Fitzmyer *Interpretation* 115 n 3)

# From Exegesis to Systematic Theology

## Bibliography

Brown, Raymond E., SS. “Scripture and Dogma Today.” *America* 157.12 (31 Oct. 1987) 286-89.

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Ernst, J., and A. Lindemann. *Theologie* *und* *Glaube* 82 (1992) 457-69.

Hattrup, D. “Exegese und Theologie: Eine dogmatische Anmerkung.” *TGl* 83 (1993) 90-94.

## Types of Truth

introduction

There is “poetical truth as well as historical truth, rhetorical truth as well as legal truth, mythical truth as well as gospel truth.” (Fitzmyer *Interpretation* 50)

types of truth and literary forms

Augustin Cardinal Bea, SJ (*De Scripturae Sacrae Inspiratione*. 2nd ed. Rome: Biblical Institute, 1935. 106 §90): “Each individual genre has its own truth.” (“Sua cuique generi literario est veritas.”) (Qtd. in Fitzmyer *Interpretation* 35)

Augustin Cardinal Bea, SJ (*De sacrae Scripturae inspiratione*. 2nd ed. Rome: Biblical Institute, 1935. 106 §90): “Each literary form has its own truth.” (Qtd. in Fitzmyer *Scripture*, *the Soul* 23 n 29)

PBC (*Instruction* 1964 §XII): “Truth is differently presented and expressed in various types of historical writings, in prophetic or poetic texts, or in other modes of speech.” (Fitzmyer *Interpretation* 9)

Vatican II (*Dei Verbum* 1965 §12): “Truth is differently presented and expressed in various types of historical writings, in prophetic or poetic texts, or in other modes of speech. Furthermore, the interpreter must search for what meaning the sacred writer, in his own historical situation and in accordance with the condition [8] of his time and culture, intended to express and did in fact express with the help of literary forms that were in use during that time.” (Qtd. in Fitzmyer *Interpretation* 8-9)

“. . . the truth of the passage is analogous to its form.” (Fitzmyer *Interpretation* 65)

Should Fitzmyer have said “correlative to”?—Hahn

“And therein lies the crucial relationship of form criticism to historical criticism.” (Fitzmyer *Interpretation* 65)

“Since the truth that he [the author] has enshrined in his text is analogous to the form used, historical criticism teaches us that we cannot read an ancient text without the sophistication that the form calls for.” (Fitzmyer *Interpretation* 66)

historical truth and literary forms

Form-critical analysis “affects one’s historical judgment . . .” (Fitzmyer *Interpretation* 65)

theological truth

PBC (*Instruction* §IX): “the truth of the story is not at all affected by the fact that the evangelists related the words and deeds of the Lord in a different order, and expressed his sayings not literally but differently, while preserving their sense.” (Qtd. in Fitzmyer *Interpretation* 54)

PBC (*Instruction* §X): “From the results of the new investigations, it is apparent that the doctrine and life of Jesus were not simply reported for the sole purpose of being remembered, but were “preached” so as to offer the Church a basis of faith and of morals.” (Qtd. in Fitzmyer *Interpretation* 54)

PBC (*Instruction* §X): “The interpreter . . . will be able to illustrate more profoundly the perennial theological value [54] of the Gospels and bring out clearly how necessary and important the Church’s interpretation is.” (Qtd. in Fitzmyer *Interpretation* 54-55)

PBC (*Instruction* §XII): “Let the teachers above all explain its theological teaching . . . When they practice the art of criticism, especially so-called literary criticism, let them not pursue it as an end in itself, but that through it they might more plainly perceive the sense intended by God through the sacred writer. Let them . . . show in addition how these things really contribute to a clearer understanding of revealed doctrine . . .” (Qtd. in Fitzmyer *Interpretation* 55)

historical truth vs. gospel truth

historical truth

“. . . the most significant thing in the whole Instruction is that the Biblical Commission calmly and frankly admitted that what is contained in the Gospels as we have them today is not the words and deeds of Jesus [stage one] . . . but only . . . the form compiled and edited by the evangelists [stage three].” (Fitzmyer *Interpretation* 49)

“. . . though “historical truth” appears in the title of the Instruction [*Instruction on the Historical Truth of the Gospels*], it is used only once in its text . . .” (Fitzmyer *Interpretation* 38)

PBC (*Instruction* §V): “some proponents of this method [form criticism] . . . begin with a false idea of faith, as if it had nothing to do with historical truth—or rather were incompatible with it.” (Qtd. in Fitzmyer *Interpretation* 52)

Inerrancy is “immunity from formal error in what is affirmed or asserted. The opposite of error is not simply historicity but truth.” (Fitzmyer *Interpretation* 50)

The Church “in her official pronouncements on the nature of inspiration [has never] taught that the necessary formal effect of inspiration is historicity.” (Fitzmyer *Interpretation* 50)

“If a passage in the Gospels contains historical truth, it does not contain it simply because it is inspired. The reasons for its historicity will be quite other than the inspired character of the text. The inspiration may guarantee such historical truth as is there, but it will not guarantee it any more than it would guarantee the poetic truth of the hymn to Christ in Philippians 2.” (Fitzmyer *Interpretation* 50)

“Its [inspiration’s] guarantee is not quantitative but qualitative and analogous.” (Fitzmyer *Interpretation* 50) (I don’t know what this means.—Hahn)

“The inspired truth was intended by God to give human beings not simply a “remembered” account of the doctrine and life of Jesus, but a “preached” form of it, “so as to offer the Church a basis of faith and of morals” (par. X).” (Fitzmyer *Interpretation* 50)

Vatican II on “the purpose of biblical inerrancy” (*Dei Verbum* §11. Trans. Béchard, Dean P., SJ, ed. and trans. *The Scripture Documents*: *An Anthology of Official Catholic Teachings*. Collegeville: Liturgical, 2002. 24): “Since everything asserted by the inspired authors or sacred writers should be regarded as asserted by the Holy Spirit, it follows that we must acknowledge the Books of Scripture as teaching firmly, faithfully, and without error the truth that God wished to be recorded in the sacred writings for the sake of our salvation.” (Qtd. in Fitzmyer *Interpretation* 50 n 25)

gospel truth

Changes were made to the first stage during the second and third stages. So “if it is not a question of historical truth, of what kind is it? . . . the answer [is] gospel truth.” (Fitzmyer *Interpretation* 44)

In *The Instruction on the Historical Truth of the Gospels* (1964), “The Commission implies, then, that the gospel truth is not something that is tied up with any fundamentalistic literalness.” (Fitzmyer *Interpretation* 45)

“Fundamentalistic literalness” seems by the context to mean interpreting all statements as historical truth.—Hahn

In *The Instruction on the Historical Truth of the Gospels*, “In none of the positive directives does the term “historical truth” reappear. It is evident, therefore, that the Commission was far more interested in sketching with broad lines the character of gospel truth than in just reasserting that the Gospels were historical.” (Fitzmyer *Interpretation* 38)

The evangelists’ “redacted form of the sayings and deeds of Jesus . . . is the inspired form, but it is not a stenographic report of an [49] eyewitness. The evangelists were inspired by the Holy Spirit to compile and write down the accounts as they did. This inspiration guarantees their gospel truth, which is free from error.” (Fitzmyer *Interpretation* 49-50)

biblical theology

PBC (*Instruction* §XII): professors should “not pursue it [literary criticism] as an end in itself, but . . . [so that] through it they might more plainly perceive the sense intended by God through the sacred writer. Let them [show] how these things really contribute to a clearer understanding of revealed doctrine . . .” (Qtd. in Fitzmyer *Interpretation* 55)

“. . . the literary criticism serves only to bring out the theology of the evangelists.” (Fitzmyer *Interpretation* 46)

Appendix: Raymond E. Brown, SS

Raymond E. Brown, SS

bibliography of Brown’s writings

Witherup, R.D., and M.L. Barré. “Biography and Bibliography of the Publications of Raymond E. Brown, S.S.” In Donahue, J.R., ed. *Life in Abundance*: *Studies in John*’*s Gospel in Tribute to Raymond E*. *Brown*. Collegeville: Liturgical, 2005. 254-89.

Brown and Fitzmyer collaborated on *The Jerome Biblical Commentary* (1968), *The New Jerome Biblical Commentary* (1990), *Peter in the New Testament* (1973), and *Mary in the New* [101] *Testament* (1978). (Fitzmyer *Interpretation* 101-02)

education

“. . . in the autumn of 1953 . . . I had just returned from Europe, where I had studied at Louvain in Belgium and at Münster in Germany, and was beginning my doctoral studies at the Johns Hopkins University in Baltimore. . . . The following year he [Brown] joined us at Hopkins, as he began his own studies for the Ph.D.” (Fitzmyer *Interpretation* 101)

Brown “arrived on the scene as a young scholar just as the revolutionary encyclical of Pope Pius XII was beginning to seep into American Catholic life and just as the remarkable discovery of the Dead Sea Scrolls was beginning to break upon the world. He made his mark in biblical scholarship by making the most of these two important events . . .” (Fitzmyer *Interpretation* 102)

“When Brown began his university study of Scripture in 1954, he joined us in the study of Semitic languages, ancient history, and Near Eastern archaeology at Hopkins, under the tutelage of the famous Palestinian archaeologist and biblical scholar William Foxwell Albright. The name of Albright had become so famous that it attracted not only Brown, but many others, who eventually became noted [102] Scripture scholars or biblical archaeologists: G. Ernest Wright, Frank M. Cross, David N. Freedman, Thomas O. Lambdin, William L. Moran, Mitchell J. Dahood, many of whom came to teach at either Harvard University or the Biblical Institute in Rome.” (Fitzmyer *Interpretation* 102-03)

“Those forty-five years [were] filled with great friendship . . . we kept in touch constantly by letter and telephone.” (Fitzmyer *Interpretation* 101)

“He pursued his preparatory studies for the priesthood in Washington, DC, at the Catholic University of America, in Rome at the Gregorian University, and in Baltimore at St. Mary’s Seminary. He held an M.A. in philosophy from Catholic University, an S.T.D. from St. Mary’s Seminary, a Ph.D. from the Johns Hopkins University, and an S.S.L. from the Pontifical Biblical Commission.” (Fitzmyer *Interpretation* 114)

Probably Fitzmyer means the Pontifical Biblical Institute.—Hahn

teaching

1959: Brown “began to teach at St. Mary’s Seminary in Baltimore . . ., a year after I began to teach at Woodstock College . . .” (Fitzmyer *Interpretation* 103)

“Woodstock College was a Jesuit seminary . . . The school was located in Woodstock, Maryland, west of Baltimore, from its establishment until 1969, when it moved to New York City, where it operated in cooperation with the Union Theological Seminary and the Jewish Theological Seminary. The school closed in 1974. It was survived by the Woodstock Theological Center . . .” (“Woodstock College.” *Wikipedia*. 8 Nov. 2022.)

“The Woodstock Theological Center (1973-2013) was an independent, nonprofit Catholic theological research institute in Washington, D.C.. . . . Founded in 1973, the center took its name from Woodstock College, a former Jesuit seminary located in Maryland. The center was an associate member of the Washington Theological Consortium. Until it closed, the center was housed at Georgetown University.” (“Woodstock Theological Center.” *Wikipedia*. 16 Apr. 2023.)

“. . . Brown began his biblical teaching career at the Sulpician seminary of St. Mary’s in Baltimore from 1959 to 1970 . . .” (Fitzmyer *Interpretation* 104)

“Thus, true to his vocation as a Sulpician, he trained many seminarians who became diocesan priests.” (Fitzmyer *Interpretation* 104)

1971 to 1990: Brown taught at Union Theological Seminary in New York. He retired as Auburn Distinguished Professor of Biblical Studies. (Fitzmyer *Interpretation* 104)

“He also educated Jesuit scholastics for a few years at Woodstock College, when it moved to New York City and was affiliated with Union Theological Seminary.” (Fitzmyer *Interpretation* 104)

“But, above all, he likewise educated many, many non-Catholic students at that Seminary itself during his twenty-year tenure there.” (Fitzmyer *Interpretation* 104)

“. . . he advocated in a balanced way many matters of special concern to women in those years of his teaching at Union Theological Seminary, and many female students have lauded his encouragement of them to pursue graduate biblical studies . . ., previously . . . a male-dominated world of scholarship.” (Fitzmyer *Interpretation* 104)

exegetical method

“In all these major books, Brown sought to maintain a centrist position, as he himself liked to call his approach, never proposing wild ideas or idiosyncratic opinions, as did some of his American colleagues.” (Fitzmyer *Interpretation* 103)

“Brown was a staunch advocate of the historical-critical method of interpreting Scripture. He not only used it in his commentaries [but in] *The Critical Meaning of the Bible* [1981] and *Biblical Exegesis and Church Doctrine* [1985].” (Fitzmyer *Interpretation* 103)

“Brown’s interpretations of Scripture were always carried out in the service of the Church, and that has not gone unnoticed, for a recent writer has studied what he calls “the ecclesial hermeneutic of Raymond E. Brown.”” (Fitzmyer *Interpretation* 103)

Duffy, K. “The Ecclesial Hermeneutic of Raymond E. Brown.” *Heythrop Journal* 39 (1998) 37-56.

*The Jerome Biblical Commentary*

Brown, Raymond E., SS, Joseph A. Fitzmyer, SJ, and R.E. Murphy, O.Carm., eds. *The Jerome Biblical Commentary*. 2 vols. in 1. Englewood Cliffs: Prentice-Hall, 1968.

*A Catholic Commentary on Holy Scripture*

Orchard, B., et al., eds. *A Catholic Commentary on Holy Scripture*. New York: Thomas Nelson, 1953.

“In his teaching there [St. Mary’s in Baltimore], he had to use at first *A Catholic Commentary on Holy Scripture* . . .” (Fitzmyer *Interpretation* 104)

“It was meant to be the Catholic counterpart of another Nelson publication, the revised *Peake*’*s Commentary on the Bible* (ed. M. Black and H.H. Rowley; 1963), in comparison with which it was sadly deficient. See the review of it by P. Benoit in *RB* 64 (1957) 598-601, esp. 600: “. . . une des caractéristiques de cet ouvrage: sa prudence très conservatrice.”” (Fitzmyer *Interpretation* 104 n. 12)

“It “was mainly the product of retrograde British Catholic biblical scholarship and horribly out of date even from the day of its first publication.” (Fitzmyer *Interpretation* 104)

“During his years of teaching at St. Mary’s in Baltimore, Brown realized the need of a one-volume commentary on the Bible that followed the directives of Pius XlI’s encyclical and used the historical-critical method of interpreting Scripture.” (Fitzmyer *Interpretation* 104)

“In order to put a more adequate textbook in the hands of seminarian-students, Brown and Roland E. Murphy conceived the [104] idea of a new one-volume commentary on Scripture.” (Fitzmyer *Interpretation* 104-05)

“They were already in contact with Prentice-Hall, the eventual publisher of *The Jerome Biblical Commentary*.” (Fitzmyer *Interpretation* 105)

“About the same time, I, at Woodstock College, was trying to launch a badly needed multivolume Catholic commentary on the NT, but I had little success in rounding up potential authors. So I eagerly joined Brown and Murphy in their project, when invited.” (Fitzmyer *Interpretation* 105)

“After a number of stormy years spent in prodding procrastinating contributors, we managed to publish the *JBC* in December of 1968.” (Fitzmyer *Interpretation* 105)

“Despite its size and technical character, it soon became a bestseller, not only in the textbook world, but also on the popular market.” (Fitzmyer *Interpretation* 105)

“There was . . . a British imprint of the *JBC* published by Geoffrey Chapman of London (1968).” (Fitzmyer *Interpretation* 105 n. 14)

“It was translated into Spanish”: *Comentario Bíblico* “*San Jerónimo*.” Madrid: Ediciones Cristiandad, 1971. 5 vols. (Fitzmyer *Interpretation* 105 n. 14)

It was translated . . . into Italian”: *Grande Commentario Biblico*. Brescia: Queriniana, 1973. (Fitzmyer *Interpretation* 105 n. 14)

“Eventually, it was reprinted in a cheaper edition for Catholics of India and Ceylon (Sri Lanka) . . .” (Fitzmyer *Interpretation* 105)

It was “pirated in Taiwan . . .” (Fitzmyer *Interpretation* 105)

“In English alone, it sold over 300,000 copies in this country and Canada. Brown was the editor of the general articles, and thus his example and influence contributed in many ways to the excellence of that part of the *JBC*. So in this indirect way, Brown contributed to the biblical education of many, many persons in the world at large. These were not only Catholics, but also many Protestants, because the *JBC* came to be used in a number of Protestant seminaries across the English-speaking world.” (Fitzmyer *Interpretation* 105)

*The New Jerome Biblical Commentary*

Brown, Raymond E., SS, J.A. Fitzmyer, and R.E. Murphy, eds. *The New Jerome Biblical Commentary*. Englewood Cliffs: Prentice Hall, 1990.

“Although Brown was reluctant to undertake a revision of the *JBC*, he eventually yielded to the pressure of Murphy and myself, and so he contributed his invaluable services again to *The New Jerome Biblical Commentary* of 1990.” (Fitzmyer *Interpretation* 105)

“This too has been translated into Italian”: *Nuovo Grande Commentario Biblico*. Brescia: Editrice Queriniana, 1997. (Fitzmyer *Interpretation* 105 n. 15)

“A spin-off of the *NJBC* was *The New Jerome Bible Handbook* (London: Chapman, 1992), produced in England for use by students on the secondary school level. It is distributed in the U.S.A. by Liturgical Press, Collegeville, MN.” (Fitzmyer *Interpretation* 105 n. 15)

*The Jerome Biblical Commentary for the Twenty-First Century*

Collins, John J., Gina Hens-Piazza, Barbara Reid, OP, and Donald Senior, CP, eds. *The Jerome Biblical Commentary for the Twenty-First Century*. New York: Bloomsbury. 2022.

“The new volume continues its approach of historical-critical methodology in the light of Catholic tradition, with a broader array of commentators beyond Europe and North America; Pope Francis wrote a foreword for the volume.” (“*Jerome Biblical Commentary*.” *Wikipedia*. 3 Apr. 2023.)

Dead Sea Scrolls

“Brown also began his biblical studies just as the discovery of the Dead Sea Scrolls was breaking upon the world. In this area too, he made his contribution in a small way.” (Fitzmyer *Interpretation* 105)

“After he had finished his doctoral studies at Johns Hopkins in 1958, he was named a Fellow at the American School of Oriental Research in Jerusalem, as it was then called, with a special designation to work on the concordance of non-biblical texts from Qumran Cave 4 that was being put together. I had been the first Fellow so appointed in 1957-1958 and started the concordance; Brown followed me in 1958-1959, and W.G. Oxtoby followed him in 1959-1960. In those days, we had no computers, and all the cards were written by hand. Such a concordance was badly needed by the seven-member editorial team appointed to piece together, study, and publish the thousands of fragments from Qumran Cave 4. It was meant to help them in identifying tiny fragments, relating them to others, and translating them. There was also the plan that, [105] once the fragmentary texts of Cave 4 were all published, we would be able to revise the tentative readings on the cards according to their final and definitive form and publish the concordance. Alas, in 2007 we are still awaiting the final publication of some of the fragmentary texts, and the concordance is now being produced with a computer systematically, as each volume in the series Discoveries in the Judaean Desert is published by the Clarendon Press of Oxford.” (Fitzmyer *Interpretation* 105-06)

“The cards of our concordance, however, were eventually photographed in the late 1980s, printed in a restricted edition, and sent to those few editors to whom the fragments of Cave 4 had been originally entrusted for publication. Neither Brown nor I ever received a copy of that concordance, despite all the work that we had put into it! That concordance, however, not only helped those few original editors, but was assisting many others who more recently have been co-opted into the editorial team to speed up the publication of those important texts of Qumran Cave 4. Brown never published much on the Dead Sea Scrolls, but he did contribute an important survey article on them in both the *JBC* and the *NJBC*.” (Fitzmyer *Interpretation* 106)

other main works

1966, 1970: *Gospel according to John*

Brown, Raymond E., SS. *The Gospel according to John* (*i-xii*). AB 29. Garden City: Doubleday, 1966.

Brown, Raymond E., SS. *The Gospel according to John* (*xiii-xxi*). AB 29A. Garden City: Doubleday, 1970.

These volumes “introduced many new insights and made use of the new literature of the Dead Sea Scrolls to illuminate that Gospel.” (Fitzmyer *Interpretation* 103)

1970: *New American Bible*

Brown and Fitzmyer collaborated on “the translation-committee of the New American Bible . . .” (Fitzmyer *Interpretation* 101)

1973: *Virginal Conception and Bodily Resurrection of Jesus*

Brown, R.E. *The Virginal Conception and Bodily Resurrection of Jesus*. New York: Paulist, 1973.

“His book *The Virginal Conception and Bodily Resurrection of Jesus*,which seemed so controversial to some Catholics, was recommended by the American Catholic bishops among suggested readings in the bibliography of their national pastoral letter on Mary (November 1973).” (Fitzmyer *Interpretation* 114)

1977: *Birth of the Messiah*

Brown, Raymond E., SS. *The Birth of the Messiah*: *A Commentary on the Infancy Narratives in Matthew and Luke*. Garden City: Doubleday, 1977. New updated ed. ABRL. New York: Doubleday, 1993.

1979: *Community of the Beloved Disciple*

Brown, Raymond E., SS. *The Community of the Beloved Disciple* (New York/Ramsey, NJ: Paulist, 1979.

1981: *Critical Meaning of the Bible*

Brown, Raymond E., SS. *The Critical Meaning of the Bible*. New York: Paulist, 1981.

1982: *Epistles of John*

Brown, Raymond E., SS. *The Epistles of John Translated with Introduction*, *Notes and Commentary*. AB 30. Garden City: Doubleday, 1982.

“. . . he developed his idea of the Johannine school, an idea that he and J. Louis Martyn, his colleague at Union Theological Seminary, had often discussed together.” (Fitzmyer *Interpretation* 103)

1983: *Antioch and Rome*

Brown, Raymond E., SS, and John P. Meier. *Antioch and Rome*: *New Testament Cradles of Catholic Christianity*. New York: Paulist, 1983.

1985: *Biblical Exegesis and Church Doctrine*

Brown, Raymond E., SS. *Biblical Exegesis and Church Doctrine*. New York: Paulist, 1985.

1994: *Death of the Messiah*

Brown, Raymond E., SS. *The Death of the Messiah*: *From Gethsemane to the Grave*: *A Commentary on the Passion Narratives in the Four Gospels*. 2 vols. ABRL. New York: Doubleday, 1994.

1997: *Introduction to the New Testament*

Brown, Raymond E., SS. *An Introduction to the New Testament*. ABRL. New York: Doubleday, 1997.

“His last great work . . . was a comprehensive approach to all the books of the NT. That book became the fitting crown not only of his publications, but also of his long career as a biblical scholar . . .” (Fitzmyer *Interpretation* 103)

“many paperbacks and popular books” for “the general reader” (Fitzmyer *Interpretation* 104)

*An Adult Christ at Christmas*

“Other paperbacks centered on feasts or periods of the Church’s liturgical calendar, Advent, Lent, or Easter; they sought to bring a biblical understanding to such feasts.” (Fitzmyer *Interpretation* 104)

Pontifical Biblical Commission

“To the dismay of many ultraconservative Catholics in the United States, Pope Paul VI appointed Raymond Brown as the American member to the newly reconstituted Pontifical Biblical Commission for the term 1972-1978.” (*Annuario Pontificio* [1973] 1036.) (Fitzmyer *Interpretation* 106)

“The reaction to his appointment in the United States called forth many unfavorable criticisms.” (Fitzmyer *Interpretation* 106 n. 17)

E.g.: “Bible Group Gets Brown Hair Shirt.” *Catholic Currents* (15 August 1972) 7. See also 110-13.

“Thus Brown became one [106] of the *electi quidem* in the Catholic world of biblical matters, the only American of that first group of twenty members of the Biblical Commission.” (Fitzmyer *Interpretation* 106-07)

“Subsequently, after I had finished two terms on that Commission in 1995, he was named as my successor in 1996 and was completing his second term when he died. He served in this capacity, having been recommended for it by the episcopal conference of the United States. Such was the confidence of the American bishops in him that they proposed his name for a second time, despite all the criticism of Brown’s interpretation of Scripture by conservative Catholics.” (Fitzmyer *Interpretation* 107)

E.g.: *Catholic Currents* (15 August 1972) 7. See also 110-30.

ecumenism: Catholic-Lutheran dialogue

“In the years following the Second Vatican Council, when the Catholic bishops of the United States appointed a team to engage in theological dialogue with American Lutherans, Brown was one of that first team.” (Fitzmyer *Interpretation* 107)

“The Catholic and Lutheran theologians met for the first time in Baltimore in July 1965. Because it was the first time in almost four hundred and twenty-five years that Catholic and Lutheran theologians were sitting down together to discuss their differences, a neutral topic was chosen: The Nicene Creed as Dogma of the Church.” (Fitzmyer *Interpretation* 107)

*The Status of the Nicene Creed as Dogma of the Church*. Washington DC: National Catholic Welfare Conference, 1965.

“. . . they also mapped out areas of further necessary discussion and study on divisive issues.” (Fitzmyer *Interpretation* 107)

“The second round of the dialogue took place in 1966 and was devoted to Baptism.” (Fitzmyer *Interpretation* 107)

Empie, P.C., and W.W. Baum, eds. *One Baptism for the Remission of Sins*. Lutherans and Catholics in Dialogue 2. New York: USA National Committee for the Lutheran World Federation. Washington DC: National Catholic Welfare Conference, 1966. Esp. 9-21, 23-26.

“For it Brown contributed a paper, “One Baptism for the Remission of Sins,” with a Lutheran paper on an aspect of the same subject by Krister Stendahl, the Swedish-born dean of the Harvard Divinity School.” (Fitzmyer *Interpretation* 107)

“There was again hardly any disagreement between the two teams of theologians on this topic.” (Fitzmyer *Interpretation* 107)

“The third round was devoted to Eucharist as Sacrifice . . .” (Fitzmyer *Interpretation* 107)

*The Eucharist as Sacrifice*. Lutherans and Catholics in Dialogue 3. New York: USA National Committee for Lutheran World Federation. Washington DC: United States Catholic Conference, 1967.

“The only paper by a Catholic biblical scholar was”: Quinn, Jerome D. “Propitiation.” 37-44. (Fitzmyer *Interpretation* 107 n. 21)

“. . . it was thought that the two sides would be beginning a dialogue on a neuralgic and divisive topic. However, to the surprise of all, there was a remarkable agreement between the two sides, despite the controversy between Lutherans and Catholics since the days of the Reformation and the Council of Trent about the sacrificial nature of the Mass and about the nature of the Eucharist or Lord’s Supper. Once the tenets of each side were explained properly about Sacrifice and Real Presence, little area for disagreement was found, despite a difference of terminology. Since this topic was more theological and historical than biblical, there was little that was asked of Brown, but he made his contribution to the general theological discussion.” (Fitzmyer *Interpretation* 107)

“The fourth topic, Eucharist and Ministry, was the beginning of the really controversial matters that still separate Lutherans and Catholics.” (Fitzmyer *Interpretation* 108)

*Eucharist and Ministry*. Lutherans and Catholics in Dialogue 4. same publishers, 1970. See Quinn, J.D. “Ministry in the New Testament.” 69-100.

“On this topic, Brown again made his contribution to the general discussion, and the biblical paper on the Catholic side was prepared by Jerome D. Quinn of the Seminary of St. Paul in St. Paul, Minnesota. The common statement on Eucharist and ministry proved to be the most controversial of all the papers that were issued by the National Dialogue. Though it clarified many divisive points, the topic to which it was devoted remains today a much-debated and sensitive issue between Lutherans and Catholics . . .” (Fitzmyer *Interpretation* 108)

“Papal Primacy and Universal Church was the topic of the fifth round of the national dialogue.” (Fitzmyer *Interpretation* 108)

*Papal Primacy and Universal Church*. Lutherans and Catholics in Dialogue 5. Minneapolis: Augsburg, 1974.

“For this topic the question of Peter’s role in the NT was obviously very important. Because the discussion of the Petrine function was foreseen to be technical and too much to be discussed by the theologians in the plenary sessions of the dialogue, a decision was made to have Brown gather a task force of Catholic and non-Catholic scholars to prepare a study on Peter in the NT. This was officially sponsored by the National Dialogue and resulted in the small book *Peter in the New Testament*,an assessment of the NT data by Catholic and Protestant scholars.” (Fitzmyer *Interpretation* 108)

Brown, R.E., K.P. Donfried, and J. Reumann, eds. *Peter in the New Testament*: *A Collaborative Assessment by Protestant and Roman Catholic Scholars*. Minneapolis: Augsburg. New York: Paulist, 1973. London: Chapman, 1974.

“The participating scholars were: P.J. Achtemeier, M.M. Bourke, P.S. Brown, R.E. Brown, J.A. Burgess, K.P. Donfried, J.A. Fitzmyer, K. Froehlich, R.H. Fuller, G. Krodel, and J. Reumann.” (Fitzmyer *Interpretation* 108 n. 24)

“The participants in the task force were not only Catholics and Lutherans, but also other non-Lutheran Protestant NT scholars, because Brown insisted on the value of voices from the non-Lutheran Protestant traditions on this topic: he realized that the Petrine role in the NT would affect many other bilateral conversations that the Catholic Church in this country would engage in.” (Fitzmyer *Interpretation* 108)

“This book, when finally published, proved to be very important. It not only fed into the common statement on papal primacy, but it was translated into Dutch, French, German, Italian, Japanese, and Spanish. Thus Brown’s influence reached many Catholics and Protestants throughout the world.” (Fitzmyer *Interpretation* 108)

“When the common statement on papal primacy was finally finished, Brown asked to be excused from further participation in the National Dialogue with the Lutherans, and 1973 thus proved to be the last year that he was so involved.” (Fitzmyer *Interpretation* 108)

“However, because he knew that the question of Mary would eventually be taken up in the Dialogue of Lutherans and Catholics, he proposed that the Dialogue sponsor a similar task force to discuss the NT data on the Blessed Virgin Mary, [108] even in advance of the round of the Dialogue that would take up that topic. The work of that task force resulted in another small book, *Mary in the New Testament*, which was likewise translated into several modern languages.” (Fitzmyer *Interpretation* 108-09)

Brown, R.E., K.P. Donfried, J.A. Fitzmyer, and J. Reumann, eds. *Mary in the New Testament*: *A Collaborative Assessment by Protestant and Roman Catholic Scholars*. Philadelphia: Fortress; New York: Paulist; London: Chapman, 1978.

“The participants were: P.J. Achtemeier, M.M. Bourke, R.E. Brown, S. Brown, K.P. Donfried, J.A. Fitzmyer, K. Froehlich, R.H. Fuller, G. Krodel, J.L. Martyn, E.H. Pagels, J. Reumann.” (Fitzmyer *Interpretation* 109 n. 26)

“Thus Brown’s influence in the National Dialogue continued for a while after he was no longer a member of it. I was appointed to take his place on that Dialogue in 1973.” (Fitzmyer *Interpretation* )

ecumenism: international

“I had earlier served for a term of five years on the International Dialogue set up by the Vatican Secretariat for Promoting Christian Unity and the Lutheran World Federation from 1967 to 1971. That Dialogue produced the pioneer document *The Gospel and the Church* . . .” (Fitzmyer *Interpretation* 108 n. 28)

Meyer, H., ed. *Evangelium-Welt-Kirche*. [*The Gospel and the Church*.] Frankfurt am Main: O. Lembeck/J. Knecht, 1975.

It “has often been called “the Malta Report.”” (Fitzmyer *Interpretation* 108 n. 28)

World Council of Churches

“Brown had asked to be excused from the National Lutheran-Catholic Dialogue, because by 1973 he was already involved in other time-consuming ecumenical endeavors with the World Council of Churches. As early as 1963 he had been the first Roman Catholic to be invited to address the Fourth World Conference on *Faith and Order*,which met in Montreal. He made a point of mentioning not only the advances in Catholic ecumenical relations since the time of Pope John XXIII, but also the impact that “modern critical biblical studies” in the Catholic Church were finally making in ecumenical circles.” (Fitzmyer *Interpretation* 109)

“At that Fourth World Conference on *Faith and Order*,which took place in the middle of the Council, Brown read a paper entitled “The Unity and Diversity in New Testament Ecclesiology,” and debated the topic with the noted German NT scholar Ernst Käsemann, who was invited also to address the same conference.” (Fitzmyer *Interpretation* 109)

Brown, R.E. “The Unity and Diversity of New Testament Ecclesiology.” *Novum Testamentum* 6 (1963) 298-308.

“Brown’s involvement with the World Conference on *Faith and Order* continued for at least twenty-five years; he was the only American Catholic member of the Faith and Order Commission by an agreement between the Vatican Secretariat and the World Council of Churches and played a major role in the statement on *Baptism*, *Eucharist and Ministry* issued by that Commission in 1982.” (Fitzmyer *Interpretation* 109)

*Baptism Eucharist and Ministry*. Faith and Order Paper 111. Geneva: World Council of Churches, 1982. (Formulated at Lima, Peru, January 1982.)

See: *Baptism Eucharist and Ministry 1981-1990*: *Report on the Process and Response*. Faith and Order Paper 149. Geneva: World Council of Churches, 1990.

“By papal nomination, Brown also served as a consultor to the Vatican Secretariat for Promoting Christian Unity from 1968 to 1973 . . .” (Fitzmyer *Interpretation* 109)

1982: the Vatican Secretariat for Promoting Christian Unity appointed Brown “to the International Methodist/Roman Catholic Dialogue.” (Fitzmyer *Interpretation* 109-10)

“His early death [at age 70: 1928-1998] has thus deprived the Christian ecumenical and interfaith movements of this century of one of its best and most sympathetic advocates.” (Fitzmyer *Interpretation* 109)

preaching

“Brown’s role in Church life also included his ministry of the Word, for he was always an effective preacher. His homilies and sermons were usually expository, as he sought to explain the sometimes difficult passages of Scripture. He was invariably a corrective preacher, who made it clear in such homilies that he did not agree with certain interpretations that were at times being propounded. He sought only to elucidate the literal meaning of the written Word of God and to bring it to the level of those who listened to him.” (Fitzmyer *Interpretation* 110)

“. . . Cardinal Mahony, the archbishop of Los Angeles, . . . told about an experience during a pilgrimage to the Holy Land in 1978 . . .” (Fitzmyer *Interpretation* 110)

“. . . Brown was the annual professor at the Albright Archaeological Institute in Jerusalem . . . he accompanied the pilgrims to the traditional site of Jesus’ Sermon on the Mount . . .” (Fitzmyer *Interpretation* 110)

Cardinal Mahony (“Cardinal Mahony Calls Scripture Scholar’s Death ‘Great Loss.’” *Catholic News Service* [12 Aug. 1998] 10): “Father Brown gave such an elegant and reflective description of that event that, once he had finished, no one spoke or moved. We all sat there as if we had heard Jesus speaking those words for the first time.” (Qtd. in Fitzmyer *Interpretation* 110)

honors

“. . . he was widely acclaimed for his perceptive analysis, clarity of expression, and intellectual integrity.” (Fitzmyer *Interpretation* 103)

“. . . *Time* once hailed him as “probably the premier Catholic Scripture scholar in the U.S.”” (Fitzmyer *Interpretation* 102)

“He had been a visiting professor at the Biblical Institute in Rome (1973).” (Fitzmyer *Interpretation* 114)

“He was honored with more than thirty honorary doctorates: from such foreign institutions as the Universities of Edinburgh (1972), Uppsala (1974), Louvain (1976), and Glasgow (1978); and from such American institutions as De Paul University (1974), Villanova University (1975), Boston College (1977), Fordham University (1977), Hofstra University (1985), and the Catholic University of America (1989).” (Fitzmyer *Interpretation* 114)

“In 1983 he was elected to the American Academy of Arts and Sciences.” (Fitzmyer *Interpretation* 114)

“He was also the first American Catholic to have served as president of all three of the distinguished biblical societies: the Catholic Biblical Association of America (1971-72), the Society of Biblical Literature, which is the largest association of biblical scholars in the world (1976-77), and Studiorum Novi Testamenti Societas, the prestigious international NT society (1986-87).” (Fitzmyer *Interpretation* 114)

unjust criticism and persecution

“. . . what an ordeal he went through in the 1970s and 1980s.” (Fitzmyer *Interpretation* 111)

Brown “was invited to give the keynote address to the National Catholic Educational Association, which held its annual convention in April 1973 in New Orleans.” Afterward, he was severely criticized. (Fitzmyer *Interpretation* 110)

A negative “reaction to him occurred . . . in Anaheim, California, which eventually occasioned the remarks of Cardinal Manning.” (Fitzmyer *Interpretation* 110)

Timothy Cardinal Manning, former archbishop of Los Angeles (*Tidings* [archdiocesan newspaper],4 Apr. 1980): “He [Brown] is a good and holy priest, and loyal to the Church. He is a Scripture scholar and limits his skill to his Scripture expertise. Fr. Brown, as a follower of Christ, is in good company when it comes to being criticized. . . . Do not be led astray by the venomous critics of Fr. Brown.” (Fitzmyer *Interpretation* 110)

“. . . that sniping and unfair criticism of him. The sad thing about it is that so much of it came from fellow priests, who should have known better.” (Fitzmyer *Interpretation* 111)

George A. Kelly

Kelly, George A. *The New Biblical Theorists*: *Raymond E*. *Brown and Beyond*. Ann Arbor: Servant, 1983.

“The most extended criticism and persecution came from a priest-sociologist, Msgr. George A. Kelly, a professor at St. John’s University in New York.” (Fitzmyer *Interpretation* 111)

There were “six points that Kelly sought to make in his book about Brown.” (Fitzmyer *Interpretation* 111)

Brown had “changed both his style and his opinions in fifteen years” (p. 116) . . .”

He “had unduly limited “the data he w[ould] accept as persuasive” (p. 121) . . .”

He had “not been thoroughly evaluated by his peers” (p. 123) . . .”

“. . . he wrote “as if Scriptura Sola” were the “prevailing norm for Catholic exegesis” (p. 127) . . .”

“. . . Brown’s “rhetoric in public controversy frequently obscure[d] the issues in scholarly dispute” (p. 129) . . .”

“. . . he was “overprotected by American bishops” (p. 137).”

“Although that attack of Kelly was the most extended, it was not the most vicious.” (Fitzmyer *Interpretation* 111)

1973: *Triumph* editorials

“In 1973 the periodical *Triumph* printed the following paragraph among its editorials . . .” (“Present Imperfect.” *Triumph* 8.7 [July 1973] 8.) (Fitzmyer *Interpretation* 111)

“The editor was Michael Lawrence; senior associate editors, Leo Brent Bozell and Frederick Wilhelmsen.” (Fitzmyer *Interpretation* 111 n. 34)

“Personal[:] *Situation wanted*: Are you a prestigious university, looking for an internationally known Scripture scholar with no dogmatic hang-ups? Then I’m the man for you. You’ll never catch me affirming the virginal conception of Christ, the existence of Adam and Eve, the inerrancy of Jesus’s knowledge, the Apostolic Succession. Do I make faith subservient to theology? deny the validity of past formulations of doctrine? deny literal truth to the Gospels? Yes, yes and [111] yes again. We could make beautiful heresy together. Salary? Sufficient to support me in the style to which I have become accustomed. Reply to R.E. Brown, *New York Review*,Box 47.” “Mr. R.E. Brown, *New York Review*,Box 47. Dear Mr. Brown: We love you. Come home. (signed) The Catholic University of America.” (Fitzmyer *Interpretation* 111-12)

“A few months later a more extended editorial [in *Triumph*] . . . complained about an action taken by the Catholic Biblical Association against publications such as *Triumph* . . .” (Fitzmyer *Interpretation* 112)

The editorial refers to: Miguens, Manuel, OFM. “Apostolic Succession? Fr. Brown’s Inquiry.” *Triumph* 7.4 (Apr. 1972) 20-24, 42. “Miguens was then a NT professor at the Catholic University of America, Washington, DC.” (Fitzmyer *Interpretation* 112 n. 35)

Editorial (“The Bible Truth.” *Triumph* 8.9 [Nov. 1973] 8): “His [Miguens’s] was a scholarly case, so airtight that it was never dealt with by Father Brown or his claque, who wouldn’t renounce their faith in Brown if an archaeological find were to be dug up tomorrow saying “Raymond Brown, who will go about during the twentieth century, is a fraud,” signed/Jesus of Nazareth, and attested to by a notary public.” (Qtd. in Fitzmyer *Interpretation* 112)

“To such unfair criticism one would have to add the continuous attacks on Brown in *The Wanderer* . . .” (Fitzmyer *Interpretation* 112)

the Rev. Robert E. Burns, CSP

R.E. Burns, “The Brown Controversy,” *The Wanderer* 113.17 (24 April 1980) 2. (Objected to the Los Angeles Archdiocese’s defense of Brown and of his talk at the CCD Congress in Anaheim, 6-9 March 1980.)

“Some Modernist Errors.” *The Wanderer* 113.22 (29 May 1980) 2. (Compares Brown’s view on the infancy narratives with the condemned proposition 18 of the *Syllabus of Modernist Errors*.)

“Guardians of Orthodoxy.” *The Wanderer* 113.39 (25 Sept. 1980) 2.

“Demythologizing Scripture.” *The Wanderer* 115.22 (3 June 1982) 2.

“The Beloved Disciple.” *The Wanderer* 115.52 (30 Dec. 1982) 2. (Brown as an example of “the Modernists today.”)

“A Reply to Bishop Hughes.” *The Wanderer* 116.6 (10 Feb. 1983) 2. (Burns denies that he ever “called Fr. Brown a heretic,” but then compares Brown with Tertullian, “one of the greatest minds in the early church, [who] ended his days in the Montanist Heresy.”)

the Rev. Juniper B. Carol, OFM

Juniper B. Carol (“The Deleterious Influence of Fr. R. Brown.” *The Wanderer* 106 (29 Nov. 1973) 1, 6): “To sum up, Fr. Brown’s theories . . . cannot . . . be reconciled with the authentic and constant teaching of the Catholic Church . . . what he has to offer concerning the human knowledge of Christ may be properly styled as neo-Modernism pure and simple.” (Qtd. in Fitzmyer *Interpretation* 112 n. 38)

Stanley Interrante

Interrante, Stanley. “Orange Diocese Laity Protest Fr. Brown Appearance.” *The Wanderer* 113.4 (24 Jan. 1980) 1, 6.

Interrante, Stanley. “The Aftermath of Fr. Raymond Brown in Orange.” *The Wanderer* 113.5 (31 Jan. 1980) 7.

William H. Marshner

Marshner, William H. “Heretics and Buffoons Meet in Washington.” *The Wanderer* 106 (15 Mar. 1973) 6.

Marshner, William H. “Raymond Brown and the Charge of Modernism.” *The Wanderer* 106.45 (15 Nov. 1973) 1.

A.J. Matt, Jr.

Matt, A.J., Jr. “Why Is Fr. Brown Afraid of Jerry Cal?” *The Wanderer* 109.19 (6 May 1976) 4.

Frank Morriss

Morriss, Frank. “The Evil Fruit of Fr. Brown’s ‘Scholarship.’” *The Wanderer* 111 (9 Mar. 1978).

Morriss, Frank. “Fr. Brown Fathers Wild and Irresponsible Speculation.” *The Wanderer* 111 (6 Apr. 1978).

Frank Morriss (“Raymond Brown-Maritain: Gap Is Wide One.” *Catholic Northwest Progress* [Seattle] [11 May 1973] 4): “Maritian [*sic*] died leaving among his last major works an expose [*sic*] of the vacuity and deceptiveness of the school of non-thought Father Brown represent [*sic*].” (Fitzmyer *Interpretation* 112 n. 42)

John J. Mulloy

Mulloy, John J. “The ‘Vilification’ of Fr. Raymond Brown.” *The Wanderer* 110 (13 Jan. 1977) 1-2.

Mulloy, John J. “The Bible, the Magisterium, and Father Brown.” *The Wanderer* 110 (2 Feb. 1977) 1-3.

Mulloy, John J. “Fr. Brown on the Historical ‘Truth’ of the Gospels.” *The Wanderer* 110 (10 Mar. 1977) 1-2.

Mulloy, John J. “A Jew of the First Third of the First Century.” *The Wanderer* 110.29 (21 July 1977) 1, 6-7.

Mulloy, John J. “Archbishop Whealon’s Defense of Raymond Brown.” *The Wanderer* 110 (25 Aug. 1977) 4.

Mulloy, John J. “Fr. Brown’s Ecumenism and the Primacy of St. Peter.” *The Wanderer* 111 (12 Jan. 1978) 5.

Mulloy, John J. “Hans Kueng: The Doctrinal Image of Fr. Raymond Brown.” *The Wanderer* 113.3 (17 Jan. 1980) 4. (Editorial.)

Mulloy, John J. “How Eccentric Can a ‘Centrist’ Theologian Be?” *The Wanderer* 114.2 (4 June 1981) 4. (Editorial.)

Mulloy, John J. “The Cardinal’s Critique of Fr. Brown’s Scholarship.” *The Wanderer* 113.9 (28 Feb. 1980) 4, 6.

Charles R. Pulver

Pulver (“The Continuing Mis-Adventures of Fr. Raymond Brown.” *The Wanderer* 106 [4 Jan. 1973]): “Giddy perhaps from his recent appointment to the Pontifical Biblical Commission, this highly-touted Biblical scholar proceeded to behave in a most unscholarly manner. His address on December 3rd to over 400 priests and Religious of the diocese [of Syracuse NY] will surely go on record as one of the worst assaults on the Magisterium within recent memory.” (Fitzmyer *Interpretation* 112 n. 44)

Pulver, Charles R. “The Make-Believe World of Fr. Raymond Brown.” *The Wanderer* 106 (7 June 1973) 9.

Pulver, Charles R. (21 June 1973).

Pulver, Charles R. 106.30 (2 Aug. 1973) 4.

Pulver, Charles R. “How Fr. Brown Stole Christmas.” *The Wanderer* 109.7 (12 Feb. 1976) 1, 6.

Pulver, Charles R. “Fr. Raymond Brown Favors ‘Centrist’ Theology.” *The Wanderer* 114.19 (7 May 1981) 3.

Pulver, Charles R. “Can Fr. Brown Steal the Center?” *The Wanderer* 114/19 (7 May 1981) 4. (Editorial.)

“Even the notice of his death in *The Wanderer* bore the headline, “Fr. Raymond Brown, Modernist Scripture Scholar, Dead at 70.” (*The Wanderer* 131.36 [3 Sept. 1998] 11.) (Fitzmyer *Interpretation* 113)

“The following week, *The Wanderer* carried its final attack on him . . .” (Fitzmyer *Interpretation* 113)

King, H.V. “Traditional Scholars Long Opposed Fr. Brown’s Theories.” *The Wanderer* 131.37 (10 Sept. 1998) 1, 11.

“The “traditional scholars” in that title were the editors and writers of that notorious *Käseblättchen*. One wonders whether they ever heard of the Christian principle, *Nil nisi bonum de mortuis*!” (Fitzmyer *Interpretation* 113)

“Equally intemperate were the attacks on Brown that appeared in the *National Catholic Register* . . .” (Fitzmyer *Interpretation* 112)

Paul H. Hallett (Fitzmyer *Interpretation* 112 n. 45)

Hallett (“The Infant and the Herods.” *National Catholic Register* (12 Dec. 1971): “the ultraliberal professor . . . brings into question the Virgin Birth. This is no surprise to those who know the works of this Modernist. . . . Is it uncharitable to suspect that those who would like to fictionalize the Infancy Narratives have a secret death-wish against the Divine Child? But He will always escape them, as He escaped the forces of Herod.”

Hallett, Paul H. “Challenge of the Rev. R.E. Brown.” *National Catholic Register* (17 June 1973). (On Brown’s address, “The Crisis of Theology.” to the NCEA.)

Hallett (“Heresy Must Hurt.” *National Catholic Register* [9 Sept. 1973] 4): “How can Modernists like the Rev. R.E. Brown occupy posts on such vital organs of the Magisterium as the Pontifical Biblical Commission? He was appointed to the Commission in 1972, after his views on the Virgin Birth were already notorious.”

Hallett, Paul H. “The Modernist Test.” *National Catholic Register* (6 Jan. 1974) 4.

Hallett, Paul H. “Rules for Bible Critics.” *National Catholic Register* (10 Feb. 1974).

Hallett, Paul H. “Fr. Brown Mispresents Bible, Catholic Church.” *National Catholic Register* (30 Nov. 1975). (On Brown, *Biblical Crises Facing the Church*.)

Hallett (“Archbishop Dwyer Letter Makes History Expose.” *National Catholic Register* [24 Apr. 1977]): “Father Raymond Brown (notorious for unsound Biblical exegesis) has even been invited to Rome to lecture to Bishops. This, Your Holiness, is a scandal to many.”

Hallett, Paul H. “Criticizing the Critics.” *National Catholic Register* (15 June 1980) 537.

the Rev. William G. Most (Fitzmyer *Interpretation* 112 n. 46)

Most (“Believing Scriptures: Escape from Confusion.” *National Catholic Register* [7 Oct. 1973]): Brown holds “There can be no miracles . . .”

Most (“Will Fr. Brown Be Next?” *National Catholic Register* [20 Apr. 1980]): after comparing Brown to Leonardo Boff, Most asks, “Will R. Brown be the next on the carpet?”

“Brown suffered much from such unjust and vicious persecution during his scholarly life. I say this because he often complained to me personally about the way he was being vilified, and yet he never answered in kind. He never descended to the low level of his critics.” (Fitzmyer *Interpretation* 112)

triumph of the historical-critical method

Pius XII (*Divino afflante Spiritu* §27): “Let all the other sons of the Church bear in mind that the efforts of these resolute laborers in the vineyard of the Lord should be judged not only with equity and justice but also with the greatest charity. All, moreover, should abhor that intemperate zeal that imagines that whatever is new should for that very reason be opposed or suspected. Let them bear in mind above all that in the rules and laws promulgated by the Church there is question of doctrine regarding faith and morals, and that in the immense matter contained in the sacred Books—legislative, historical, sapiential, and prophetical—there are but few texts whose sense has been defined by the authority of the Church; nor are those more numerous about which the teaching of the holy Fathers is unanimous. There are still many points, and some very important, in the discussion and explanation of which the skill and talent of Catholic exegetes can and should be freely exercised [33] so that each may contribute his part to the advantage of all, to the continued progress of the sacred doctrine, and to the defense and honor of the Church.” (Qtd. in Fitzmyer *Interpretation* 33-34)

Biblical Commission (*The Interpretation of the Bible in the Church* [1993] 34 [cf. Fitzmyer *Interpretation* 26]): “the historical-critical method is the indispensable method for the scientific study of the meaning of ancient texts . . . [Scripture as] the ‘Word of God in human language’ . . . not only admits the use of this method but actually requires it.” (Fitzmyer *Interpretation* 113)

conclusion

Brown died 8 August 1998.

“Finally, to those of us who knew Raymond Brown as a friend, his example will always be recalled: his fidelity to the Church that he served, his gentle tolerance of those who disagreed with him, and his utmost forbearance of those who persecuted him. Brown’s absolute dedication to the study of the written Word of God will never be forgotten.” (Fitzmyer *Interpretation* 114)

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*EB*: *Enchiridion Biblicum*: *Documenti della Chiesa sulla Sacra Scrittura*, *Edizione bilingue*. Bologna: Edizioni Dehoniane, 1993.

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