

LOISY'S THEOLOGICAL DEVELOPMENT

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IN DECEMBER 1903 the Congregation of the Holy Office added five works of Alfred Loisy to its Index of Prohibited Books¹ and made their author widely known. Up to this time the Abbé Loisy had written most of his articles and books for seminarians and priests, or for scholars engaged in his own field of biblical studies. He was hardly known to the general public of France; even the Catholic public had only recently begun to hear of him. He wrote about the Scriptures and the questions that critics, particularly in Germany, had been asking for over fifty years about their truth, authorship, and inspiration; and his readiness to accept many of the answers which the critics offered had put him squarely among a small group of Catholic scholars in Europe who wanted to adapt the Church's teaching to the contemporary world, to have the Church absorb, not reject, the results of scientific research that had a bearing on religion and especially on Christianity.

Loisy's writing had caused trouble with his superiors before 1903. He had been forced to resign his chair of Scripture at the Institut Catholique of Paris in 1893; in 1900 the Archbishop of Paris forbade the *Revue du clergé français*² to publish anything he wrote.³ By that time what had reached the clergy, especially the younger priests, was through them beginning to reach the laity, and the publication by Loisy of several radical articles between 1898 and 1903 caused controversy in the Catholic press. The biblical question was being discussed outside merely clerical circles. The writers who shared Loisy's views on updating the Church's teaching and language were coming to be known as Modernists, and the volume and quality of Loisy's contributions to the movement made him their leader in the eyes of his superiors and of hostile publicists. The Roman condemnation brought him before a much wider public than he had reached up to then. He continued to write after 1903, and to write the same sort of criticism with the same vigor and persuasiveness as before; but now there were many more people alert to the discomfort being caused in the episcopal curias of France and in the Vatican by the new movement. In 1907, when Pius X issued his Encyclical *Pascendi* against Modernism, there could be no doubt in anyone's mind as to who was the leader of the French Modernists—they were even called Loisyists

¹ *Index librorum prohibitorum* (Vatican City, 1948) 286–87.

² Henceforth *RCF*.

³ A. Loisy, *Mémoires pour servir à l'histoire religieuse de notre temps* (3 vols.; Paris, 1929–31) 1, 271–72, 573.

by some of their opponents.⁴ Other French scholars eminent in their various fields of learning were regarded, rightly or wrongly, as Modernists—Edouard Le Roy, Lucien Laberthonnière, Albert Houtin; but none could challenge Loisy's position as the most respected or feared or disliked leader. No Catholic engaged in biblical studies had acquired such a grasp of modern views, especially those of German scholars. No one else had the theological learning or used it so skillfully to relate Scripture to theology. No one wrote with his force, sketched so attractive a future for an enlightened Church, and advocated so nobly the rights of scholarship and academic freedom. The English Catholic Modernists Friedrich von Hügel and George Tyrrell looked up to him,⁵ and even the Italians, more jealously patriotic, acknowledged him as the leader of the movement in France, if not in the whole Church.⁶ More of the Pope's condemnations of Modernist errors—the Decree *Lamentabili* and the Encyclical *Pascendi*—were aimed at Loisy than at any other single writer.⁷

It was only after his excommunication, when Loisy himself and other writers, friendly or hostile, reviewed the history of the crisis, that the emergence of this leader from the obscurity of a few specialist periodicals seemed natural and inevitable. In 1898, ten years before his excommunication, few of his readers or even of his acquaintances would have seen him as a public figure, the leader of a movement declared to be the most powerful and inimical ever faced by the Church.⁸ On resigning his chair in 1893, he became chaplain to a girls' school conducted by the Dominican sisters at Neuilly, and he had been forced by ill-health to retire from there in 1899, and was living in a flat in Bellevue, continuing his studies and publishing book reviews and articles. He had a few visitors, and visited very few people himself.⁹ He said Mass in a room of his flat.¹⁰ He was a model of the secluded and remote scholar. And it was towards such seclusion, study, and writing that his life seemed to move from his boyhood.

THE STUDENT

Loisy had been born in February 1857 at Ambrières, department of the Marne, where his father farmed a few acres. He was at the top of the

⁴ *Mémoires* 1, chaps. 17 and 19; E. Poulat, *Histoire, dogme et critique dans la crise moderniste* (Tournai, 1962) 125–56, 19 n. 1.

⁵ J. J. Heaney, *The Modernist Crisis: von Hügel* (Washington, D.C., 1968) 58–59.

⁶ A. R. Vidler, *The Modernist Movement in the Roman Church* (Cambridge, Eng., 1934) 192–94.

⁷ Poulat, *Histoire* 103.

⁸ H. Denzinger, *Enchiridion symbolorum* (Barcelona, 1957) 2105. Henceforth DB. The Schönmetzer edition of the *Enchiridion* gives less of *Pascendi* than its predecessors; it has, however, the marginal numbers of the earlier edition quoted by me.

⁹ *Mémoires* 2, 422.

¹⁰ *Ibid.* 1, 528.

small classes in the two schools he attended near Ambrières; he does not seem to have been popular or to have enjoyed the company of other boys. His health was poor, and all his life he was to be concerned about it, giving it as the reason for his refusal to travel or visit acquaintances.¹¹

He decided during a school retreat in 1873 to become a priest; he was moved by the conferences of the Jesuit director to be something better than "a good Christian"; also, he had the idea that the sacrifice involved in such a decision could be offered for the recovery of his sister, who was seriously ill. His mother was not enthusiastic and his father was extremely disappointed, but they would not oppose him, and in 1874, at the age of seventeen, he entered the seminary at Chalons-sur-Marne.¹²

He found his philosophical and theological studies congenial enough, but only Hebrew roused his enthusiasm. He began it in 1875-76 and had to teach himself, because the professor was on sick leave. Hebrew engaged him in the study of the Bible, and this absorbed more and more of his attention. Throughout the remainder of his seminary course he studied Scripture with growing interest and mastery.¹³

The first of many checks in his ecclesiastical career occurred when his reception of tonsure was delayed. He was a close friend of another seminarian, who was reputed to be "liberal" in his opinions and disrespectfully so in expressing them, and this postponement was a warning against being seduced into liberalism. But there was no delay in his ordination to the priesthood. Indeed, he received a dispensation to be ordained in 1879, before he reached the canonical age.¹⁴ He was a devout seminarian, and for several years after ordination a devout priest. Then, and surprisingly when he wrote his memoirs in his seventies, he considered himself something of a mystic during these years in the seminary. But his spiritual notes written during annual retreats are banal, and while the seminarian might mistake ordinary fervor for mysticism, it is strange that the friend of Bremond and the author of much writing on mysticism had not learnt to recognize the real thing.¹⁵

Before ordination he received an assignment that was to determine his future career. The bishop, on the advice of the seminary superior, sent him to finish his course at the Institut Catholique of Paris. He began the academic year 1878-79 there and found the lectures depressing; even the course in Church history given by Louis Duchesne, a witty and iconoclastic lecturer, seemed unexciting. His health, certainly his nerves, suffered; he came home in January 1879 and resumed his place in the Chalons seminary. From there after ordination he was appointed to the parish of Broussy-le-Grand, and transferred after six months to Landri-

¹¹ *Ibid.* 1, 17, 28, 75, 112, 113, 147.

¹² *Ibid.* 1, 28, 31.

¹³ *Ibid.* 1, 48, 50, 52.

¹⁴ *Ibid.* 1, 53-55, 77.

¹⁵ *Ibid.* 1, 59-61, 134, 137-38.

court, a couple of miles from his native Ambrières. He believed he was unpopular with the episcopal curia and suspected he was to be moved yet again. So he applied for permission to return to the Institut and in May 1881 was studying theology once more. He gained his licentiate with brilliance in June 1882.¹⁶

THE PROFESSOR

Already in December 1881 Loisy was lecturing at the Institut in Hebrew; by 1883 he was on the faculty, giving two Hebrew courses and attending Renan's lectures at the Collège de France. Then in 1884 one of his two Hebrew courses was turned into a course in exegesis and he became a professor of Scripture. He also lectured for a short time in Assyriology and Ethiopian.¹⁷

His career was interrupted between December 1886 and April 1887 when he thought he had tuberculosis. During these months he lived in Cannes and for the first and only time read some novels;¹⁸ but the fears proved groundless, his general health improved, and he returned to the Institut. He was disappointed in his hope of gaining the principal chair of Scripture in 1890—a Sulpician priest, Fuleran Grégoire Vigouroux, was appointed—but he retained the second chair and continued his course in exegesis. He gained his doctorate in that year, and with the publication of his thesis on the history of the canon of the Old Testament his long literary career was begun.¹⁹

He decided to publish the material he was giving in his lectures and founded a small periodical, *L'Enseignement biblique*, which continued publication until Leo XIII's Encyclical *Providentissimus Deus* appeared and was seen to condemn its guiding principles.²⁰ Before that Loisy's critical method in dealing with biblical questions had caused some alarm. The Sulpician students were withdrawn from his course at the beginning of the academic year 1892–93.²¹ He suffered more seriously from an article written in the *Correspondant* of January 1893 by Mgr. Maurice d'Hulst, rector of the Institut. D'Hulst wished to explain the differences of opinion about the biblical question that obtained among Catholics, and to ease the tension that was beginning to appear among many of the clergy. He described the schools of thought discernible among contemporary Roman Catholic scholars; one of them favored a broad and liberal interpretation of Scripture, and while he named no names, it was commonly understood that he was describing Professor Loisy's attitude. His article frightened the authorities; complaints were sent to Rome; and when d'Hulst visited

¹⁶ *Ibid.* 1, 65–111.

¹⁷ *Ibid.* 1, 100–101, 117, 120.

¹⁸ *Ibid.* 1, 158.

¹⁹ *Ibid.* 1, 179–91.

²⁰ *Ibid.* 1, 200–201, 315.

²¹ *Ibid.* 1, 216.

there in April, he was appalled to find the orthodoxy of the Institut under suspicion, and that suspicion centered on Loisy. He returned to Paris knowing that an encyclical on the biblical question was being prepared which would disown the interpretations and methods with which Loisy's name was associated. He was convinced that Loisy must be removed from his chair of Scripture and restricted to teaching biblical languages. Loisy accepted the change resentfully and never forgave d'Hulst; but he delivered his final lecture in June and expressed frankly his views on the "truth" of the Bible and the errors it allowed. Then, before the new academic year began, he made an article for *L'Enseignement biblique* out of this lecture. The lecture passed unnoticed except, presumably, by his students; the article was delated to the bishops who were responsible for the Institut. The bishops in alarm insisted on his resignation from the Institut, and he was out.²²

PROBLEMS AND SOLUTIONS

A month later the Encyclical *Providentissimus Deus* appeared. Loisy wrote to the Pope accepting the Encyclical but pleading the necessity of research into biblical matters, of reconciling faith and science. The reply from the Secretary of State, Cardinal Mariano Rampolla, acknowledged his submission and advised him to devote himself to some other branch of study. Loisy suspended publication of *L'Enseignement biblique*.²³

In September of the following year he was appointed chaplain at Neuilly. While he was there, he took the principal part in founding the *Revue d'histoire et de littérature religieuse*, and this became the chief organ for expressing his views. The books he published from 1891 to 1902 were collections of articles from *L'Enseignement biblique* and other periodicals.²⁴ They dealt mostly with biblical problems, the religions of the ancient East, inspiration and inerrancy, and, under the name of Firmin, some theological questions. The ease of Loisy's style and the high quality of his learning gave the articles as wide a circulation as such writings could hope to have. The opposition roused by their content, and the replies made in magazines and religious papers, would have increased the number of those who knew of him and his radical opinions, and it was doubtless this publicity and the influence it brought Loisy that determined the Archbishop and the Holy See to act against him in 1903. There was also a new factor in the situation to alarm them. Up to 1898 Loisy had confined himself largely to Scripture and its problems. In the *RCF* from 1898 he wrote theological articles which expressed opinions

²² *Ibid.* 1, 234-49, 258-71.

²³ *Ibid.* 1, 302-17.

²⁴ A. Houtin and F. Sartiaux, *Alfred Loisy, sa vie, son oeuvre* (Paris, 1960) 304-5.

that seemed dangerously novel and would have been most alarming had they been less ambiguous or less aggressive in their criticism of Protestant theologians. In *L'Évangile et l'église* for the first time he expounded systematically and at length his view of the Church's dogmatic teaching.

However novel his ideas might appear to the authorities, they had been developing since his seminary days at Chalons, and always towards the stage they had reached when he was censured. His doubts about traditional Catholic teaching were born when he began philosophy. The Thomist proofs for the existence of God seemed unsatisfactory to him and he could lay no other rational foundation. He was encouraged by his spiritual director to treat this difficulty as a temptation against faith, and apparently he was content enough to do so. He was able, without undue tension, to receive ordination and engage in pastoral work.²⁵ But further doubts, this time about the word of God, arose shortly after his return to the Institut. In the summer of 1881 his colleague Duchesne made him a present of Tischendorf's New Testament, and the whole subject of biblical criticism was brought to his notice. The more he read about it, the greater was his confusion. Not only were there textual variations from manuscript to manuscript, which made it difficult to discover what exactly was the inspired word, but graver problems arose about the authority of books, the authenticity of passages in them that were theologically important, and the dating of Old Testament prophecies that now seemed to have been uttered after the events they were supposed to foretell. Gradually a mass of questions piled up before him without answer.²⁶

He wrestled with these problems, moving as far as possible towards a critical solution that would not overthrow the current teaching on inerrancy and inspiration, moving so far that his doctoral thesis on the canon of the Old Testament was thought in its first form to be too radical. But he could not keep his opinions within the limits of the orthodoxy accepted and demanded all about him and still satisfy his understanding of what honest criticism meant. It was not only the value of the Bible that was at stake. The doubts which first arose about the authenticity and meaning of some sentences in Scripture now spread to the whole body of Catholic doctrine; the claims of the Church, the dogmas that it taught as revealed, the notion of revelation itself and faith, all came in question. For some four years the study and struggle went on, and during these years he became convinced that the Church must give up its resistance to the progress of biblical scholarship outside it and cease to insist on its current orthodoxy.²⁷ But could the Church do this and remain the Catholic

²⁵ *Mémoires* 1, 50, 59-63, 77-79.

²⁶ *Ibid.* 1, 97, 118-27.

²⁷ A. Loisy, *Choses passées* (Paris, 1912-13) 68.

Church? And would it? He believed it could and would. His imagination was full of an ideal Church and he wanted to work for it. The real Church he had yet to encounter.

These were years of great anguish of mind, but in 1885 came a sort of peace. Loisy saw that his difficulties with the Bible disappeared when a symbolic interpretation was adopted of texts that earlier had been taken in a literal sense. The teaching of the Church could be subjected to the same process of reinterpretation. There need be no withdrawal or denial of dogmas; their meaning would be seen to be different as the progress of learning threw more light on subjects they treated. Scientific research would no longer be a threat to faith but an auxiliary, helping it to a deeper understanding of itself. The Catholic savant need no longer be torn between contradictory loyalties to truth and to the Church.²⁸

This position, which Loisy came to settle into in 1885, needed the support of some other ideas that formed the basis of his religious system. To be understood and consequently be acceptable, dogmas must be situated in the age in which they first were formulated; the development of doctrine is a historical fact and essential to a living Church; there are two means of knowing truth—rational examination and the experience of a living faith—and these explore different areas of reality or different aspects of the same area and lead not to contradictory conclusions but to different and complementary results; formulae are unable to enclose the full meaning of the truth they formulate, especially if it be a religious truth, and they must be recast, amplified, and modified as time goes on and scientific progress shows how defective they are. It is in the light of these interpretations that one must understand Loisy's later assertion that by 1886 he no longer believed in a personal God or the immortality of man.

This system—and, despite Loisy's denial, he had a system—took shape only gradually. Between 1885 and 1895 Loisy's preoccupation was Scripture: particular books, the Old and New Testaments in their entirety, the Synoptic Gospels, the fourth Gospel, the canon. Scripture raised questions about inspiration and inerrancy which demanded reconsideration of revelation and faith, of the function of the Church in preserving and expressing revealed truth, and of particular dogmas that were founded in Scripture. Loisy was forced to develop a theology.²⁹

It was during the years at Neuilly that he put his theology into order. He had leisure for study and no longer had to address his study to lectures. He read during these years the books which gave him the bases of his theology: Newman's *Development of Doctrine*, *Apologia*, and

²⁸ Ibid. 69–70, 78–83.

²⁹ Ibid. 35, 149–53, 210–15; *Mémoires* 3, 23; Raymond de Boyer de Sainte-Suzanne, *Alfred Loisy entre la foi et l'incroyance* (Paris, 1968) 103 n. 7.

Grammar of Assent, Harnack's *Dogmengeschichte*, and Auguste Sabatier's *Esquisse d'une philosophie de la religion*.³⁰ It was at Neuilly that he made himself the most effective theologian of the Modernists, as quick in assimilating contemporary theology and as sensitive to contemporary problems as Tyrrell or Houtin, and much more intelligible in his exposition of them than von Hügel.

Loisy was always sensitive to the charge of being dependent on other scholars, especially Germans, for his ideas. He was still resentful in 1931 of Duchesne's remark, made in 1908, that his writing showed that he knew German.³¹ But he possessed a gift for appropriating whatever in the books of others supported the position he occupied or was moving into; and what he took he would often express more neatly or more persuasively than the authors from whom he borrowed. Even Newman's exposition of development is not more attractive than Loisy's briefer account in *L'Évangile et l'église*. At any rate, the key ideas of his theological system are to be found in Harnack, Sabatier, Renan, and Newman; and because Harnack and Sabatier were influenced by the philosophy of Kant, Loisy, who was no philosopher, underwent that influence also. His acquaintance with the French Catholic philosophers accused of being Kantian and actually disciples of Ollé-Laprune led him to adopt some of the language of the immanentists. But it was after the condemnation of his books that he became a thoroughgoing immanentist, using the system in a way that was unacceptable to the Catholic philosophers his name had been associated with—Blondel and Laberthonnière.³²

Between 1875 and 1895 Loisy traveled a full circle. He had begun with theological doubts. Then his interest shifted to biblical studies, and these destroyed his acceptance of the Scriptures in the sense understood by most Catholics and demanded by the authorities of his Church. The change in his attitude to the Bible produced further theological problems.³³ So at Neuilly he began to prepare a vast work of modern Catholic apologetics. It was never published in the form that he originally planned for it. Some of it went into scriptural works he published then and later, and some of it was synthesized in *L'Évangile et l'église* and *Autour d'un petit livre*.³⁴ But first he tried out his new apologetic in articles contributed to the *Revue du clergé français* over the *nom de guerre* A. Firmin (his full name was Alfred Firmin Loisy). He expressed himself in language

³⁰ *Mémoires* 1, 415, 438.

³¹ *Ibid.* 1, 153–54, 206; 3, 67, 84.

³² See the correspondence with von Hügel and Loisy's comments in Vols. 2 and 3 of the *Mémoires*.

³³ *Ibid.* 2, 459.

³⁴ *Ibid.* 2, 239–40, 473.

likely to suit the mild liberalism of that journal and of many of its readers. He was sometimes elusive and ambiguous; and as in *L'Évangile*, he sought to assume an appearance of orthodoxy by attacking the Protestants from whom he derived many of his ideas.

THE ARTICLES IN THE REVUE DU CLERGÉ FRANÇAIS

Loisy began the series in December 1898 with an article on Newman's *Development of Doctrine*,³⁵ which contained much that was to reappear in different forms and with puzzling nuances of meaning during the next ten years. In 1898 the idea of doctrinal development was not the theological commonplace it has since become. It was the foundation on which Loisy built the apologetic that he would have the Church adopt if it was to survive in the modern world and play its proper part; but he found Newman's treatment of it somewhat too limited for his purpose. It was not because Newman addressed his argument to Anglicans, who held much in common with Catholics. Newman's case against Anglicanism was valid against Protestantism generally, and Loisy found he could easily use it against liberal Protestants and rationalists. Newman, however, was concerned to establish the principle of development, not to examine each step in the process.³⁶

This examination Loisy undertook, and he also extended the history of development further than Newman took it, both backwards and forwards: back through the Old Testament to the beginnings of religion, forward to include all that scientific research had discovered in the half century since Newman wrote.³⁷ Loisy described three phases of the process. There was the vital movement that religious groups experienced in belief, in acceptance of moral norms, and in worship. This was strongest and purest among the Jews and Christians, and their records made observation of development easier. The earliest stage of the movement was not planned or even conscious. It was followed by a period of reflection conducted and articulated by thinkers—prophets, teachers, and theologians—and sometimes was stimulated by opposition to the shape which the movement was currently taking. In the Catholic Church this theological stage was followed by the dogmatic stage, in which the Church consecrated one form or expression of the movement by an authoritative act, defining a doctrine or regulating the life and worship of the Catholic community.³⁸

Loisy pointed out how far Newman advanced beyond Vincent of Lerins. He did not restrict development to making earlier dogmatic formulae clearer and more explicit, or to producing logical deductions from defined

³⁵ "Le développement de dogme d'après Newman," *RCF* 17 (1898) 5–20.

³⁶ *Ibid.* 11–12.

³⁷ *Ibid.* 13.

³⁸ *Ibid.* 13–14.

truths; and Newman's development took in not only the doctrine but the rest of the Church's life too.³⁹ For Loisy, these two notions were all-important: that development affected not only formulae but ideas, and not only ideas but the whole life of the Church.

As interesting as anything in this article is what he excluded from legitimate development, that is, from development which always maintains a doctrine *eodem sensu eademque sententia*.⁴⁰ There must be no contradiction of an earlier dogma, nor substitution of one meaning for another. He recognized, however, as legitimate—and the elusive expression is typical—

the interpretation of a traditional truth with the help of ideas that are, if one may so put it, connatural with the earliest formulation of these truths. What is Christian theology from the end of the first century but an effort, constant and continually repeated, to establish a sort of balance or continuous correspondence between the interpretation of revealed dogma and the intellectual progress of humanity?⁴¹

Loisy laid the foundations of his system with care. He expounded the idea of development briefly but very clearly and attractively. He attached the great name of Newman to what he was advocating and defended Newman against the criticism of Sabatier. He left unsaid what could only be said safely after he had gained a hearing for his application of Newman's idea. He made a point of the novelty that Newman admitted in advancing his hypothesis. Newman claimed only de Maistre and Möhler as forerunners, though he might have pointed to many traces of it in earlier theological writings. And surely Loisy sees himself in Newman when he writes:

He had no suspicion that it would be rash to offer traditional theology this help, though it did not ask it of him. He only foresaw that "Catholicism was in danger of having a new world to conquer before it had the weapons necessary for the war, while infidelity had its view and conjectures on which it arranged the facts of ecclesiastical history and even found proof in support of its negative conclusion in the absence of any scientific theory among the defenders of tradition."⁴²

His next article, on Auguste Sabatier's individualistic concept of religion,⁴³ took his system further. Development was the Church growing; the Church was essential to Christianity because religion is social and what is social is institutional. The *Esquisse* saw religion almost wholly as a relationship of the individual to God. Guided by his own conscience,

³⁹ Ibid. 15.

⁴⁰ DB 1800.

⁴¹ "Le développement" 19.

⁴² Ibid. 15.

⁴³ "La théorie individualiste de la religion," *RCF* 17 (1899) 202-15.

answerable only to God, the Christian lived his life as Christ showed him a man should live. The Christian community and its various institutions were secondary and unessential. Interior religion was everything.

For Loisy, religion *must* be a social thing. History shows religion relating men to one another as well as to God. The Christian society is the Church, and the Church, because it is a living organism, survives and grows by assimilating whatever in the world about it offers nourishment. The sort of organism that it is establishes the consistency that shows through all its changes. Its contact with a changing world produces various developments as it absorbs and adapts the ideas, customs, and institutions, religious or secular, of that world. Sabatier criticized the Church because it borrowed so much from paganism. For Loisy, on the contrary, this showed that it was alive.⁴⁴

Loisy was unfair to Sabatier in this and other articles, as he was to Harnack in *L'Évangile*, in making the contrast between their evaluation of the social element in religion and his own so great. The *Esquisse* did give the first place to the Christian's direct relationship to God. Like Harnack and other Protestants, Sabatier put the heaviest emphasis on the Christian's duty to choose freely and act responsibly; but he recognized, too, the great importance of the Christian community and the advantages of Christian institutions. At this time, and indeed up to his break with the Church, Loisy made much of the difference between his position and that of his two main Protestant targets; and certainly he contradicted Sabatier and Harnack on many points, some of them important. But there was agreement over far wider areas than he let his readers suspect, and after 1907 much of his writing reads like a paraphrase of Sabatier. How much agreement there was in these years and how much developed later it is impossible to say, so difficult is it to determine what Loisy believed at any stage of his life. There are conflicting accounts given in successive books and in letters to different correspondents; there is his declared policy of not fully exposing his ideas to hostile authority; certainly there was fluctuation in his own mind. At any rate, the whole tone of this and subsequent articles in the *RCF* is hostile to Sabatier and the Protestants. Doubtless he hoped to make his own attitude and opinions acceptable by inserting them in articles that refuted an eminent and popular Protestant theologian, or by representing them as contradictory of a Protestant view.

There is irony in his twitting Sabatier, in this article, about a scholastic tendency to divide and subdivide the notion of religion. He was himself to resent being accused (apropos of *L'Évangile*) by Blondel of just such a scholastic habit subconsciously operating.⁴⁵

⁴⁴ Ibid. 203-5, 208-12.

⁴⁵ Ibid. 207; R. Marlé, *Au coeur de la crise moderniste* (Paris, 1960) 77.

Even after this second article it is not quite clear how decisive an influence in its subsequent development Loisy would allot to the constitution which Christ gave to his Church, how much to the action of other forces upon it, and how predominant God's guidance was among these forces. This was later to be the target of much criticism: Loisy seemed to say, and indeed came to say, that development happened to the Church as to any human institution; it went blindly into historical situations and acted to maintain itself as then seemed best. It was the world acting on the Church which was decisive in determining the form that development took. But in the first two articles it is not so clear; of course, he is establishing the fact and justifying the process of being acted on by the world, and naturally most of what he has to say is said about the natural influences working on the Church from outside and being absorbed by it. For the next six or seven years the emphasis he gave to the various elements—the Church's constitution, the natural forces outside it, and God's guidance—shifted to and fro. After 1908 true development was the continuous self-revelation of God immanent in man. The Church's historical development was like that of any other human institution.

The eighteenth volume of *RCF* (1899) carried another article by Firmin critical of Sabatier's *Esquisse* and reacting against it: "La définition de la religion"⁴⁶ contained two theological ideas essential to Loisy's system, both derived from Newman. The average man's idea of God is not a metaphysical notion, nor is it derived from the metaphysical proofs for His existence.⁴⁷ Our idea of God is anthropomorphic and changing; we are driven by the need we experience of something better and higher than we find in ourselves and in the world about us. God is mysterious and incomprehensible; He can only be described and worshiped through inadequate symbols and rites. These, because they are inadequate, are changeable; but they are necessary, they are all we have.⁴⁸ He criticizes Sabatier for identifying revelation with the religious sense; belief is not only a psychological phenomenon. Revelation is a genuine communication, not just what we get by analyzing the feeling we have for God. And once more he insisted on the essentially social nature of religion.⁴⁹

Loisy now moved back to the revelation from which the life of the Church developed. This obviously touched on the essence of Christianity; and it may well be because Loisy's notion of revelation differed radically from that regarded by contemporary theologians as orthodox that he began his series of theological articles with two containing less frightening views.

⁴⁶ *RCF* 18 (1899) 193–209.

⁴⁷ *Ibid.* 203–4.

⁴⁸ *Ibid.* 195, 206, 207, 208–9.

⁴⁹ *Ibid.* 193, 198, 200.

"The Notion of Revelation"⁵⁰ was certainly the most important article of the series. Again his exposition takes the form of a defense against Sabatier and Harnack, their individualistic religion, their static concept of religious belief, their antidogmatism, indeed their whole notion of religion and revelation. His own view follows easily from the previous article; revelation is not just a psychological phenomenon occurring in the believer, development is not a merely human evolution of religious thought and sentiment experienced. Man's consciousness of God is of God as "the absolute source, the inexhaustible object, and the final end of revelation."⁵¹

Revelation communicates truth, and this is unchangeable, but not its formulation. There is progress in awareness of revelation and in its formulation. The believer in the early age of Christianity acknowledged God and was baptized in the name of the three divine Persons; this was not a formal confession of intellectual conviction, but a consecration, in which belief was implicit, to the Father to whom Jesus reconciled the Christian and to whom the Holy Spirit united him. Christian theologians then explained what doctrine was implicated in this rite and made it explicit. So doctrine and theology developed and, when the Church officially sanctioned this, it became dogma. The first "native" or spontaneous form of belief is still a supernatural intuition and affirmation; and while nowadays revelation is preserved in dogmas, it serves as a base of Christian life in the form of an assertion of faith. As dogma in its doctrinal form, it achieves the harmony of belief with contemporary scientific thought. The intellectual constituent of religious faith must come to terms with the believer's world—it absorbs and dominates it, is not destroyed by it. And so the religious ideas constituting intellectual faith are not the result of a purely natural process of reasoning, not scientific and analytical but intuitive. Faith uses ideas to express God's revelation, symbols of eternal truth, understood with the help of God's grace, but changing with the world of which Christianity is part.⁵²

History attests the appetite of man for revelation: all religions regard themselves as revealed religions. But revelation must not be identified, as it is by Sabatier, with the religious consciousness of the believer; ultimately this will come to mean that the believer is God. They must be kept separate. Revelation is the action of God, both transcendent and immanent, in the soul.⁵³

There are passages in Loisy's exposition of what revelation is where his thought becomes cloudy. A light springs up in the soul when it comes

⁵⁰ *RCF* 21 (1900) 250-71.

⁵¹ *Ibid.* 250-51.

⁵² *Ibid.* 251-55.

⁵³ *Ibid.* 255-57.

into contact with the divine; that light can be communicated to others—there you have revelation of a divine truth divinely made.⁵⁴ As a matter of fact, this is what Sabatier said in *Esquisse*, but it would have been no help to Loisy to point that out. Instead, he went on to give the Church's role, which he conceived in a way quite acceptable to orthodoxy. True religion has its revelation protected by an institution.⁵⁵ Other religions preserve fragments of a revelation broken up because unprotected.

To revelation corresponds faith. Faith is not wholly an intellectual grasp of truths; it is indeed an activity of the mind, but of the mind working under pressure from the heart. Revelation is not of speculative truths but of life; the response to it is supernatural regeneration. A vital test of religion, therefore of revelation, is whether it raises the believer above himself, above his egoism and his passions.

Revelation is adapted to the human condition and to the conditions in which the first recipients of revelation live. But it is not a discovery privately made by an inquiring person, it is a real communication of religious truth; a human mind grasps some divine truth made known through divine action with a divine authority to authenticate it.⁵⁶

In 1900 he attempted much more difficult terrain with "The Proofs and Economy of Revelation."⁵⁷ He allows, with Sabatier, against whom this article too is apparently directed, that the Bible did not have a notion of the natural law. Miracles were not more from God than the ordinary operations of nature; they were more noticeably the result of God's action, not more really. And they were noticeable to the believer, to the eye of faith. This seemed to confront him with Vatican I, which laid it down that miracles and prophecy were proofs of revelation. But he pointed out that Vatican I, like all councils, was condemning certain errors, and its statements must be interpreted in the light of what they were denying—here, the rationalist theses of Strauss, Renan, and others, that miracles are myths. The bishops were not defining the nature of miracle and prophecy; what they said positively of these was that they were a divine work (*faits divins*) and it is this which serves to prove religion. A divine work is one in which God makes Himself knowable by men of good will; the supremely divine work is religion itself and its continuous advance.⁵⁸

What Loisy has to say here about the "naturalness" of miracles is not said so clearly as he was to say it later, and there is much characteristic

⁵⁴ *Ibid.* 258.

⁵⁵ *Ibid.* 260.

⁵⁶ *Ibid.* 259, 266, 268–69.

⁵⁷ *RCF* 22 (1900) 127–52.

⁵⁸ *Ibid.* 127, 130–31; cf. *Choses passées* 177–81.

use of saving phrases and a wrapping up of radical ideas in mild and reasonable language. In this article perhaps more than in the previous ones, Loisy's great gifts as a writer are evident in the alternation of clarity, hardness of outline, and definition, with vagueness and ambiguity. A careful reading is needed if one is to realize that the explanation of how prophecies were interpreted and reinterpreted amounts to this, that what was prophesied did not happen, and so the prophecy had to be interpreted in a new, spiritual sense.⁵⁹ Loisy knew that a quite frank statement would be so unacceptable to the authorities as to provoke a reaction. The article can hardly have been palatable to them, but he makes it less obnoxious by acknowledging the difference between prophecy—a "divine work"—and poetic inspiration, and by expressing this in scholastic language that reads very quaintly in the context: "Acts are specified by their object, and not by the analogy of their psychological forms."⁶⁰

There is in this article the reappearance of earlier features of his theological system: the idea that a truth inaccessible to reason may be accessible to faith; that conviction comes from an accumulation of moral probabilities, and that the light of faith gives certainty to the proofs and facts that constitute the "rational" case for belief (he is here, of course, using Newman);⁶¹ that the satisfaction of man's needs and aspirations by religion is the basis of faith; that faith needs a Church and the Church must exercise authority; that faith expresses itself about God, who is absolute, through formulae which are contingent.⁶²

He is more explicit about the need for a new apologetic. Catholics have been defending theses by logic, and their adversaries have attacked these theses with logic. Today religion must be put forward as a fact to be observed. Loisy goes on to say that to rational proofs like miracle and prophecies must be added the Church's history of beneficent activity, the record of its development through the centuries—that is, the argument of Vatican I that the Church's life is a proof of its being the true Church.⁶³

He uses, too, a technique that later antagonists were to find irritating. Having demolished the traditional arguments (at any rate, in their usual form) from miracles and prophecy by throwing doubt on the principle of causality, he then airily says that all this is for the theologians to deal with; he is a historian considering miracles as events.⁶⁴

One further article appeared in the *RCF* before the one which caused his exclusion from that periodical. In 1900 he wrote, this time under the pseudonym Isidore Deprés, one of the several commentaries commissioned by the *RCF* on Pius X's Encyclical of September 1899 to the

⁵⁹ *Ibid.* 127–33, 134, 136.

⁶⁰ *Ibid.* 138.

⁶¹ *Ibid.* 132.

⁶² *Ibid.* 142, 149–52.

⁶³ *Ibid.* 139.

⁶⁴ *Ibid.* 127.

clergy of France on ecclesiastical studies.⁶⁵ The prescriptions affecting other disciplines—dogmatic and moral theology, philosophy, etc.—had been discussed by other writers; now Loisy told his readers what the Pope approved and disapproved of in the section of the letter that dealt with the study of Scripture. There were positive recommendations to seminary professors to study the scriptural languages, to teach intelligently, to take the Vulgate as their text, to give their students what would be essential or useful in their pastoral ministry. But the Encyclical, for Loisy, is concerned to condemn the new criticism that some Catholic exegetes have borrowed from the Protestants and rationalists, and the new concept that these Catholics are propagating of biblical studies as a subject independent of theology, to be pursued by its own methods and arrive at its own conclusions, without reference to theology until the problem arose of reconciling its conclusions with theological doctrine. There had been no “liberal” school among Catholic exegetes when *Providentissimus* was written; its strictures on the higher criticism were directed against non-Catholics.⁶⁶ The Encyclical was clearly a condemnation of the work of Catholic exegetes. However good their intentions and noble their ideals—to produce a body of Catholic criticism learned enough to match the erudition of non-Catholic criticism and, at the same time, compatible with Catholic dogma—their work was disowned. Only the future could tell if it had achieved anything before its destruction.

Loisy could hardly have admitted more clearly that his approach to Scripture and theology was rejected by the Pope. But the article was largely descriptive, and its frankness about the Pope’s intention made the final submission all the more impressive. It was a grudging submission. Loisy pointed out resentfully that theologians must now undertake the apologetic work that Scripture scholars could not do effectively within the limits imposed by the Encyclical. But he submitted, and this may have warded off for some months the Archbishop’s action banning him from the pages of the *RCF*.⁶⁷

The ban on Loisy’s writing in the *RCF*⁶⁸ was not due only to his final article, on the religion of Israel.⁶⁹ This certainly revived the fears that had led to exclusion from the Institut. After all, he was saying the same thing; he applied his theory of symbolic interpretation and development to Genesis and the Old Testament, showing that evolution took place in the revelation made to the Jews, that a Bible narrative was not necessarily

⁶⁵ “La récente encyclique au clergé de France,” *RCF* 23 (1900) 5–17.

⁶⁶ But Loisy saw *Providentissimus* as condemning what he wrote in *L’Enseignement biblique* and stopped publication.

⁶⁷ “La récente encyclique” 17.

⁶⁸ *Mémoires* 1, 570.

⁶⁹ “La religion d’Israel,” *RCF* 23 (1900) 337–63.

historical and the early Genesis chapters were not.⁷⁰ All this was bound to shock the theologians whom the Archbishop regarded as competent to advise him; but there had been correspondence between Rome and Paris, each hoping the other would move against Loisy.⁷¹ There can be little doubt that Loisy's treatment of miracles and prophecy as proofs of revelation and the extent to which he was prepared to use the notion of development were as much factors in his condemnation as was the article.⁷²

Loisy, shut out from Catholic periodicals and prevented by ill-health as well as by inclination from undertaking pastoral work, still had the *Revue d'histoire et de littérature religieuse* in which to publish his ideas, and he gained further security by becoming a lecturer in one of the optional courses of the Ecole des Hautes Etudes. He seems to have felt the need of status as a base from which to operate. In 1901 he tried unsuccessfully to get the chair of ancient Christian literature,⁷³ and in January 1902 he began his half-comic candidature for a bishopric. The Prince of Monaco offered him the see of that principality; Loisy accepted, Rome refused. He agreed to let his name be put forward by the French government (which had the right of presentation to bishoprics) for another see; again Rome refused. It is impossible that Loisy should not have foreseen the reaction of Rome; he had been receiving reports and gossip about his reputation there for years. But it was no doubt useful to him to let Rome know that he was so highly regarded by the government. What is astonishing is that in *Choses passées* (1913) and in his memoirs written more than twenty-five years after the two candidatures had failed, the accounts he wrote⁷⁴ show a complacency, a sense of being entitled to such advancement, and a conviction that he could have been a competent bishop which go far to justify Aubert's reference to his pitiless egocentricity.⁷⁵

L'ÉVANGILE ET L'ÉGLISE

Rome had not given its second and final refusal to Monaco's presentation of Loisy when his *L'Évangile et l'église*⁷⁶ appeared. It was a refutation of Harnack's immensely popular lectures to students at the University of Berlin published under the title *Das Wesen des Christentums*. Harnack's idea of Christianity was familiar to Loisy from his

⁷⁰ *Mémoires* 1, 563-64.

⁷¹ *Choses passées* 218-19.

⁷² *Mémoires* 1, 563-68; cf. DB 2054, 2060-62 (*Lamentabili*) and 2072, 2078 (*Pascendi*).

⁷³ *Mémoires* 2, 5-7, 29-31.

⁷⁴ *Choses passées* 232-41; *Mémoires* 2, 91-96, 141-48, 161-66.

⁷⁵ *Concilium* (English) 7/2, 47.

⁷⁶ Henceforth *L'Évangile*.

reading of the *Dogmengeschichte*; he had the material for an answer in his great manuscript of apologetics and he had sketched a first criticism of the book in his lectures at the Ecole des Hautes Etudes. *L'Evangile*, published in November 1902, was a fuller and more finished criticism. It was not merely an answer to Harnack; Loisy took the opportunity to expound at length his views on Catholicism as it should be seen in the new century. Harnack's book, like Sabatier's *Esquisse*, enabled him to do this in the course of defending the faith against a heretical attack.

L'Evangile repeated most of what had already appeared in the *RCF* articles about revelation, development, the social nature of the Church, and the inadequacy of language to express religious truth fully or absolutely. Less is said about revelation, and what is said lies scattered through the book or is implicit in his exposition of Christian dogma. There is much more about the process of development. Indeed, *L'Evangile* is a long essay on development. Harnack's theory that there was a kernel of evangelical truth to be reached by peeling off the layers of dogma and law and custom folded round it by the Church⁷⁷ was answered by Loisy with the idea of a seed that grew continuously from its planting by Jesus to its present form and stature. The changes that in Harnack's view were imposed upon the original, simple truth revealed in Christ—God's fatherhood—Loisy saw as being the responses of a living organism having the force to survive, and doing so by feeding off the country in which it found itself, transforming what it took and being itself changed as living things are changed in their growth.⁷⁸

Loisy had said this in answer to Sabatier. He also repeated his description of the three stages of development. "The concepts that the Church presents as revealed dogmas," he wrote in a passage which found its way into the Pope's syllabus of Modernist errors,⁷⁹ "are not truths fallen from heaven and preserved by religious tradition in exactly the form in which they first appeared. The historian sees in them the interpretation of religious events, gained laboriously by theological thinking. Dogmas may be divine in origin and substance; they are human in structure and composition."⁸⁰ The process of development precedes its logical justification; the best apologetic for what lives is found in living. The scaffolding of theological argument is necessary to represent the continuity of past with present, of religion with progress.⁸¹

L'Evangile described in far greater detail than the *RCF* articles the developments that occurred in the Church's long history, what beliefs were made dogmas and when and where. It is a powerful argument, covering the Church's life to Vatican I, ranging over the Christian world.⁸²

⁷⁷ *L'Evangile* xxx.

⁷⁸ *Ibid.* xxi-xxx.

⁷⁹ No. 22 (DB 2022).

⁸⁰ *L'Evangile* 202-3.

⁸¹ *Ibid.* 214.

⁸² *Ibid.* 133-70.

Loisy puts his case concisely and persuasively and with an admirable lucidity. There is no more attractive section of this very attractive book than the chapters on the Church and Christian dogma. They sweep over centuries and countries to gather their material, and the results are presented with an eloquence which reminds one of Macaulay's essay on Ranke's *History of the Popes*. He is a less rhetorical Macaulay, if a less knowledgeable one. His reading in history beyond apostolic times could scarcely support more than a sketch of the Church's development, but it was all he needed, and he drew it with great skill and power. "Christian thought at its beginning was Jewish and had to be Jewish, while the Christianity of the gospel contained the germ of a universal religion."⁸³ The first development made a Jewish movement founded on Messianism into something acceptable to the Greco-Roman world and to humanity. This was the work of the fourth Gospel, St. Paul, Justin, Irenaeus, and Origen. There was always opposition from conservative elements, and always an accommodation of the next step to what went before. The fourth Gospel used the idea of the Logos in a statement of faith; the Apostolic Fathers elaborated this idea, not building a speculative philosophy on it but using it to define Christ and so making it a Christian notion, changing it from what it originally was. Paul's theory of salvation was necessary to ensure that Christianity did not remain Jewish; the incarnation of the Logos was necessary for presenting the gospel to Greek pagans. There was growth in doctrine as the Church absorbed from Greek philosophy what enabled it to express the Incarnation and the Trinity and retain the monotheism that had marked off the Jews from other races.⁸⁴

Among the Christians of Western Europe, less interested in metaphysics than the Greeks, seeing in their religion a life of disciplined and ordered piety, the Church's doctrines on grace and authority were explored. The structures of authority were taken from the imperial government,⁸⁵ but the authority was there from the beginning. "The popes had to be what they were, what they became, for the Church to remain the Church and not cease to be Christianity and the religion of Jesus."⁸⁶ So Alexandria offered the Church the metaphysics of personality, Antioch the theandric constitution of Christ, Rome rules for the government of the Church, Carthage ideas on holiness; they were all absorbed. Reaction to the Protestant Reformation produced further growth, its individualism leading the Church to guard the essentially social nature of the Christian (as indeed of all) religion by developing its ecclesiology and strengthening its government. Even the definitions of Vatican I issued naturally from

⁸³ Ibid. 178-84.

⁸⁴ Ibid. 178-92.

⁸⁵ Ibid. 195-200, 140-50, 192-96.

⁸⁶ Ibid. 152.

the situation in which the Church then found itself.⁸⁷

Loisy clearly made development a continuation of what was begun by Christ. Christianity follows out the thrust of its initial life force.⁸⁸ Under all its changes and adaptations it teaches what Christ taught.⁸⁹ The essence of Christianity is what Christ thought essential; the essence of primitive Christianity is what the early Christians thought essential; and so through successive ages you can discern what was genuine Christianity at that time. If the Church continues to be basically what it was for Christ, then it continues to be Christ's Church.⁹⁰ And the Roman Catholic Church, facing in the same direction, seeking the same thing as the Church of the gospel, is Christ's Church. The contemporary Church's relation with the primitive Church is that of an adult to the child he was; identity comes from continuity of existence, and consciousness of this through all the changes of life.⁹¹

Loisy repeated what he had written in the *RCF* articles about the conditions that make change inevitable and beneficial. The world in which the Church lived and to which it was sent is a changing world, its knowledge growing from century to century. The Church's message has to be given to men whose world has subjected them to an experience of life quite different from that enjoyed by earlier generations. It is useless for it to meet conditions that no longer exist and not to recognize intellectual and other needs that have arisen recently.⁹² The Church formerly acknowledged this. Its creeds and definitions have been related to the level of contemporary knowledge; when that changed, a new interpretation of old formulae was needed. "Only truth is unchangeable, but not its image in our mind."⁹³

In *L'Évangile* the changing world is a greater cause of the changes in the Church and its dogma than the inadequacy of formulae to capture and express divine reality. But that inadequacy was nonetheless an essential part of Loisy's system and he treated it in several parts of his book. Faith deals with the infinite but it must use finite symbols and images to express itself.⁹⁴ The essence of Christianity is its life and you cannot enclose a life in a formula. Now the life of Christianity is not realized in its perfection at any period, and so the way in which the Church understands and expresses its faith will change as it changes.⁹⁵ "Reason keeps putting questions to faith, and traditional formulae are subjected continuously to the working of interpretation in which 'the letter that kills' is controlled by 'the spirit that gives life.'"⁹⁶

⁸⁷ *Ibid.* 196, 200–202.

⁸⁸ *Ibid.* xxvi.

⁸⁹ *Ibid.* 135–37.

⁹⁰ *Ibid.* xiv–xvi.

⁹¹ *Ibid.* 156–58, 160–63.

⁹² *Ibid.*, sections 4 and 5.

⁹³ *Ibid.* 206–10.

⁹⁴ *Ibid.* 105, 216–19.

⁹⁵ *Ibid.* 171–219.

⁹⁶ *Ibid.* 203.

It was the fulness of Loisy's exposition of development that caused such alarm among the traditional theologians. Chapter 1 of his section on dogma commences:

Even if we do not wish to recognize in the Gospel the first outline of Christology, we must acknowledge it in St. Paul. The apostle who served the Christian religion pre-eminently by detaching it from Judaism, who presented the kingdom of God as something achieved in the redemption wrought by Christ, who conceived the gospel as the spirit of the law, also laid the foundations of Christian dogma.⁹⁷

Again it is easy to imagine the effect on traditional theologians of a passage like this:

Paul's theory of salvation was indispensable for its time, if Christianity were not to remain a Jewish sect without any future. The theory of the incarnate Logos was also necessary when the gospel was presented not only to Jewish proselytes in the Empire but to the whole pagan world and to everyone with a Greek education.⁹⁸

Here was development no longer in outline and sheltering under the name of Newman, but so expounded that it could be interpreted to mean the manipulation of what was revealed in order to make it acceptable to prospective converts.

The divinity of Christ, the incarnation of the Word, was the only way suitable for translating to a Greek mind the idea of the Messiah. . . . From a historical point of view it may be maintained that the Trinity and Incarnation are Greek dogmas, since they are unknown to Judaism and Judaic Christianity, and Greek philosophy, which helped to make them, also helps us to understand them.⁹⁹

John was responsible for the notion of Christ the Logos, Paul for world redemption,¹⁰⁰ though there is a trace of Christ the Redeemer in Mark.¹⁰¹ Christ himself was and could only be intelligible to his contemporaries as the Messiah. The faith of the early Christians went to work immediately on the concept of the Messiah, transforming his kind deeds into miracles.¹⁰² Other, later transformations produced a Christology, though Jesus had taught none formally. But there was—or, at any rate, who can say there was not?—a relation between believing in his preaching and having faith in his person.¹⁰³

If St. Paul and later Christian writers produced all this, what was left to Christ? "The Christianity of the Gospel contained the germ of a

⁹⁷ *Ibid.* 172.

⁹⁸ *Ibid.* 180.

⁹⁹ *Ibid.* 184–86.

¹⁰⁰ *Ibid.* 180.

¹⁰¹ *Ibid.* 25–26.

¹⁰² *Ibid.* 17–18, 21–24.

¹⁰³ *Ibid.* 99.

universal religion"¹⁰⁴—this was scandalously inadequate for the requirements of official theology in 1902.

The Church and the papacy, however strongly and persuasively defended, had similarly weak beginnings,¹⁰⁵ too weak in the eyes of Loisy's superiors to justify the claims it made to be the Church founded by Christ. And so with the sacraments: development could be seen to be wholly the result of adaptation to historical circumstances of which Christ was ignorant and for which he could make no provision.¹⁰⁶ "Jesus neither settled the form that Christian worship should take nor laid down the Church's constitution and dogmas." In Jesus' own lifetime there was no other worship than the Jewish for him and his disciples.¹⁰⁷

The Last Supper was a symbolic abrogation of Old Testament worship; it was celebrated when Christ's vision was fixed not on founding a new religion or a new Church but on the imminent coming of the kingdom, and it was not meant to be the beginning of a new form of worship. It was the Church, moving out of the Jewish and into the Greek and Roman world, that had to work out its liturgy; for without a distinct liturgy there is no new religion. The Eucharist, the most specifically Christian rite, made Christianity among the Gentiles fully a religion.¹⁰⁸

None of the sacraments was given a more satisfactory connection with Jesus. They "are born of a thought, an intention, of Jesus interpreted by the apostles and their successors, in the light and under the pressure of circumstances and events." "The sacraments, like the Church and its dogmas, issue from Jesus and the gospel as living realities and not as completely designed institutions."¹⁰⁹

Like the sacraments, devotion to Mary and to the Sacred Heart are legitimate developments of what Christ began.¹¹⁰ Loisy had a malicious sense of humor that must have been gratified in writing a defense of the Immaculate Conception and the Sacred Heart that would be more offensive to the orthodox than Protestant attacks on them.

The description of development contained in *L'Évangile*, showing how much the world contributed to the process and how wide was the gap between what the Gospels taught and the doctrine of seminary textbooks of 1900 (and, indeed, of the first half of this century), would have been enough to produce a stronger and swifter reaction than the *RCF* articles had met. But by the time his critics came to the sections on the Church and dogma, where development was most fully treated, they had already been horrified by Loisy's earlier chapters on the authenticity and interpretation of Scripture and by his refusal to prove the divinity of Christ

¹⁰⁴ *Ibid.* 178.

¹⁰⁵ *Ibid.* 135-49.

¹⁰⁶ *Ibid.* 238-49.

¹⁰⁷ *Ibid.* 225, 231.

¹⁰⁸ *Ibid.* 226, 227.

¹⁰⁹ *Ibid.* 238-39.

¹¹⁰ *Ibid.* 252-56.

and the fulness of Christ's self-awareness.¹¹¹ It was bad enough to make the connection between the Church and the Gospels so weak and uncertain;¹¹² but the Gospels themselves were unreliable, and Christ in the Gospels was a limited and apparently deluded person.¹¹³ The New Testament was not so much the history of Christ as the history of early Christian belief about him.¹¹⁴

Little of what the Church in 1900 taught about Jesus Christ seemed to find support in what Loisy left of the Gospels. There Jesus was only Messiah—the title "Son of God" means that.¹¹⁵ He saw himself as a messenger announcing the imminence of the kingdom of heaven and preparing people for it.¹¹⁶ The kingdom, for Jesus, was an eschatological kingdom; everything else—and, of course, there was the moral teaching and the working of miracles—was for that.¹¹⁷ Loisy established this at great length and demolished Harnack's concept of a kingdom that was internal to each Christian seeing God as his father and living in accordance with this faith.¹¹⁸ But in doing so, how much did he leave of Christ's divinity or realization of himself as God? His discussion of Christ as Messiah and Son of God, the leader of a kingdom not yet come, somewhat hesitantly assigns Christ's self-awareness as Messiah to the moment of his baptism. As a critic, he conjectures that Christ would have had the sentiment of God being his father, as father of all men, before he became aware of being Messiah and therefore Son of God in a unique way. His divine sonship, for him, meant being Messiah; it had no meaning apart from the coming of the kingdom.¹¹⁹ The Gospels and the early preaching preserved in Acts show Christ as the Messiah, and the Resurrection is adduced as proof of this.¹²⁰

The Resurrection was given its pre-eminent role in the development of Christology by Paul. The earliest Christians believed that Christ had risen; it was Paul and those who wrote under his influence who made this decisive in establishing Christ as God. The Resurrection itself cannot be "proved" by the historian; it transcends the experience to which history witnesses. History cannot even reconstitute the sequence of events set down in different order in the Gospels and by Paul. The New Testament "only offers a limited probability which does not seem proportionate to the extraordinary importance of what is attested." But history records the faith of the apostles in an ever-living Christ; the apparitions stimulated this faith, and there is the decisive fact that the apostles and Paul had no idea of an immortality distinct from bodily resurrection. For them,

¹¹¹ *Ibid.* 6–21, 31–32, 77–83, 89–91.

¹¹² *Ibid.* 100–101.

¹¹³ *Ibid.* 59–61, 107–8.

¹¹⁴ *Ibid.* 16.

¹¹⁵ *Ibid.* 17–18.

¹¹⁶ *Ibid.* 104–5.

¹¹⁷ *Ibid.* 47–56.

¹¹⁸ *Ibid.*, sections 2 and 3 *passim*.

¹¹⁹ *Ibid.* 90–91.

¹²⁰ *Ibid.* 16–19.

if Christ lived after Calvary, it must be in a body. One can accept, then, Harnack's distinction between the form in which the resurrection of Christ is conveyed to the apostles and through them to Christians, and the substance of their faith in the living Christ. The empty tomb and the appearances remain the main testimony of their faith in Christ, and that faith is expressed today in the same form.¹²¹ We have here an example of what Loisy meant in declaring that the dogmas of the Church were an expression of faith because they formulated a faith already existing in the community.

This whole chapter 4 of section 2, "Le Fils de Dieu," is obviously intended to be a modern defense of Catholic belief in the Resurrection, but the reader has only to set it alongside the treatment of the Resurrection in any of the recognized theological manuals published between 1870 and 1950 to understand the gulf between orthodox theologians and Loisy. The same can be said of the earlier chapters of this section that deal with the divinity of Christ and the kingdom that he established. No saving phrases, no distinction between the historian and the believer, between a critical and any other sort of reading of the gospel,¹²² could hide the discrepancy. The rather waspish attack on Harnack that closed the section could not have erased the impression that little was left of Christ's divinity or of the reality of his resurrection.¹²³

The place given to the Catholic faithful, the *ecclesia discens* as the theologians called them, also was offensive to theological ears.¹²⁴ The development of the Church, according to Loisy, in doctrine, worship, and government under pressure of whatever circumstances, "proceeds from the innermost life of the Church, and the decisions of authority only sanction, so to speak, or consecrate the movement that arises from the piety and thought of the community."¹²⁵ And "in matters of worship the religious feeling of the masses has always preceded the doctrinal definitions of the Church about what is worshiped."¹²⁶ Development of doctrine occurs also through the intellectual work of individual Christians, "who, thinking with the Church, also think for her." Indeed, one of the developments that must take place in the modern Church is a recognition that the faithful are no longer minors.¹²⁷ Church authorities will surely adopt processes in dealing with their own members that are more conformable with the dignity of Christians. Always the hierarchy and the pope are for the faithful, not vice versa. The Church is an educator before it is a ruler, and its aim is to form sincere, free, and responsible adults. The contem-

¹²¹ Ibid. 112-13, 119-20, 121-22.

¹²² Ibid. 118-19.

¹²³ Ibid. 122-25.

¹²⁴ DB 2006.

¹²⁵ *L'Evangile* 169, 218.

¹²⁶ Ibid. 234.

¹²⁷ Ibid. 218-19.

porary authoritarianism of the Church is a reaction against Protestant individualism, not something essential to its constitution.¹²⁸

Most sinister of all, perhaps, was the distinction Loisy made between the critic and the Catholic, and the independence he claimed for the critic. His position was clear, and obnoxious to the authorities; he was writing history, using the scientific methods proper to this particular discipline to reach historical reality in so far as this was accessible; he was not writing a defense of Catholicism or its dogma; his history would be an inadequate apologetic especially for the divinity of Christ and the authority of the Church. His material was only the data of history—what Harnack appealed to.¹²⁹ It was no part of the historian's task to evaluate the teaching of the Church or judge the truth of its dogmas. His task was to trace the origin and progress of a belief or a faith, to assess its influence and the relative importance it attached to its doctrines. He need not decide if Jesus was the incarnate Word, if he was the Messiah; he has to write the history of Jesus, of the belief in the Messiah, and of the transformations this belief underwent.¹³⁰ Loisy denied the relevance of Renan's jibe that orthodox theologians are caged birds and liberal theologians are birds free but with their wings cut. "There is no radical incompatibility between the profession of theologian and that of historian."¹³¹

In *L'Évangile* the claim to write freely as a critic was intimately connected with a distinction between what was credible to faith but not demonstrable by reason—which seemed to his hostile critics the same as saying that something could be true in theology and false in history,¹³² and as if theology must renounce an apologetic which tried to meet rationalism on its own grounds. Loisy denied making an opposition between two truths. But he contrasted the logic of faith with the logic of reason,¹³³ a doctrine of faith addresses itself to faith, that is, to a man judging with his whole soul the value of the religious teaching that is offered him.¹³⁴ The case for a rationalistic apologetic, such as Vatican I had encouraged and theologians now produced in great numbers, was gone. It could not be sustained against the enormous and still-growing heap of scientific facts being accumulated year after year by historians, archeologists, geologists, and others, forcing a radical reinterpretation of

¹²⁸ Ibid. 164–66.

¹²⁹ Ibid. vii.

¹³⁰ Ibid. 31–32.

¹³¹ Ibid. x–xi.

¹³² Loisy denied saying or meaning this; see *Simplex réflexions sur le décret du Saint Office, Lamentabili sane exitu et sur l'encyclique, Pascendi dominici gregis* (Ceffonds, 1908) 61–62.

¹³³ *L'Évangile* 103–4.

¹³⁴ Ibid. 32.

creeds and dogmas. Apologetics must recognize the distinction between faith and reason, and realize with relief that no fact, no provable argument, can upset a religious belief, because they move on different planes.¹³⁵

THE REACTION

A book like *L'Évangile*, so powerfully written, offering a strong support in so many places where the Church was hard pressed, but using arguments and methods associated in most Catholic minds with liberal Protestantism, was bound to have a mixed reception. Two popular clerical journalists, the Abbés Gayraud and Maignen, who had already attacked the *RCF* articles bitterly, resumed their attack on Loisy with the same narrowness and intensity. There was a more measured and therefore more dangerous criticism from professional theologians like Lagrange, Batiffol, and Grandmaison. The book was received with enthusiasm by many priests, and by scholars Catholic and non-Catholic. The Catholics among these saw *L'Évangile* as the new, long-needed apologetic that would supersede the old-fashioned replies to eighteenth-century rationalism still being provided in seminaries as defenses of the nineteenth-century Church. But many critics complained of the ambiguity and elusiveness of Loisy's writing, some of them suspecting him of deliberate deceit.¹³⁶

How much of this ambiguity was there really in Loisy? How much was due to his need of escaping censure? In his preface Loisy denied that *L'Évangile* was a book of apologetics; if it were, it would be found defective. To his friend and advocate Archbishop Mignot of Albi he wrote in November 1902 that it was not an apology for Christianity.¹³⁷ When the book was banned by the Archbishop of Paris, he declared he was a scholar writing a historical work against a German historian. *L'Évangile* was not a theological manual written for seminarians.¹³⁸ Surprisingly, he maintained this not only in his attack on the Encyclical condemning Modernism,¹³⁹ but in his memoirs written twenty-five years later.¹⁴⁰

Yet Loisy drew his material from his unpublished book of apologetics¹⁴¹ and indeed was prepared to think it possible that the projected book would take him out of the Church.¹⁴² The results he claimed for

¹³⁵ Ibid. 214-19.

¹³⁶ Poulat, *Histoire* 138, 146, 150.

¹³⁷ *Bulletin de littérature ecclésiastique* 67 (1966) 174.

¹³⁸ Loisy, *Autour* x-xi.

¹³⁹ *Simple réflexions* 30-31.

¹⁴⁰ *Mémoires* 2, 169, 391-93.

¹⁴¹ Ibid. 1, 438-39; *Choses passées* 180-81.

¹⁴² *Mémoires* 1, 443.

L'Évangile are theological: the destruction of absolute dogmas on Church, sacraments, etc.¹⁴³ And his complaints about the way the Church treated him were based on his being its apologist.¹⁴⁴ There was no doubt in the minds of Loisy's friends that he was a theologian as well as a historian writing historical theology in defense of the Church. Von Hügel thought *L'Évangile* would make the official Church modify its presentation of Catholicism—this in an enthusiastic letter before he had finished the book.¹⁴⁵ Three months later he was equally enthusiastic over the second edition: the needs of Catholic apologetics were satisfied for fifty years to come.¹⁴⁶ In the letters to von Hügel that he reproduced in his memoirs, Loisy described his book in terms of an apologetic.¹⁴⁷ Mignot read *L'Évangile* before publication, advised Loisy to publish it, and praised it as a theological work.¹⁴⁸ Mignot's vicar-general was as appreciative and for the same reason.¹⁴⁹ Duchesne, who saw the danger Loisy ran of being condemned for his first two chapters especially, thought that the book destroyed Harnack's version of Christianity.¹⁵⁰

The enthusiasm aroused by the merits and attraction of the book did not always last. Abbé Wehrlé was at first lyrical about it: "I admire it, I praise it, I recommend it without reserve," he wrote to Blondel. Loisy, he said, would attract converts; a condemnation would ruin these prospects and would moreover force the clergy back into the enclosure where they had been guarding the deposit of faith instead of sharing it about. A visit to Loisy at Bellevue left Wehrlé with a very favorable impression of the man and the priest, and he found that the parish priest regarded Loisy as a saint as well as a scholar without peer, and thought *L'Évangile* the work of a Father of the Church. All this, communicated to his friend Blondel, was met with cautious praise for much of Loisy's book and fears about a "secret Christology that would leave Christ himself ignorant, like the Church, of what he is sowing and what he will reap." Further consultation with the Abbé Mourret and the superior of the S. Sulpice seminary in Paris and a rereading of *L'Évangile* destroyed Wehrlé's enthusiasm and hopes. "How clear-sighted you have been!" he wrote ruefully to Blondel in February 1903. "How much better coolness is than enthusiasm! What a lesson you have given me!"¹⁵¹

¹⁴³ *Ibid.* 2, 168, 473; *L'Évangile* (5th ed.) 3.

¹⁴⁴ A. Loisy, *Quelques lettres sur des questions actuelles et sur des événements récents* (Ceffonds, 1908) 116–17, 242.

¹⁴⁵ *Mémoires* 2, 157.

¹⁴⁶ *Ibid.* 2, 222.

¹⁴⁷ *Ibid.* 1, 444.

¹⁴⁸ *Ibid.* 2, 193–94, 233.

¹⁴⁹ *Recherches de science religieuse* 57 (1965) 72.

¹⁵⁰ *Mémoires* 2, 157, 191.

¹⁵¹ Marlé, *Au coeur* 48–50, 54, 70–71.

The unfavorable opinion of serious philosophers like Blondel and of theologians weighed much more heavily than the virulence of Maignen or the fervor of priests like Wehrlé. Batiffol, rector of the Toulouse Institut Catholique and one of Loisy's *bêtes noires*, was a very dangerous critic in Loisy's eyes because of his position. Batiffol thought Loisy made revelation synonymous with inspiration, denied that God could be known by reason, broke the connection between Christ and the Church, its sacraments and liturgy, destroyed the transcendence of Jesus' person, based his conjectures not on historical evidence but on his own philosophy, and made the supernatural a product of faith.¹⁵² Abbé Vigouroux, who had been given the chair of Scripture which Loisy had hoped to win, was in Rome early in 1903 and reported to Mignot that *L'Évangile* was causing concern; the Master of the Sacred Palace had refused to authorize an Italian translation.¹⁵³ Lagrange reviewed it severely in the *Revue biblique*¹⁵⁴ and insisted that Loisy was a theologian "of marvelous talent expounding a most attractive theology." Grandmaison's moderate and intelligent review¹⁵⁵ was damaging, but Loisy said here was a critic with whom he could have a discussion.¹⁵⁶ Perhaps the most penetrating criticism of *L'Évangile* was not published for fifty years.¹⁵⁷ Maurice Blondel's letters attacking Loisy's method, his separation of history from philosophy and theology, and his Christology and the exegesis that supported it were answered with diminishing good humor by Loisy and left behind a resentment that is apparent twenty-five years later.¹⁵⁸ The replies of Loisy show his extraordinary agility and once again his debating skill and persuasiveness. There is about them a certain air of improvisation, and the continually disputed interpretations by Blondel of Loisy's statements and their correction by Loisy give, more than anything else in his writings, an idea of his elusiveness. On every point raised by Blondel there is an orthodox statement of belief and then an explanation of this which seems to void it of meaning or turn it round.

As disturbing as anything else to the authorities was the attraction Loisy appeared to have for seminarists and young priests. As early as 1901 the students at the French College in Rome were running clandestine courses of study for themselves in Blondel's philosophy, Loisy's exegesis, and Duchesne's Church history. One had been expelled for subscribing to *RHLR*.¹⁵⁹ When the professor of dogmatic theology at the Apollinaris in Rome announced that Cardinal Richard had condemned *L'Évangile*, several students made a demonstration.¹⁶⁰ Richard wrote to the Pope in

¹⁵² *BLE* 67 (1966) 283-84.

¹⁵³ *Ibid.* 277-78.

¹⁵⁴ *Revue biblique*, April 1, 1903, 293-313.

¹⁵⁵ *Études*, Jan. 20, 1903, 143-54.

¹⁵⁶ *Mémoires* 2, 198.

¹⁵⁷ Marlé, *Au coeur* 72-111.

¹⁵⁸ *Mémoires* 2, 228-31.

¹⁵⁹ *Ibid.* 56, 61.

¹⁶⁰ *BLE* 67 (1966) 277-78.

December 1903, when Loisy's Indexing was under consideration, that he feared a number of young priests were attending Loisy's course at the Hautes Etudes and being seduced by his teaching. Confessors reported that Loisy's doctrines were upsetting people. While Loisy was living near Paris at Neuilly and Bellevue, he was visited by students and young priests.¹⁶¹

From the late nineties there had been fears that Loisy would be condemned by Rome, and the memoirs and correspondence of Modernists and their friends at that time are full of rumors and accounts of moves and countermoves at the Vatican. Paris wished Rome to act; Rome seemed to wait for Paris.¹⁶² Leo XIII in his last years was only fitfully in control of Church government, and whoever had his confidence as adviser in some area of administration could direct his policy for a time.¹⁶³ It took Pius X a few months to be caught up fully by the fears of his Curia. Between September and December he became convinced that Loisy's books must be censored, and afterwards the conviction grew that in Modernism he was facing the greatest danger ever encountered by the Church.¹⁶⁴ The book Loisy published in October 1903 in explanation of *L'Évangile* sharpened its criticism of the Church and its apologetics and made clearer the radical tendency of his exegesis and his Christology, and moved the Vatican to take over the business from the Archbishop of Paris, so that in December *L'Évangile* and *Autour d'un petit livre* with three other works of Loisy were Indexed.

THE SECOND "LITTLE RED BOOK"

Autour d'un petit livre was a series of letters commenting on *L'Évangile* and on the reviews it had received. It had the qualities his previous writings had led readers to expect: lucidity, an easy style, a powerful marshaling of arguments, a noble vision of the Catholic savant's task and rights. His irony was now more pungent and more frequently used than in *L'Évangile*. The ambiguities were fewer and can be seen to arise not so much from a desire to appear more orthodox than he was, as from the ambiguity of his own position: he still claimed to be a Catholic, he still wanted to be accepted as a Catholic priest, and yet had taken up positions that were at variance with the official statements of Catholic belief. *Autour* repeats much that is in *L'Évangile* more clearly, because more openly declaring what Loisy believed and making explicit what had been implicit.

What he had written in *L'Évangile* about the authenticity of the Gospels and their reliability as history and the effect this had on the dogma of Christ's divinity had caused a very angry reaction from many

¹⁶¹ *Mémoires* 2, 280, 422.

¹⁶³ *Mémoires* 1, 515.

¹⁶² *Choses passées* 218, 219, 226-27.

¹⁶⁴ DB 2105.

of his reviewers and had seemed particularly obnoxious to the authorities.¹⁶⁵ *Autour* made no concessions to them. His fourth letter declared that what he found in the Gospels was not compatible with the absolute and personal divinity of Christ, that this dogma could only be maintained through using a more or less symbolist theory of religious belief and the idea of God's immanence in mankind. Christ had no awareness of his own divinity. Christological dogma was formed under the need of explaining Christ to pagan converts.¹⁶⁶

He showed again in *Autour* how closely his Christology was connected with his view of the Scriptures, and this in turn with the distinction between what was accessible to the critic and historian and what was perceptible only by the believer and therefore material for the theologian. The historian could not venture into the thoughts of Christ about himself as the later Church did.¹⁶⁷ The divinity of Christ, even if Jesus had taught it, would not be a fact of history.¹⁶⁸ As the sciences reach nature, but not God though He is in nature, so history can only find a man in Jesus, though faith may find a God in the man.¹⁶⁹ Historical facts in the Gospels must be shown to be facts by historical method, not by appeal to the Council of Nicaea. And historical method discovers in the New Testament only germs and traces of today's defined dogmas.¹⁷⁰

Autour seems to imply more definitely a revelation that is not from without but from within. God in man is the cause and object of revelation.¹⁷¹ Revelation is not a system of theories but instruction about good living. Here is a new emphasis, on morality as the factor predominating in faith and religion, the criterion for judging dogma.¹⁷² It is the moral conscience that, helped by reason, comes to believe in God. So would a believer come to a conviction that Christ is God.¹⁷³

Of faith he wrote that it is based on internal experience, and as religious consciousness develops, it will represent its object through dogmas that seem to express historic events. This is what the Gospels do, and the religious experience recorded there is renewed in us and developed. The Gospels are the beginning, not the fulfilment, of a religious ideal; and because of this continuous development dogmatic formulae can have no absolute value.¹⁷⁴

¹⁶⁵ Poulat, *Histoire* 125-57.

¹⁶⁶ *Autour* 117-18, 123-131; *Choses passées* 262-63, 308-10.

¹⁶⁷ *Autour* 136-38, 143.

¹⁶⁸ *Ibid.* 215.

¹⁶⁹ *Ibid.* 10-11, 115.

¹⁷⁰ *Ibid.* 15-17.

¹⁷¹ *Ibid.* 196-99.

¹⁷² *Ibid.* 79.

¹⁷³ *Ibid.* 215; *Quelques lettres* 45.

¹⁷⁴ *Quelques lettres* 41-43.

Development he described, as in the *RCF* articles and *L'Évangile*, passing through its three stages.¹⁷⁵ But he hardly fulfilled Mignot's hope that he would show (in a second edition of *L'Évangile*) that development was not a merely natural process, as Sabatier had made it.¹⁷⁶ By saying that Judaism and Christianity have developed and changed "by the very intensity of a vital force, of a dynamism which has found in its encounter with history the occasions, the stimuli, the aids, and the material of their own development,"¹⁷⁷ he would have reinforced the suspicions of those who believed that *L'Évangile* made development the result of natural forces acting on the Church through history.

About the Church he said again that it was instituted to serve its members, but he said it more sharply: "Christ did not die on the cross so that his vicars could sit on thrones." He added some observations about the fears inspired by the Church, the sort of things he had previously attributed to hostile critics.¹⁷⁸

Autour not only gave fuller treatment to points of doctrine that Loisy wrote about in *L'Évangile*; it adopted a more radical stance and an unfriendly tone. Yet there is nothing unexpected in its pages; his bitterest critics were giving an even more extreme interpretation of *L'Évangile*, and his letters and notes show that there was no real shift of opinion between 1902 and 1903.

ON THE WAY OUT

After the Indexing of his books, no further official action was taken against Loisy until the publication of *Lamentabili* and *Pascendi* in 1907. Between 1904 and 1907 there were the pressures applied through Cardinal Richard to get Loisy to submit formally to the condemnation of his books. Loisy did this to his regret under the influence of two friends in March 1904.¹⁷⁹ He also wrote to the Pope in defense of his whole position, appealing to the Pope's heart; his appeal was rejected by Pius in a letter not to Loisy but to the Archbishop. This was very important for Loisy's attitude to Rome: he resented hotly the rejection of his appeal, and the incident must be counted as one of the most telling influences in weakening his desire to remain in the Church.¹⁸⁰

He wrote many letters during these years, some of them to newspaper editors, and others to private correspondents but (because he kept copies) with some idea of possible publication.¹⁸¹ The personal letters are more explicit and uninhibited and probably deliver his thought more truly. He continued to make notes on his own opinions and feelings, and these were

¹⁷⁵ *Autour* 200.

¹⁷⁶ *Mémoires* 2, 178.

¹⁷⁷ *Autour* 47.

¹⁷⁸ *Ibid.* 178-80, 184-85.

¹⁷⁹ *Mémoires* 2, 367.

¹⁸⁰ *Ibid.* 351, 360-61.

¹⁸¹ In *Quelques lettres*.

quoted in later publications, his own autobiographical *Choses passées* (1913) and the *Mémoires*, as well as in the biographical sketch written by Albert Houtin and completed by Houtin's friend Sartiaux. From all these sources, but especially from the notes, it is possible to trace Loisy's movement away from the Church, which led him to welcome the decree of excommunication when it came.

In May 1901 Loisy had written to a Vatican official, Alberto Lepidi, O.P., that his devotion to the Church persisted through all the ill-treatment he had received.¹⁸² Eighteen months later his notes reveal intense bitterness and resentment. "The present regime is a school of deceit and vileness. Fools, cowards, liars need to be crushed between finger and thumb; and with some health, I'll have my revenge on these good little Fathers," that is, the Jesuits. "The Catholic press is full of fanatics who denounce, greedy to exterminate, full of hate in defending the gospel of love. Some papers are insincere, hoping to avoid repression by authority, promoting what they know are false ideas. A few are torn between honesty and prudence."¹⁸³ But writing for publication in the *London Times* in January 1904, he declared that he was still a Catholic and a critic—a conjunction which he realized later was impossible for him.¹⁸⁴ In that month, expecting excommunication for not submitting to his Indexing, he prepared a letter to the Roman authorities in which he declared that he remained united in heart to the Catholic Church and intended to abide by the obligations of the priesthood. In his memoirs he adds that this allegiance came to appear less and less necessary, the Church came to appear more and more hostile to the true progress of humanity. "Excommunication put me in my proper place, which was outside Roman Catholicism."¹⁸⁵ The submission to which his friends persuaded him produced a reaction, and henceforth, while he would not leave the Church by his own act, he would be happy to be made go. And this attitude persisted until he was declared *vitandus*.¹⁸⁶

Even when he had given up hope of the Church, he would not act against it until it had expelled him. "We must not attempt anything against the Church," he wrote to von Hügel in December 1906, "and in the circumstances we cannot do anything to save her from herself." His notes put the matter in a rather different light. It was a question of taking part in a demonstration to greet the Italian Modernist Antonio Fogazzaro

¹⁸² *Mémoires* 2, 39.

¹⁸³ *Ibid.* 2, 158.

¹⁸⁴ *Ibid.* 2, 310–11; cf. E. Poulat, *Un oeuvre clandestin d'Henri Bremond* (Rome, 1972) 142.

¹⁸⁵ *Mémoires* 2, 346–47.

¹⁸⁶ *Ibid.* 2, 460–61, 466; *Choses passées* 311; Houtin-Sartiaux, *Alfred Loisy* 136–37; Boyer de Sainte-Suzanne, *Alfred Loisy* 91.

on a visit to Paris. In his journal he saw the meeting as a recognition of being able to reform the Church; if this were so, one would have to remain in the Church. But Catholicism was by now an obstacle to be destroyed, so he would take no part.¹⁸⁷ He wrote to the Archbishop of Paris in June 1907 that he had lost interest in making his ideas palatable to authority; he no longer believed that development of true religion in the Church was possible.¹⁸⁸

It is this change of attitude in Loisy that is all-important. There is little in anything he published between *L'Évangile* and *Simple réflexions*, his last work as a Catholic, to suggest a considerable development of ideas contrary to the accepted orthodoxy; even the most extreme outbursts in his journal between 1903 and 1907 can be matched by earlier passages. What mattered was that he finally lost hope of doing what he wanted to do in the Church, of changing it, of being finally allowed to change it. The condemnations of himself and other Modernists and the rumors of further moves against them produced this hopelessness.¹⁸⁹ The break between Church and state in France, with all the bitterness it caused between the advocates of the two parties, the policy imposed by Rome on the French bishops in this crisis, the rejection of his personal appeal to the heart of the Pope, the demand made of him that, like Clovis, he should burn what he had adored and adore what he had burned—these incidents and what they revealed about the men who governed the whole Church from Rome destroyed the affection and loyalty that had made him want to work within the Church.¹⁹⁰ The proceedings by which the Church and the state were separated in 1905–6 filled him with disgust: here was the Pope encouraging a rebellious attitude to the French government among Catholics, without regard for anything except Roman power. He supported the government passionately; he saw no religious issue at stake, only the political influence of Rome, for which the French Church was to be stripped of its possessions, and French Catholics incited to rebellion. He was glad, he wrote in his memoirs, to be no longer Roman but altogether French, “that is, a simple member of the human race in France.” After 1906 particularly he was anxious to break with Rome, and his notes and letters of this time are written in a tone of marked hostility.¹⁹¹

The less hope he had of the Church reforming itself, the more openly were his views on doctrine expressed. If it were not for earlier references in his notes to his loss of belief, it would seem as if he moved further away from orthodoxy during these five years. What the letters and notes

¹⁸⁷ *Mémoires* 2, 501–2.

¹⁸⁸ *Quelques lettres* 106.

¹⁸⁹ *Mémoires* 2, 467.

¹⁹⁰ *Ibid.* 2, 360–61, chaps. 34 and 35 *passim*.

¹⁹¹ *Ibid.* 2, 441–501.

of this time supply is evidence that the loss of faith was not stemmed. The only new feature is the greater prominence given to morality as the ultimate justification and criterion of belief.¹⁹² It appeared in *Autour*; a note made in 1907 states it again.

We call faith the confidence which the soul has in the moral meaning and moral value of human existence. This supposes the moral meaning and value of the universe. This supposes God. This confidence is not founded on rational evidence . . . It consists in a sort of strong instinct, a feeling of the value of things. It grows by an experience that is *sui generis*, the practice of a good life.¹⁹³

This would develop further after he left the Church. The journal recorded in June 1904 his conviction that religious belief must support morality, and he got no help from believing that Christ rose after descending into hell or that there were three real persons in God. For years he had not been able to pray to God as to a person from whom one ought get a favor; his personal gods were the persons he loved.¹⁹⁴ Creation as in the creeds was infantilism, he noted in May 1904. "If I believe anything, I don't believe what the Church teaches, and the Church is not inclined to teach what I believe. The Catholic system, doctrine, and discipline, everything, is contrary to reason and life."¹⁹⁵ In June of that year he noted that the common doctrine of immortality was infantile; man had no more claim to it than fleas had.¹⁹⁶ In 1907 he wrote to a correspondent:

the great Christian dogmas are semimetaphysical poems, in which a superficial philosophy can see only a somewhat abstract mythology. They have served to maintain the Christian ideal—that is their merit. As a scientific definition of religion, which they claim to be, they necessarily find themselves behind the present times and, compared with today's science, are the works of ignorance. The whole theological economy of the redemption, of which Jesus himself seems not to have had the least idea, appears to us artificial and contrived.¹⁹⁷

He expounded his Christology to a priest the same year. The divinity of Christ is a dogma symbolizing more or less effectively the relationship of God with humanity personified in Jesus. All humanity is God's child, immanent in Him as He is immanent in it. Jesus first realized this intensely and through him humanity has realized it. Christian speculation has made Christ the divine personification of humanity. The dogma formed in the fourth and fifth centuries is obviously different from a revealed truth and can be adapted to modern exigencies of faith. It cannot be proved rigorously by history or philosophy. But innumerable people have felt that God lived in Christ, and if reflective, they expressed this in

¹⁹² *Ibid.* 2, 387.

¹⁹³ *Ibid.* 2, 514.

¹⁹⁴ *Ibid.* 2, 397.

¹⁹⁶ *Ibid.* 2, 387.

¹⁹⁶ Houtin-Sartiaux, *Alfred Loisy* 129.

¹⁹⁷ *Quelques lettres* 71.

theological expositions and gave a rational explanation of it. Theology is on a lower level than the divine mystery it deals with, and apologetics is on a lower level than the religious and moral life it explains and justifies. Religious belief corresponds to the reality of all human experience; it develops. And Catholic apologetics must develop with it, if it is to maintain that correspondence.¹⁹⁸ Loisy could not meet von Hügel's wish that he write to Pius X and express full belief in the divinity of Christ.¹⁹⁹ Christ's divinity is in the same category as man's deification; it is a figure of man's deification.²⁰⁰ This was in 1904, a short time after he had written to Abbé Wehrlé that his Christology was the Church's.²⁰¹

Statements such as that made to Abbé Bricout, the editor of *RCF*, in a letter of June 1907 that he no longer believed any article of the Creed in the sense given it by the Church, sound more radical than they were. He went on to mention the absolute authority of the hierarchy, the absolute force of the Church's theology, the probative force of its apologetic. "The current idea of revelation and Scripture, of dogma and the Church's powers, is false and insupportable."²⁰² He was more ready to allow definite disproof from the Gospels: e.g., the Synoptics show that Christ did not think he was God, and the fourth Gospel deforms his thought. With equal definiteness historical criticism can prove that Lazarus was not raised from the dead.²⁰³ But after writing in his journal in June 1904 that he was rather a pantheistic-positivist-humanist than a Christian, he gave an interview in August to *La presse* in which he declared "an unshakable confidence in the future of Catholicism. We must not doubt the doctrine of life taught by the crucified God."²⁰⁴ Similarly, *Autour* and the letters intended for immediate publication prior to 1907 show none of the petulance or ferocity or extravagance of the more private statements.

His notes of 1903 and 1904 give a very watered-down account of papal infallibility; dogmatic definitions give a direction to Catholic thought.²⁰⁵ And he wrote to Cardinal Merry del Val in 1907 that the Church's infallibility could not be inerrancy; even the Scriptures are full of errors. "Is it not simply the power, I would rather say the duty, of guiding believers in a path that conforms to the tradition of the gospel?"²⁰⁶ He gave the same denial of infallibility to a priest whom the Archbishop of Paris had sent to him that year, when he was ill.²⁰⁷ It was at this time that he contrasted with the treatment he had received his lifelong efforts to defend the Church and explain its doctrines in a way that would be

¹⁹⁸ *Ibid.* 149-52.

¹⁹⁹ *Mémoires* 2, 315-16.

²⁰⁰ *Ibid.* 2, 400, 408.

²⁰¹ Marlé, *Au coeur* 72.

²⁰² *Quelques lettres* 180.

²⁰³ *Ibid.* 60, 148.

²⁰⁴ Houtin-Sartiaux, *Alfred Loisy* 129, 131.

²⁰⁵ *Mémoires* 2, 305.

²⁰⁶ *Quelques lettres* 123.

²⁰⁷ *Choses passées* 334-35.

intelligible and acceptable to educated men and women of his time.²⁰⁸ It was part of the disenchantment that made him desire to be expelled from the Church.

LAMENTABILI, PASCENDI, AND SIMPLES RÉFLEXIONS

On July 3, 1907 the Holy Office issued a list or syllabus of sixty-five propositions drawn from the works of the Modernists and condemned them; the condemnation was confirmed and approved by Pius X.²⁰⁹ On September 8 of the same year the Pope issued the Encyclical *Pascendi*, describing the Modernist system in great detail, its origin in a false philosophy, its great power for the subversion of Catholicism, and the range of its errors, spreading over every important area of Christian teaching.²¹⁰ By January of the following year Loisy had his answer published: *Simplex réflexions*. He acknowledged the propositions that were drawn from his works. He admitted the right of the Encyclical and syllabus to point out the logical connections and similarities between the different parts of Modernist works or between author and author, or to make explicit the assumptions and postulates of Modernist authors and the consequences of what they wrote. He complained that his opinions were sometimes distorted by being taken out of context or having qualifying phrases removed or generalizing from what he said about a particular item of belief.²¹¹ He protested later in his memoirs against the Encyclical's presenting its own construction of Modernism as a system either explicitly taught or secretly agreed on by the authors it chose to regard as Modernists.²¹² He complained, too, in *Simplex réflexions* about the Encyclical's abusive language, not noticing how close it was in what it wrote about him to what he had written about Sabatier in his *RCF* articles.²¹³

In *Simplex réflexions* he denied that Blondel and Laberthonnière were inside the Modernist system or had anything to do with the views of Le Roy, Tyrrell, the Italian Modernist social reformers, or what he had written himself in *L'Évangile*.²¹⁴ Privately, in a letter to von Hügel dated October 24, 1907, he complained angrily that Blondel and Laberthonnière refused to recognize themselves in *Pascendi*: since the two wanted to submit to Rome, they should disavow formally what they had written.²¹⁵

Loisy took the opportunity to give a historical summary of Modernism. It began with ecclesiastical history (he certainly meant but did not mention Duchesne) and went into exegesis. Between the appearance of d'Hulst's article in 1893 and *L'Évangile* it was a renewal of exegesis.

²⁰⁸ *Quelques lettres* 116–17, 220, 242.

²⁰⁹ DB 2001–2065a.

²¹⁰ DB 2071–2109.

²¹¹ Poulat, *Histoire* 103–11.

²¹² *Mémoires* 2, 567.

²¹³ Cf. *Quelques lettres* 232–33.

²¹⁴ *Simplex réflexions* 144–45.

²¹⁵ *Mémoires* 2, 580–81.

L'Évangile widened the movement to take in the origins of Christianity, development of ecclesiastical authority and of dogma and worship; now it was *loisysme*.²¹⁶ Then Le Roy's article on dogma in *Quinzaine* of April 16, 1905 brought it into philosophy. Fogazzaro's novel *Il santo* and the *rinnovamento* of Milan advocated general reform. Blondel and Laberthonnière and immanence were parallel movements outside these other aspects of Modernism; they dealt with the psychology of religion. Tyrrell wrote mystical theology.²¹⁷

Simple réflexions went through the propositions of *Lamentabili* and then analyzed and criticized *Pascendi*. There is the same cool tone, the same air of great reasonableness, the same acute analysis of ideas, lucidity of exposition, and persuasiveness that made the earlier books so popular and must have brought home to many how effective an apologist the Church was casting away. There is, too, an occasional vagueness or ambiguity, as in *L'Évangile* and *Autour*. Facing excommunication, fully aware that he was about to leave the Church, he insisted more firmly than ever on the rights of the scholar and the independence of history in its examination of religious events. Science did not try to subject matters of faith to itself; it would not allow theology to dictate to it on its own ground. Science did not try to reform theology but forced theology to reform itself.²¹⁸ Historical and textual criticism of the Bible was not for the pulpit nor even for the theologian.²¹⁹ He denied emphatically that this meant that what was false in history could be true in theology. But a myth or a legend can express a religious truth, and what was believed by faith might not be demonstrated nor be demonstrable by the historian.²²⁰ The death of Jesus was a historically proven event; that his death was redemptive is a matter of faith—the historian is not in his own field here.²²¹ The Church can interpret Scripture quite legitimately to support its current teaching; it is not bound, as the critic is bound, to the meaning the text had when it was written.²²² As to what was true or false historically in the Bible, of course there are innumerable errors of fact in it, but the Modernists did not regard God as its author in the sense that they believed ancient authors to have written their works.²²³ God was the author of the Bible as He was the architect of St. Peter's in Rome or Notre Dame in Paris.²²⁴ Its imperishable value lay in its spirit, not its details.²²⁵

Loisy gave to the moral element in faith, its motivation and object the prominence which had emerged in recent works. The essence of a dogma

²¹⁶ I.e., *L'Évangile* is a theological work.

²¹⁷ *Simple réflexions* 144–45.

²¹⁸ *Ibid.* 171.

²¹⁹ *Ibid.* 174.

²²⁰ *Ibid.* 61–62.

²²¹ *Ibid.* 169–70.

²²² *Ibid.* 32–33, 109–10.

²²³ *Ibid.* 228.

²²⁴ *Ibid.* 42.

²²⁵ *Ibid.* 45.

was in its moral power.²²⁶ So belief grows not from an appetite for what was in the gospel in its original form, but for what Christianity, Protestant and Catholic, offers it today.²²⁷ This affects what Loisy now believes about revelation. There is no such distinction between what reason discovers and revelation discloses, as scholasticism maintains. Personal experience plays its part in the evolution of belief. The Encyclical for the first time taught that revelation was and must be from outside the believer—a childishly anthropomorphic notion, involving a sort of supernatural mechanics.²²⁸ Equally mechanical is the notion that revelation ended with the apostles, a notion quite foreign to the teaching of the apostles themselves.²²⁹

For the rest, Loisy repeats without much alteration what he has already said about Christ and about the sacraments. He corrects *Lamentabili* about what he means by the efficacy of the sacraments²³⁰ (which is certainly not *ex opere operato*) and says the theologians who wrote *Pascendi* for the Pope invented the sacramental theology they ascribe to him; but his objection seems to be that they describe this as deriving finally from immanentism. He seems to find nothing wrong with the theory that the sacraments come from Christ because they come from the life of Christians living the life of Christ.²³¹

AFTER PASCENDI

Quelques lettres leaves the reader in no doubt that by the time he came to write *Simplex réflexions* Loisy was irrevocably committed to breaking with the Church. The letters to Merry del Val are not written to make his views appear compatible with the orthodoxy imposed by Rome; they are meant to show that that orthodoxy was incompatible with reason or with an intelligent twentieth-century view of religion.²³² The turbulence of feeling which marked the years up to 1904 was gone; the pull from two opposite extremes, the Catholic priesthood and the vocation of the dedicated and impartial scholar, was no longer equal. He had lost the ambition to do in his time what Newman had done in the previous century: to open up a path which would take the Church through the difficulties with which it was beset by contemporary science. This was seen to be impossible and, given the personnel that governed the Church, determined its policy, and fixed its image, no longer attractive.²³³

²²⁶ *Ibid.* 40, 246.

²²⁷ *Ibid.* 234.

²²⁸ *Ibid.* 149.

²²⁹ *Ibid.* 58.

²³⁰ *Ibid.* 184.

²³¹ *Ibid.* 179.

²³² *Quelques lettres* 83–86, 118–33, 232–38.

²³³ *Ibid.* 106, 250; Poulat, *Oeuvre clandestin* 142; *Mémoires* 2, 473.

Loisy's feelings now ran all the same way: a resentment against the intolerance of Rome, a fierce anger against its attack on the French Church and nation, a bitter contempt for the cowardice or dishonesty of which its champions had to be guilty and for the criminal foolishness with which Rome was condemning itself to death.²³⁴

His conduct, when the decree of excommunication came, was dignified. He was not a joiner and held aloof from attempts to form an organization of Modernists. He had his *Revue d'histoire et de littérature religieuse* and in March 1909 he gained the chair of History of Religions in the Collège de France. His opening lectures there gave no satisfaction to those who hoped there would be denunciations or exposures of Rome.²³⁵ That he was scarred and embittered by his experience as a Catholic professor and priest is obvious, particularly from his memoirs; the feeling is still strong twenty years after the events that caused it, and the tiny details of injustice, inconsistency, unfair dealing of which he thought himself the victim are recorded with the minuteness of one who has just experienced them.

It is not a pleasant personality that comes through the memoirs. Loisy was egotistic, very touchy about the respect due to him, ungenerous in his attitude towards colleagues and friends. Indeed, he was a man who was more at ease among disciples than among friends; the ex-Jesuit Bremond was the person who came closest to Loisy, and though Bremond was a professional writer, an expert in the history of French spirituality, and a member of the Academy, his letters to Loisy express and seem designed to express the devotedness not of a peer but of a perhaps favorite disciple. Loisy wrote of him as a dear friend, but if Bremond had not maintained his humble attitude, I doubt whether Loisy's feelings would have been so warm.²³⁶

There can hardly be doubt that in ejecting Loisy the Church deprived France of a theologian who combined learning with a gift of exposition that was not equaled by any other French theologian before World War II. Among writers of manuals or of more popular expositions of some area of theology, there was no one who could write so attractive an account of Catholicism and write it so convincingly. Duchesne in the writing of history surpassed him; he was original in his thinking, as well as charming in his style. But in theology the most important works written between 1900 and 1940, for all their learning, are dull and slow-moving compared with the smooth, easy flow of Loisy's "little red books." He had a keener eye for the weakness of an argument, a shrewder understanding of what

²³⁴ *Simple réflexions* 266-77; *Quelques lettres* 183-86.

²³⁵ *Mémoires* 3, 98-105.

²³⁶ A. Loisy, *George Tyrrell et Henri Bremond* (Paris, 1936) passim; Poulat, *Oeuvre clandestin* passim.

needed emphasis, a more accurate appreciation of the mentality of educated Catholics. There was no one of his time in France who could have communicated more easily with the academic world. In spite of the sectarianism which marks his *RCF* articles, and the priggishness which made men like Duchesne as uncongenial to him in 1930 as in the 1880's,²³⁷ he was possessed of a mind that moved freely among ideas and was open to the impact of fresh discoveries, absorbed them, adapted what he already knew to what he learnt, and came to a synthesis which he could express with the charm and force that had gone into the exposition of each former stage of his development. It was his weakness as well as his strength. The charge he reacted against angrily,²³⁸ that his work was derivative, is surely justified. Newman, Harnack, and Sabatier supplied him with nearly all his theological ideas,²³⁹ but his work of selection and synthesis and presentation was a work of genius.

Any reader of Loisy who also studies the history of Rome's dealings with Modernists in France and Italy, with American and French ecclesiastics involved in Americanism, or with the Italian Catholic clergy and laity who favored a full participation in national life, must ask how much Loisy's exclusion from the Church was due to his own unbelief, and how much to the insensitiveness or arrogance of the Roman curial officials, supported or inspired by the Pope himself. Could Loisy under a different regime have remained in the Church?

Of course, a great deal that scandalized the Vatican between 1880 and 1900 is a commonplace of today's orthodoxy: the authorship of the sacred books, inspiration, prophecy, the compilation of the Gospels and their interrelation, the authorship of some of the Pauline letters, the historical process of revelation, the development of doctrine, the relation between the content and expression of dogma. The question naturally arises whether Loisy need have been ejected from the Church, whether the Church of 1970 would have arrived fifty years earlier and with less upset if the authorities of 1900 had been less rigid, less constricted by out-of-date concepts of what tradition and consistency in dogmatic teaching meant, more open to the needs of the Church and the world in which it lived and which it was sent to serve, less centralized in its government, less authoritarian in its treatment of its own clergy. These complaints, made by Loisy, were echoes (like so much of what he wrote); they had been made by earlier critics when Vatican I was being prepared and there were hopes abroad that it would promote a movement towards a broader

²³⁷ *Mémoires* 1, chaps. 3-5, for his relations with Duchesne.

²³⁸ *Ibid.* 1, 153-54; *ibid.* 3, 67, 84.

²³⁹ *Ibid.* 2, 560-61; Loisy added Renan's name to these.

understanding of the world and a greater appreciation of the distinct functions of the different members of the Church.²⁴⁰

But giving full recognition to the defects of personnel and machinery in the Roman Curia at the end of the last century, one cannot imagine Loisy settling into the Church with any satisfaction to himself and others. A more sympathetic treatment and a truer appreciation of his gifts would certainly have kept him in the Church longer; the political events of 1905-6 and the brushing aside of his personal appeal to the Pope had more to do with his desire to have the connection broken than the disparity between his theology and that of Cardinal Richard and Pius X.²⁴¹ But there was in fact nothing to keep Loisy in the Church, no good in it that he could not have encouraged from the outside, nothing that he would have found in it alone and always. The later development of his thought, his deism, definite in the assertion, vague and elusive in its meaning, and his religion of idealized humanity are in line with the evolution of his thought while he was still a Catholic. Sooner or later, given his temperament, he would have found himself seriously at odds with his Church, and he was not a man who could recognize an authority and live under its disapproval. Bremond's cheerful suggestion that Modernists should express their submission to censure when it was inflicted, and proceed as before,²⁴² could not have been acted on by Loisy; and it is hard to see him avoiding censure even in a Church much more tolerant than the Church of Pius X and Merry del Val.²⁴³ What strikes one reflecting on the theology of Loisy, its shifts and its developments, is not so much what he came to think as the absence of any principle, philosophical or theological, which could have given stability to his thought. He would always have insisted that religion was a social thing; apart from that, there is nothing that he might not have said.

Emphasizing as he did the necessity under which the Church lies of recognizing and going to meet the world in which it lives, he might have been more ready himself to recognize the Church of which he was a minister for what it then was. Earlier he saw the need for patience; a later generation of priests, taught by him, would spread the ideas that were unacceptable now.²⁴⁴ But patience under continuous, often capricious and venomous criticism, and under disapproval of his superiors in France and Rome, was just what so prickly a character as Loisy's could

²⁴⁰ Cf. E. Cecconi, *Storia del Concilio Ecumenico Vaticano* (4 vols.; Rome, 1872-79) specifically 2, (359)-(366) and (420)-(428).

²⁴¹ See above, section "On the Way Out."

²⁴² Loisy, *George Tyrrell et Henri Bremond* 7.

²⁴³ *Quelques lettres* 250.

²⁴⁴ *Mémoires* 1, 136, 211.

not maintain. He would, it seems to me highly probable, have gone later; but how unfortunate the history of the events which led to his being expelled! So little sense of what had been attempted in good faith, of how powerful an advocate was being lost, of the dreadful lack of an adequate apologetic in the Church! Such a reliance on strong and sometimes brutal acts of authority to remedy a situation which demanded the provision of theological education, pastoral activity among the educated, and a vast program of research to lay a foundation for this!

There are no heroes in the history of Modernism, unless among those who were on the edges of the movement—men like Blondel, who worked so fruitfully for a new apologetic under such thankless conditions,²⁴⁵ or Laberthonnière, who accepted the appalling savagery of his sentence²⁴⁶ rather than rebel against an authority he recognized as in itself lawful. But among the Modernists themselves and their judges there is no magnanimity to make their other virtues attractive. Zeal, industry, courage, intellectual brilliance, and a score of other gifts are scattered among the two camps, but one cannot escape the impression that they were small men dealing with great issues. At least Loisy was not the smallest of them.

²⁴⁵ Maurice Blondel et Auguste Valensin, *Correspondance* 1-2 (Paris, 1957), is full of the distress caused by news of possible action against Blondel and of measures taken against other Catholic authors.

²⁴⁶ He was forbidden to publish anything. See Maurice Blondel, *Lucien Laberthonnière: Correspondance philosophique* (Paris, 1961) 221.