“Alfred Loisy’s Developmental Approach to Scripture: Reading the ‘Firmin’ Articles in the Context of Nineteenth- and Twentieth-Century Historical Biblical Criticism.”

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Alfred Loisy’s Developmental Approach to Scripture: Reading the ‘Firmin’ Articles in the Context of Nineteenth- and Twentieth-Century Historical Biblical Criticism

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Abstract: Alfred Loisy’s ‘Firmin’ articles applied John Henry Newman’s concept of development of doctrine within church history to the Bible. In doing this, Loisy was attempting to convince his Catholic audience to appropriate the historical critical method within Catholic biblical interpretation. Loisy attempted to explain the notion of development within the Bible, which had become commonplace among the Protestant historical critical scholarship of the time, in light of Newman’s concept of the development of doctrine within history.

Introduction

Alfred Loisy played a pivotal role in the late nineteenth-century and early twentieth-century Catholic attempts to appropriate the methods of historical biblical criticism. From 1898 until 1900, Loisy wrote six articles pseudonymously under his middle name, Firmin.¹ This present article² discusses Loisy’s attempt in his ‘Firmin’ articles

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1 These articles originated in an unpublished manuscript Loisy entitled, La crise de la foi dans le temps présent. Essais d’histoire et de philosophie religieuses (henceforth referred to as Essais). An edition of this manuscript has been published from its dual redactions with critical notes and introductory essays in François Laplanche, ed., Alfred Loisy: La crise de la foi dans le temps présent (Essais d’histoire et de philosophie religieuses: Texte inédit (Turnhout: Brepols, 2010).

2 This article represents a revision of a paper I presented before La Société Internationale d’Études sur Alfred Loisy. I owe Charles Talar thanks for inviting me to present that

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