

# THINGS OLD AND THINGS NEW IN BIBLICAL INTERPRETATION

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## *Introduction*

FOR ALMOST FIFTY YEARS since Pope Pius XII's encyclical *Divino afflante Spiritu* (1943) the historical-critical method has been the most widely used method by Catholic biblical scholars. Historical criticism is 'the disciplined interrogation of sources to secure a maximal amount of verified information'.<sup>1</sup> Its primary aim is to discover the 'literal' sense of the biblical text, defined by Raymond E. Brown, as 'the sense which the human author directly intended and which the written words conveyed'.<sup>2</sup> To discover this sense historical criticism uses a wide variety of methods, for example, textual criticism, source criticism, studies of the background and influence on a given writer, examination of literary genres and literary styles of a given document, and study of related literature of antiquity.

In mandating that the prime rule of interpretation is to 'carefully investigate what meaning the sacred writer intended' neither *Divino afflante Spiritu* nor the Dogmatic Constitution on Divine Revelation of Vatican II (*Dei verbum*) limited exegesis to the historical-critical method, nor ruled out meanings of the text which go beyond the literal meaning.<sup>3</sup> In turning to theological exegesis, the Council cites St Jerome that 'the holy Scripture must be read and interpreted according to the same Spirit by whom it was written'.<sup>4</sup> This 'pneumatic' or spiritual exegesis means that 'serious attention must be given to the content and unity of the whole of Scripture'; interpretation must take into account 'the living tradition of the whole church along with the analogy of faith (*analogia fidei*)'. This final recommendation recalls the earlier statement of *Dei verbum* 8 that 'the tradition which comes from the Apostles develops in the Church with the help of the Holy Spirit' in a number of ways, by growth in understanding (*perceptio*) of the realities and words handed down,

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through contemplation and study of believers (*contemplatione et studio*), through the intimate understanding of the spiritual realities they experience (*intima spiritualium . . . experientia*) and through the preaching (*praeconio*, also translated as proclamation) of those who through episcopal succession have received the sure charism of truth. Historical exegesis, the work of scholars, the experience of believers, the prayer of the Church as well as preaching by church leaders—all contribute to understanding divine revelation.

#### *A text with multiple meanings*

In affirming that the biblical text possesses different levels of meaning the Encyclical and the Council stand in a long tradition of interpretation. In the New Testament itself, Old Testament events are interpreted allegorically and typologically, most often in reference to the events of Christ's life (e.g. 1 Cor 10,2; John 1,29), a tradition continued by second-century authors, such as Justin and Barnabas. With Origen (c.185–254) and 'Alexandrian' exegesis a fully developed theory of multiple senses of scripture begins to emerge. Origen's exegetical methods evolve principally in debt to his fellow Alexandrian, the Jewish philosopher, Philo (c. 25 BC–AD 40) who used allegory to explain offensive parts of the Old Testament and to argue that behind the puzzling literal meanings of texts were deeper spiritual truths. Allegory, which etymologically simply means to 'say something other' affirms that a text conceals something different and more significant than its surface meaning. Behind the appeal of allegory is Platonic philosophy which argued that this world offers but shadows of true realities. Platonic and neo-Platonic philosophy provide the ultimate foundation for both Philo and much Christian exegesis. Philo himself is in debt to pagan Hellenistic authors who used allegory to interpret the scandalous behaviour of the gods in the Homeric epics. A pattern is set. Literal interpretation of a text which is significant for a community is no longer viable when the text causes offence or scandal.

Origen is both controversial and not totally clear. The great historian Adolf von Harnack accused him of 'biblical alchemy' and he is blamed for the unrestrained allegory which dominates patristic and medieval exegesis.<sup>5</sup> Yet Origen was very concerned to establish the proper text of the bible and was one of the earliest writers to argue that on stylistic grounds, Hebrews was non-Pauline.<sup>6</sup> His interpretation was motivated by a twofold desire, to maintain the Old Testament as a Christian book, which a literal reading would

preclude, and to respond to pagan critics like Celsus who reproached the bible for containing immoral and fantastic stories and mocked the disagreements within the gospels. In response Origen argued that the literal sense was a vehicle for a deeper and preferable spiritual meaning.<sup>7</sup> At times Origen speaks of a threefold sense, the historical or somatic, the moral or 'psychic' and the spiritual or allegorical sense, corresponding to the division within the person between body, soul and spirit. At other times he speaks simply of a twofold difference in regard to texts which have no literal or bodily meaning.<sup>8</sup>

Origen and Alexandrian exegesis are often contrasted in an oversimplified manner with the more literal exegesis of the Antiochene theologians who worked a century later (e.g. Lucian of Antioch [d. 312], Diodorus of Tarsus [d. 390] and to some extent John Chrysostom [d. 407]). Yet the Antiochene theologians, while more restrained in their use of allegory, proposed *theoria* as a method of interpretation. *Theoria* was an insight or vision which allowed the OT prophet to see the future through his present circumstances, and thus predict the future (e.g. the events of the life of Christ).<sup>9</sup> Both the Eastern and Western branches of the early Church were united in affirming that the 'letter' of the text was only the starting point of interpretation; everyone in the ancient world 'agreed that interpretation involved going beyond the letter, and everyone used some degree of allegory to distil out of texts the deeper meanings they sought'.<sup>10</sup>

Patristic and medieval theology recognized a plurality of meanings possible for a biblical text, summarized often in the couplet attributed to Augustine of Dacia (d. 1284), but dating in content to the time of Augustine of Hippo (354–430) and John Cassian (d. c. 435).

*Littera gesta docet, quid credas allegoria,  
Moralis quid agas, quo tendas anagogia.*  
(The literal teaches what happened,  
Allegory [tells you] what you should believe,  
The moral sense what you should do  
Anagogy whither you are going.)<sup>11</sup>

Though the four senses became standard, the more frequent division is simply between the literal and the spiritual senses. The term 'spiritual' is itself complex. At times it refers to the 'true' meaning of a text over against its earthly meaning. It also is used of the manner in which a text touches the inner spirit of a person and of the understanding of a text given by the Holy Spirit. It is likewise the

meaning which is related to Christ, the Lord who is Spirit (2 Cor 3,17).<sup>12</sup>

Though spiritual and allegorical exegesis has dominated church history, the importance of close attention to the literal text was never forgotten. St Jerome (342-420) is the prime example in the patristic period. Augustine, though unjustly pilloried for frequent use of allegory, is in many ways a precursor of modern rhetorical approaches to the text.<sup>13</sup> At the dawn of the high scholastic period, the Victorines, i.e. Hugh and Andrew of St Victor (named after the abbey of St Victor founded in 1110) drew heavily on medieval Jewish exegesis which stressed the literal sense (often in opposition to Christian christological readings of the OT).<sup>14</sup>

During the thirteenth century Victorine influence was especially strong at Paris. The Dominican Gueric of St Quintin who taught at the convent of St Jacques (1233-42) during the life time of St Thomas Aquinas (1225-74) argued that the 'literal sense of Scripture contained the full sense of the author'.<sup>15</sup> As in so many other areas, Thomas provides a synthesis of different theological currents. He clearly describes the literal sense as the meaning conveyed by the words themselves (*Quodl.* 7, q. 6, a. 14) or as 'that which the author intends'. The spiritual sense is contained in 'the things' (*res*) about which scripture speaks. Thomas also ranks metaphors and parables under the *sensus litteralis*, and is thus a precursor of those who would argue that proper understanding of the literary form or genre is indispensable for interpretation. The *sensus litteralis*, better translated as 'literary' rather than 'literal sense', properly understood has nothing to do with the 'literalism' of contemporary fundamentalists, who consistently ignore the literary genres of the scripture. While recognizing the value of the spiritual sense and the tradition of the fourfold sense, Thomas articulates the principle that 'nothing necessary to faith is contained in the spiritual sense that scripture does not put forward elsewhere in the literal sense' (*Summa theologica* 1.1.10 ad 1).

The application of the four senses to specific texts such as the interpretation of Jerusalem in Gal 4,25 as referring historically to a Jewish city, allegorically to the Church of Christ, tropologically (morally) to the human soul and anagogically to the heavenly Jerusalem has done much to discredit medieval exegesis, since it is impossible to say that such meanings were intended by the original author. If, however, the four 'senses' are understood not as exegetical methods, but as a way of describing areas of life and human

experience which the bible should address, then 'pre-critical' senses are surprisingly close to contemporary 'post-critical' approaches to the bible. Another important factor in assessing pre-critical study of the bible is that the *writings* of Church Fathers and medieval theologians are not the only source for biblical exegesis. From the catacombs through the Middle Ages to their flowering in the Renaissance, the graphic arts and sculpture offer 'literal' representations of scripture.<sup>16</sup> The bible illustrations in medieval manuscripts, for example, are divided into the 'direct' where 'the text is transformed as nearly as possible into pictorial form' and the typical or allegorical.<sup>17</sup> The literal sense continued to inspire and sustain believers.

*The death and resurrection of the multiple senses of scripture*

When, after almost a century of struggle, historical criticism was accepted within Catholicism, it quickly became the dominant method of exegesis, and participated in the transformation of Catholic theology which led up to Vatican II and characterized the post-conciliar period. As a 'critical' principle it rejected for the most part the traditional four senses of scripture and concentrated on the literal or historical sense, understood principally as the meaning of the text intended by the biblical author. Its contributions were many. Roman Catholic scholars quickly became leaders in the scientific study of the bible. The biblical renewal became the soul of bilateral ecumenical dialogues, as groups turned to the scriptural roots of disputed issues only to find that a historical-critical reading of the scriptures challenged positions once thought to be set in concrete.<sup>18</sup> Redaction criticism helped to recognize the theological creativity and literary achievement of the Evangelists and disclosed a multi-coloured pluralism in the NT itself. Fresh translations such as the *Bible of Jerusalem* and the *New American bible* were produced and Catholics participated in the production of commentaries no longer divided along confessional lines. Lay people read, studied and prayed the bible in unprecedented numbers.

One principle of historical criticism which was often applied rigorously was that a text has only one single meaning which was intended by the biblical authors in their historical circumstances. Yet, in recent years, broad based reservations have been voiced about the historical-critical method, and not simply by those conservatives who have never accepted the teaching of *Divino afflante Spiritu* nor of *Dei verbum*. Major new movements have arisen within biblical

studies itself, which question whether the intention of the author as manifest in a given text is an adequate principle of interpretation. One author has argued that biblical studies has reached the end of an era, and another speaks of a major revolution or paradigm shift within biblical studies from a historical paradigm to a literary paradigm.<sup>19</sup> This shift was prepared for by movements within secular literary criticism. Until recently within biblical studies, 'literary criticism' generally meant the study of the sources of documents, and the circumstances of their production, e.g. authorship, integrity. In this essay it will be used in the sense employed in 'secular' literary criticism, as well summarized by Robert Alter:

By serious literary analysis I mean the manifold varieties of minutely discriminating attention to the artful use of language, to the shifting play of ideas, conventions, tone, sound, imagery, narrative viewpoint, compositional units, and much else: the kind of disciplined attention, in other words, which through a whole spectrum of critical approaches has illuminated, for example, the poetry of Dante, the plays of Shakespeare, the novels of Tolstoy.<sup>20</sup>

A major figure in the 'literary turn' in biblical studies has been Amos Wilder. His *Early Christian rhetoric: the language of the gospels* was a voice crying in the wilderness shortly after the advent of redaction criticism and during the apogee of Bultmannian demythologizing.<sup>21</sup> Wilder concentrated mainly on the genres of biblical literature but approached them with the literary sensitivity of a poet. Later, writing from a vantage point of over six decades of reflection on the bible, he stated that scholars and general readers had failed to do justice to the operations of the imagination in scripture, and attributes this to an 'occupational cramp' among his colleagues:

If, in interpreting the Psalms or the Book of Revelation, they treated poetry as prose, it was because their philological tradition was interested in minutiae and analysis, while their theological tradition was interested in ideas.<sup>22</sup>

Wilder's work represented a foreshadowing of the major literary turn in biblical studies which blossomed into a full blown movement in the late 1970s.

The literary turn in biblical studies comprises a host of sub-disciplines. First are those rooted in the New Criticism which call attention to the autonomy of language and the world *of the text*, rather

than the world *behind the text* which is the province of historical criticism.<sup>23</sup> These approaches involve principally study of the imaginative and symbolic character of biblical language, the structure of a given work, and 'narrative criticism' (including, for example, studies of the narrator, character, setting, plot and point of view) along with 'narratology' (the theory of how narrative achieves its effects).<sup>24</sup> The second complex of methods touches the reading process itself and role of the reader in creating meaning from a text. 'Reader Response' criticism concentrates on the text as a road map which guides the expectations and responses of the reader. Closely allied to this is 'reception theory' which studies the manner in which individuals or 'interpretive communities' determine the meaning of texts.<sup>25</sup> Common to all these approaches is a concern for the world of the text rather than for the author's intention or for the historical setting which engendered the text.

Since literary analysis of the bible has become a minor industry, rather than entering the maze of different methods and approaches, I will focus on narrative criticism and narrative theology as an example of the manner in which 'post-critical' biblical interpretation represents a recovery of values found in pre-critical interpretation. My contention is that the concern of pre-critical exegesis to find a spiritual or theological meaning in the text (*quid credas*), as well as the way it shapes human life, its moral application (*quid agas*), are also concerns of contemporary post-critical biblical study.

In 1974 Hans Frei published *The eclipse of biblical narrative*, which was to be a landmark work in biblical interpretation.<sup>26</sup> Frei argued that interpretation of the bible had been seriously distorted since the Enlightenment, first by attempting to abstract from the bible eternal truths about God, or by using the bible as source book of historical events. Pre-critical study viewed the bible as a collection of realistic narratives which helped believers to 'make sense of their lives by locating their stories within the context of the larger story'.<sup>27</sup> Theology must begin by engaging the biblical narratives, not by abstracting from them or by seeking the facts behind them. Beginning from the observation that the biblical narratives are realistic or 'history-like', Frei argued that narratives define identity and that the New Testament discloses the identity of Jesus the Christ.<sup>28</sup> The theological correlate to this is that Christian theology should begin not with human experience (as in Schleiermacher and most nineteenth- and twentieth-century theology), but with a description and redescription of the biblical texts.

An example of a narrative reading would be the phenomenon in Mark of the constant failure of the disciples. In the first part of the Gospel, though at times puzzled and startled by the actions of Jesus, they follow without question and accept Jesus enthusiastically. In the pivotal middle section (8,27-10,52), when Jesus three times speaks of suffering and death, they reject this teaching and twice substitute their own concerns of who will hold positions of power in the community (9,34; 10,36-37). In the Passion narrative, one disciple betrays Jesus (14,43-49), all flee at his arrest (14,50), and Peter, the one who confessed him as the Messiah, denies that he ever knew Jesus (14,71). For over two decades commentators have argued about the historical situation reflected by this portrayal of the disciples. Theodore Weeden, among others, felt that they were the dramatic foil for an incorrect theology of glory by members of Mark's community, a theology which Mark set out to discredit.<sup>29</sup> More positively, Ernst Best felt that the disciples were representatives of ministers in the Marcan community and that even their failure shows God's love and strength, since the community knows that in the end they believed and some gave their lives for the gospel.<sup>30</sup> These approaches are similar in discovering in Mark a 'window' to a historical situation behind the text.

A narrative reading while similar in certain respects centres on the dramatic interaction of Jesus and the disciples.<sup>31</sup> Only they are 'rounded' characters, that is, with some distinctive traits. The vivid and realistic style of Mark captures the readers and the surprising turns and paradoxes hold their attention. The plotted narrative draws the readers into the story as participants in the unfolding story. The temporal experience of the readers is manipulated from the almost frantic action of the first part of the Gospel where Jesus moves rapidly from place to place, to the slower-paced days of Jesus's final visit to Jerusalem, culminating in an agonizingly slow final scene as the hours punctuate the death watch of Jesus. Readers are to ask not so much what happened in the past, but what is happening in their lives as they follow the turns of the plot. The rhythm of enthusiastic commitment and failure in the face of suffering, and the mystery of God's action leaves the readers, like the disciples, in a state of awe and wonder (16,1-8). The narrative itself is a 'theology', a word or story about God, manifest in the stories of Jesus and the disciples.

Ethics or moral theology is the second major area where the shift to a narrative reading has influenced contemporary exegesis. With the advent of a critical reading of the scriptures a certain crisis arose

about the use of the bible for ethics. Historical consciousness made us aware of the historical limitations of the ethics of the bible (e.g. the approval of slavery; the androcentric character of its world view). The 'idealistic' exhortations of Jesus (turning the other cheek, selling one's possessions) do not stand the test of history. Various proposals grapple with these problems, ranging from a two-level ethics (e.g. one for religious, the other for lay people) through the quest for a 'centre' to NT ethics, e.g. the love command, to proposals such as those of James Gustafson that the bible teaches less what we are to do than what kinds of people we are to become.<sup>32</sup>

Ethics and narrative studies have been wedded by authors such as Stanley Hauerwas who argue that guidelines for the Christian life (ethics) must be seen in the context of biblical narrative.<sup>33</sup> Even the non-narrative parts of the bible (e.g. Proverbs, Wisdom, Paul's letters) are canonically set in the context of an overarching narrative stretching from Genesis to Revelation. This narrative comprises the Christian (or Judaeo-Christian) story that continues to define and form the Christian community, which itself is simultaneously the transmitter and interpreter of the story. A related claim is that virtues are always embedded in narrative and story. Though speaking often of love, faith and compassion, the bible in fact offers no philosophical definitions of virtues but rather presents a panoply of stories and examples of those virtues which are essential if a community is to claim the name Christian. Thus the recovery of the literary or narrative sense, which describes what God has done to form a people, provides the basis for a description of what people should do in response to God's gift, in other words, the ethics of the bible.

The literary turn in biblical studies has significant implications for understanding the bible as 'the pure and perennial source of the spiritual life'.<sup>34</sup> One of the meanings of 'the spiritual sense' has always been the relation of the bible to the spirituality of believers. St Thomas Aquinas expressed this by noting that the text (*verba*) is itself a sign of deeper realities (*res*). In our century Rudolph Bultmann attempted to strip the New Testament of its mythological overlay to arrive at its essential content (*die Sache*). The challenge in every such enterprise is to see how the 'spiritual' meaning of the bible arises from engagement with the text itself, rather than being superimposed on it.

Literary and reader-response criticism offer guidelines for a contemporary post-critical biblical spirituality.<sup>35</sup> In an oft quoted metaphor the text is now seen less as a window to the world of the

author than a mirror whereby the reader reflects on his or her own life in light of the text. This reflection takes place in the process of reading (or hearing) a text. Following the lead of Hans Georg Gadamer, Sandra Schneiders notes that a text is not a *depository* of meaning but a *mediation* of meaning. The encounter with the text is like a conversation in which two people try to come to an understanding about something of mutual interest. Schneiders goes on to compare the text to a musical score with a variety of interpretations so that 'the score becomes music only when it is rendered and the text becomes meaningful only when it is interpreted'.<sup>36</sup> While the 'literal sense' guides the reader, meaning arises ultimately from the fusion of horizons between the questions posed by the reader and those contained in the text.

In light of narrative and reader-response criticism the use of scripture in a work such as the *Spiritual exercises* of St Ignatius cannot be dismissed simply as 'pre-critical'. The *Exercises* reflect the clear narrative structure of salvation history stretching from creation and the fall, to the vision of a restored creation (the Contemplation to Obtain Divine Love). The retreatant is led slowly and deliberately through the gospel story. Though reflecting late medieval piety (e.g. Jesus as the king enlisting followers for a crusade, the battle between good and evil spirits), the *Exercises* also continue the 'pictorial' tradition of medieval art. I am not thinking here so much of the major meditations, which are often parabolic presentations of gospel themes (e.g. the meditations on the Kingdom or the Two Standards), but of meditations on the 'mysteries' of the life of Christ for the second through fourth week and the appended 'points' for meditation on the life of Christ. Equally striking is the sobriety with which Ignatius presents these meditations. Normally they are simple paraphrases of particular sections from the gospels, leaving the retreatant free to be guided by the text. The biblical text is a mediator of meaning where the quiet and slow-paced conversation between the text and the retreatant becomes the occasion for an appropriation through grace of the Christ event which stands behind the witness of the four gospels.

### *Conclusions*

The contemporary ferment in biblical studies is creative. Though under attack, the historical-critical method is indispensable for biblical studies. As a 'critical' principle it allows the scripture itself to be a norm against which subsequent interpretations are judged, and

enables the Church to fulfil its mission as servant of the Word. As a 'historical' method it reminds us that the self-gift of God took place in the history of Jesus. History, with all its limitation and ambiguities, is the arena of revelation; our faith has a corporate and individual history. Nonetheless, recent approaches to the bible which emphasize its inter-textual meaning and narrative quality, rather than its historical referent, represent a retrieval of the older insights that the literature of the bible is continually a source of theology, ethics and Christian hope.

Like Matthew's 'scribe trained for the kingdom of heaven', contemporary interpreters of scripture must bring out of their storehouses 'things old and things new' (Mt 13,52).

## NOTES

<sup>1</sup> Edgar Krentz, *The historical critical method* (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1975), p 6.

<sup>2</sup> 'Hermeneutics', *The new Jerome biblical commentary*, ed R. E. Brown, J. A. Fitzmyer, R. E. Murphy (Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Prentice Hall, 1990), p 1148 [hereafter *NJBC*].

<sup>3</sup> See *Dei verbum* 12, for guidelines of proper interpretation.

<sup>4</sup> This sentence which was introduced into the Council text during its final redaction is treated extensively by I. de la Potterie, 'Interpretation of Holy Scripture in the spirit in which it was written (*Dei verbum* 12c)', in H. Latourelle, ed, *Vatican II: assessment and perspectives twenty five years after (1962-87)* (Mahwah, NJ: Paulist Press, 1988) I, pp 220-266. While giving an interesting history of the phrase, de la Potterie attempts to make it the hermeneutical key to the whole decree, basing his argument on a forced chiasmic structure of the final text. See also D. Farkasfalvy, 'The case for spiritual exegesis', *Communio* 10 (1983), pp 332-350.

<sup>5</sup> R. E. Brown, 'Hermeneutics', *NJBC*, p 1154.

<sup>6</sup> M. F. Wiles, 'Origen as biblical scholar', in *Cambridge history of the bible*, ed P. C. Ackroyd and C. F. Evans (Cambridge: University Press, 1970) 1, pp 458-59 [hereafter *CHB*].

<sup>7</sup> *Ibid.*, p 463.

<sup>8</sup> *Ibid.*, p 467.

<sup>9</sup> R. E. Brown, 'Hermeneutics', *NJBC*, p 1154.

<sup>10</sup> F. Young, 'Spiritual meaning', in *A dictionary of biblical interpretation*, eds R. J. Coggins and J. L. Houlden (London: SCM; Philadelphia: Trinity Press International, 1990), p 649.

<sup>11</sup> Robert M. Grant, with David Tracy, *A short history of the interpretation of the bible* (2nd rev. ed; Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1984), p 85. Literal translation is mine.

<sup>12</sup> Henri de Lubac, *The sources of revelation* (New York: Herder and Herder, 1968), pp 17-19.

<sup>13</sup> R. F. Collins, 'Augustine of Hippo: precursor of modern biblical scholarship', *Louvain studies* 12 (1987), pp 131-51.

<sup>14</sup> Brown, 'Hermeneutics', p 1155.

<sup>15</sup> J. H. Martin, 'The four senses of scripture: lessons from the thirteenth century', *Pacifica* 2 (1989), p 102.

<sup>16</sup> R. L. P. Milburn, 'The "People's bible": artists and commentators', in *CHB* 2, pp 280-308.

<sup>17</sup> F. Wormald, 'Bible illustrations in medieval manuscripts', *CHB* 2, p 322.

<sup>18</sup> See esp. R. E. Brown, 'Historical biblical criticism and ecumenical discussion', in Richard J. Neuhaus, ed, *Biblical interpretation in crisis: the Ratzinger conference on bible and the Church* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1989), pp 24-49.

<sup>19</sup> Peter W. Macky, 'The coming revolution: the new literary approach to New Testament interpretation', in *A guide to contemporary hermeneutics*, ed Donald K. McKim (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1986), p 262; Norman R. Petersen, *Literary criticism for New Testament critics* (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1973), pp 9-10.

<sup>20</sup> Robert Alter, 'A literary approach to the bible', *Commentary* 60 (Dec. 1975), p 70.

<sup>21</sup> (London: SCM; New York: Harper and Row, 1964).

<sup>22</sup> *Jesus' parables and the war of myths: essays on imagination in the scriptures* (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1982), p 15.

<sup>23</sup> The literature on this 'shift' is immense. An excellent overview is S. Moore, *Literary criticism and the gospel: the theoretical challenge* (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 1989).

<sup>24</sup> See M. A. Powell, *What is narrative criticism?* (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1990).

<sup>25</sup> For an overview see E. G. McKnight, *The bible and the reader* (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1985).

<sup>26</sup> Full title: *The eclipse of biblical narrative: a study in eighteenth and nineteenth century hermeneutics* (New Haven/London: Yale University Press, 1974). See W. C. Placher, 'Hans Frei and the meaning of biblical narrative', *Christian century* 106 (1989), pp 556-59 for an excellent summary of Frei's life and work.

<sup>27</sup> Placher, 'Hans Frei', p 556.

<sup>28</sup> The other major work of Frei is *The identity of Jesus Christ: the hermeneutical basis of dogmatic theology* (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1975).

<sup>29</sup> *Mark: traditions in conflict* (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1971).

<sup>30</sup> *Disciples and discipleship: studies in the Gospel according to Mark* (Edinburgh: T. & T. Clark, 1986), pp 128-29.

<sup>31</sup> Tannehill, R., 'The disciples in Mark: the function of a narrative role', *Journal of religion* 57 (1977), pp 386-405.

<sup>32</sup> 'The changing use of the bible in Christian ethics', and 'The place of scripture in Christian ethics: a methodological study', in *Readings in moral theology No 4: the use of scripture in moral theology*, eds C. Curran and R. McCormick (New York/Ramsey: Paulist Press, 1984), pp 133-77.

<sup>33</sup> *The peaceable kingdom* (Notre Dame/London: University of Notre Dame Press, 1983) xxv, and *A community of character: toward a constructive Christian social ethic* (*ibid.*, 1981) esp. Part One, 'The narrative character of Christian social ethics'.

<sup>34</sup> *Dei verbum*, 21.

<sup>35</sup> See esp. Sandra M. Schneiders, 'Faith, hermeneutics, and the literal sense of scripture', *Theological studies* 39 (1978), pp 719-36; 'From exegesis to hermeneutics: the problem of the contemporary meaning of scripture', *Horizons* 8 (1981), pp 23-39.

<sup>36</sup> 'Faith, hermeneutics', pp 730-31.