

# From an Apology for Catholicism to Theological Modernism: The Principle of Development in Alfred Loisy's Thought

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**Abstract:** This paper aims to show the reasons why Alfred Loisy's idea to develop an apology for Christianity was unsuccessful and led to his transition to the modernist position. It explores theological and fundamental issues underlying his ambitious program. Firstly, it discusses the concept of modernism, having in mind that Loisy himself opposed the accusations of his following modernism. Secondly, it synthetically presents the context and characteristics of Loisy's works to properly understand his idea of Christian apologetics. The subsequent section analyses Loisy's most important assumptions and the way he formulated his apologia, focusing on the issue of historical criticism and his application of John Henry Newman's idea of development to the history of religion. These analyses allow us to conclude that by applying the historical-critical method, Loisy did not avoid adapting incorrect philosophical assumptions and improper application of Newman's development of Christian doctrine to his reflections on the history of religion.

**Keywords:** Alfred Loisy, apology, modernism, historical-critical method, history of religion

Alfred Loisy was called the “father” of Catholic modernism in France.<sup>1</sup> He began his scientific activity at the Catholic Institute of Paris, where he had studied (1881) and was later appointed instructor; he also defended his doctoral dissertation there (1890). However, as early as 1893, following the interference of the Cardinal of Paris, Loisy was dismissed from his teaching position because of his views on the infallibility of the Sacred Scripture.<sup>2</sup>

During those years, he formulated his program of Christian apologetics, which aimed at reconciling Christian doctrine with modern science. His later publications that presented his views, i.e., a series of articles published in *Revue du clergé français*, and predominantly his works entitled *L'Évangile et l'Église* (1903) and *Autour d'un petit livre* (1903), as well as disputes over them, first led to the listing of his five works on the Index of prohibited books, and then in 1908, to Loisy's abandonment of the Catholic Church in response to the decree *Lamentabili* promulgated by the Holy

<sup>1</sup> Sanecki, “Loisy Alfred,” 1328. The term “father of modernism” was coined by Marie-Joseph Lagrange (*M. Loisy et le modernisme*, 136).

<sup>2</sup> Cf. Goichot, *Alfred Loisy*, 17–29.

Office and Pius X's encyclical *Pascendi dominici gregis*.<sup>3</sup> In 1908, Loisy was excommunicated.<sup>4</sup>

Alfred Loisy's life and scientific activity have already been addressed by numerous studies.<sup>5</sup> In more recent works, his arguments have not been refuted *en bloc*; some contemporary authors have pointed to valuable elements of his scholarly output. It suffices to give two meaningful examples: (1) In his commentary on the evangelical parables, Augustyn Jankowski, a catholic author, includes a reference to Loisy's work *Études évangéliques* (Paris: Picard 1902).<sup>6</sup> (2) In his introduction to an edition of Loisy's chosen texts entitled *Ecrits évangéliques* (ed. C. Chauvin) (Paris: Cerf 2002), Charles Chauvin states the following: "But I dare to conclude these few pages of presentation by saying that I deplore the fact that I have been so rarely informed of the existence of Loisy's studies on the Gospels. [...] His comments would have brought me answers to the many questions posed by the interpretation of the New Testament, which in my opinion are still largely valid today."<sup>7</sup>

Currently, many authors are critical of the harsh assessment of Loisy's thought and emphasize that modernism itself, which Loisy was accused of, was erroneously defined by Pius X.<sup>8</sup> Accordingly, this is yet another reason to ask why Loisy's idea of Christian apologetics ended with his transition to the modernist positions. Seeking an answer to this question, we will first specify the concept of modernism and the way it should be construed from a contemporary perspective. Next, an outline of the most important stages in the development of Loisy's thought will be made to indicate the major reasons that determined his departure from Catholic orthodoxy.

## 1. The Concept and Meaning of Modernism

The concept of modernism in Catholic publications was shown by Charles Périn.<sup>9</sup> In his dissertation, he used this term to describe errors related to secularism, rationalism, and the tendency to remove God from social life. Later, especially after

<sup>3</sup> Cf. Loisy, *Simple réflexions*.

<sup>4</sup> Raffelt, "Loisy," 1041.

<sup>5</sup> The most important studies include: Laplanche – Biagioli – Langlois, *Autour d'un petit livre*; Goichot, *Alfred Loisy*; Hill, "Loisy's *L'Évangile et l'Église*"; Hill, "More than a Biblical Critic"; Burke, "Loisy's Faith"; Provencher, "The Origin and Development."

<sup>6</sup> Jankowski, *Królestwo Boże*, 258.

<sup>7</sup> "Mais j'ose conclure ces quelques pages de présentation en disant que je déplore que l'on m'ait si peu souvent signalé l'existence des études de Loisy sur les Évangiles. [...] Ses commentaires m'auraient apporté des réponses, à mon avis largement valables encore de nos jours, aux multiples questions que pose l'interprétation du Nouveau Testament" (Chauvin, "Présentation," 35).

<sup>8</sup> Cf. Borto, *Magisterium Kościoła*, 86–87.

<sup>9</sup> Périn, *Le modernisme dans l'église*.

the publication of Karl Braig's book,<sup>10</sup> "modernism" was construed as erroneous views, primarily concerning doctrine and related to neo-Protestant subjectivist-psychological trends.

However, the most widespread definition of modernism at that time was presented by Pope Pius X in his encyclical *Pascendi dominici gregis* (1907). Reacting to Loisy's views, among other things, he stated that modernism was a heretical system covering numerous aspects of human life, and as such, it meant heresy in religion, a revolution in politics, and falsehood in philosophy. Hence, Pius X saw the views of individual modernists as a consequence of adopting a comprehensive vision that opposed Christianity. In his encyclical, he emphasized that when it comes to modernism, "their system does not consist in scattered and unconnected theories but in a perfectly organized body, all the parts of which are solidly joined so that it is not possible to admit one without admitting all" (PDG 39).

Loisy refuted this definition of modernism. He argued that the encyclical artificially combined the various trends characteristic of the epoch with those arising from attempts to renew the Christian doctrine. Moreover, he was convinced that no one believed in modernism defined as a certain system and a synthesis of all heresies that were secretly smuggled into the Church's teaching; he claimed that modernism existed only in the minds of those who invented and presented it. On the other hand, he believed that those who were wrongly labeled modernists aimed at adapting the Catholic religion to the current needs and challenges arising from various dimensions and did not want to depart from the Catholic truth.<sup>11</sup>

In our day, this dispute can and should be looked at less hectically and explored through a perspective that allows one to weigh all the arguments. Contemporary publications, especially in the field of historiography, have upheld Loisy's views. It is argued that the modernism defined by Pius X, i.e., the so-called "ideal modernism," has never existed.<sup>12</sup> There were only trends and individual views that partially reflected the encyclical's diagnosis. However, it should be remembered that the Pope did not want to mention specific people in the encyclical but rather refer to the views and trends that emerged in theological reflection. Thus, the identity of the modernist described in the encyclical is not historical, but ideal-typical and reflects the most important features that could be distinguished in various modernist views and trends. As such, the fact that there was no historical example of what was defined as modernism in the encyclical *Pascendi dominici gregis* does not mean that Pius X was completely wrong.<sup>13</sup>

<sup>10</sup> Braig, *Der Modernismus und die Freiheit*.

<sup>11</sup> Loisy, *Simple réflexions*, 15, 254–255.

<sup>12</sup> Talar, "The Synthesis of All Heresies," 498.

<sup>13</sup> Izquierdo, "Cómo se ha entendido el 'modernismo teológico,'" 36.

It seems that it was Léonce de Grandmaison who best defined the challenge and essence of modernism a few dozen years after the publication of the encyclical. Looking at the problem in retrospect, he stated that the modernists' theology depended on fulfilling two conditions. Firstly, it sought to face conflicts in the field of Christian doctrine or morality that arose between the traditional and modern interpretations of certain aspects of Christianity. Secondly, the modernists assumed that it was the traditional position that had to be modified or completely rejected to resolve these conflicts.<sup>14</sup> This is exactly what happened with Loisy, who initially set himself the task of defending the traditional Christian doctrine by incorporating data from modern scientific reflection but eventually abandoned the Catholic faith.<sup>15</sup>

## 2. Program of an Apology for Catholicism

Alfred Loisy began his theological studies at the Grand Séminaire de Châlons-en-Champagne. As he recalled, he had felt some discomfort there. While the content and practices of faith were valuable to him in the dimension of experience, he found their scholastic explanations unacceptable.<sup>16</sup> According to Loisy's biographers, he did not receive a solid theological education at the seminary, nor did he gain it during his further specialist studies at the Catholic Institute of Paris since he focused on Oriental languages. In turn, at the Sorbonne, Loisy attended lectures given by Ernest Renan, a Protestant exegete, from whom he drew knowledge on the use of the historical method in interpreting biblical texts.<sup>17</sup>

In 1881, Alfred Loisy began his academic career at the Catholic Institute of Paris. Soon after his enrolment, he held the position of a tutor (*répétiteur*), then a lecturer (*maître de conférences*), and following the defense of his doctorate in 1890, of a full professor.<sup>18</sup> His apologetic interests at the time were closely related to the context in which he started his academic career. Two publications on the life of Jesus had appeared shortly before that — one published by David Friedrich Strauss (1835) and the other by Ernest Renan (1863). Both denied Jesus' divinity and were thus widely echoed. This was also the time of the development of historical and philological research on the Bible in the Protestant world. There was significant interest

<sup>14</sup> de Grandmaison, "Une nouvelle crise", 644.

<sup>15</sup> For more information on this topic, see Ronald Burke "Loisy's Faith," although Burke thinks that the Church's evaluation of Loisy's views was unfair and agrees with Loisy that "the heresies of today are part of the orthodoxy of tomorrow" (*ibidem*, 164).

<sup>16</sup> Loisy, *Choses passés*, 34.

<sup>17</sup> Hill, "La Science Catholique," 42.

<sup>18</sup> Poulat, *Histoire, dogme et critique*, 31.

in the origin of the Pentateuch and its authorship; the traditionally adopted biblical chronology was questioned.<sup>19</sup>

Loisy felt the need to contribute, through his works and lectures, to the opening of the Catholic exegesis to scientific advances so that it could reach the level of the Protestant one. Along these lines, he wanted to defend the Church and its theology, which he also desired to renew. However, since some of his publications and his exegesis lectures raised doubts, Loisy was deprived of the possibility of teaching exegetical topics (though he could still lecture in Oriental languages). Later, the publication of his paper on biblical inspiration led to his dismissal from the Catholic Institute of Paris (1893) and appointment as chaplain to a girls' college in Neuilly, which was run by nuns. Furthermore, the journal *Enseignement biblique* that he had founded was suspended.<sup>20</sup>

Despite being dismissed from his teaching position, Loisy pursued his goal of introducing the fruits of modern exegesis into the field of Catholic Bible research, as evidenced by the fact that he founded the journal *Revue d'histoire et de littérature religieuse* (1896) and published exegetical articles.<sup>21</sup> Working as a chaplain, he was obliged to teach the Catholic catechism to young girls. Therefore, he focused on issues related to dogma and the development of religion. In his memoirs, he claimed that at that point he no longer had the naive faith of his childhood days and did not accept virtually any of the articles of faith except that Jesus was crucified under Pontius Pilate. His understanding of religion increasingly evolved towards treating it as an unfathomable, dominant force in the history of men, which, while marked by some limitations, errors, and abuses, still made a huge contribution to the moral life of humanity. Moreover, Loisy's memoirs show that he wanted to prove that it was Christianity and the Catholic Church that best expressed the idea of religion.<sup>22</sup>

This belief led him to write a manuscript that was not initially published. Entitled *La crise de foi dans le temps présent. Essais d'histoire et de philosophie religieuses*, the manuscript was extremely extensive (12 chapters) and was completed between July 1898 and May 1899.<sup>23</sup> It was a comprehensive project of Christian apologetics, partly inspired by John Henry Newman's thoughts on the development of dogma.<sup>24</sup>

Loisy soon began publishing parts of his elaborate work in *Revue du clergé français* under the nom de plume of Alfred Firmin.<sup>25</sup> He also included some sections

<sup>19</sup> Guasco, *Le modernisme*, 60–61.

<sup>20</sup> Poulat, *Histoire, dogme et critique*, 31; Guasco, *Le modernisme*, 65–69. More on this subject, see Ciappa, *Storia e teologia*.

<sup>21</sup> Loisy, *Choses passés*, 171.

<sup>22</sup> Loisy, *Choses passés*, 165.

<sup>23</sup> Loisy, *Choses passés*, 171. The entire text was published a few dozen years ago, along with his several papers as commentaries to Loisy's thought – cf. Loisy, *La crise de la foi*.

<sup>24</sup> Loisy, *Choses passés*, 174.

<sup>25</sup> This concerns the following articles: Firmin, “Le développement chrétien”; Firmin, “La théorie individualiste de la religion”; Firmin, “La définition de la religion”; Firmin, “Les origines du Nouveau

of his study in *L'Évangile et l'Église* (1902), where he commented on A. von Harnack's theses contained in *Das Wesen des Christentums* (Leipzig: Hinrichs 1899; published in French in 1902). Harnack's main thought boiled down to the argument that the message Jesus proclaimed was that of the Kingdom of God and God as Father, and the rest was a kind of envelope for this original message, which Catholicism distorted. Loisy's *L'Évangile et l'Église* marked the first time when he undertook a public discussion on issues that were much wider than those related to biblical exegesis since they included the development of dogma, the establishment of the Church, and Gospel data about Jesus.<sup>26</sup>

Published a year later, Loisy's book titled *Autour d'un petit livre* can be described as his self-apology, which defended his theses contained in *L'Évangile et l'Église*.<sup>27</sup> His later works are characterized by both adherence to the previously adopted assumptions in his way of practicing exegesis, and polemics against those who questioned his theses — including the Magisterium of the Church. Loisy moved from the position of an apologist to a modernist position, in line with the latter of the above-mentioned understandings of modernism.

It seems essential to determine the reason why Loisy's apologetics failed, especially since in retrospect some of his postulates cannot be considered erroneous (suffice it to mention the questioning of Moses' authorship of the Pentateuch, emphasizing the historical dimension of Revelation, etc.).

### 3. Historical Criticism as the Basis for Loisy's Apologia

The idea of Loisy's apology for Christianity was preceded by his scientific work in the field of biblical studies which was closely related to his adoption of the historical-critical method. Loisy created his Christian apologetics program believing that such an apology might be conducted at the level of historical studies. In his introduction to *L'Évangile et l'Église*, he supported his conviction by stating that he was not seeking a comprehensive apology for Catholicism or dogma, but he wanted to examine it from a historical perspective, and that he was compelled to do this by

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Testament I-II"; Firmin, "L'idée de Révélation"; Firmin, "Les preuves et l'économie de Révélation." A bibliography of Loisy's works can be found at <http://alfred.loisy.free.fr> (access 3.03.2022). See also Hill, "Loisy's *L'Évangile et l'Église*," 75–76. See also: Talar, *Prelude to the Modernist Crisis*.

<sup>26</sup> Borto, *Magisterium Kościoła*, 69–70. A detailed analysis of the changes introduced by Loisy has been made by Rosanna Ciappa ("La réforme," 565–579).

<sup>27</sup> This conviction was made by Christoph Theobald, who compared Loisy's unpublished work and the content of *Autour d'un petit livre rouge* as well as Loisy's memoirs concerning this theme – Teobald, "L'apologétique historique d'Alfred Loisy," 686.

analyzing the theses put forth by authors whose works dealt with Christianity from this perspective.<sup>28</sup>

This first foundation of Loisy's apologetics played a decisive role in the development of his ideas and would accompany him throughout his inquiries. For him, the decisive criterion of truth and the basic point of reference was the conviction that the historical and the historical-critical method itself was a tool for studying historical reality. Nevertheless, he did not define this basic criterion in detail, nor was he fully aware of the limitations of the historical-critical method. This can be seen, for example, in his discussion on Christological issues. In his outline of Christian apologetics, Loisy referred to Matthew 11:25–30 (Luke 10:20–24), a passage about the exclusive knowledge of the Father that Jesus had. He stated that the whole message of the Galilean Gospel was revealed precisely in these verses.<sup>29</sup> Yet in *L'Évangile et l'Église*, where he examined the same fragment, he changed this statement. Since Adolf von Harnack — with whom Loisy disagreed — based his Christological arguments on this passage, Loisy pointed out that it did not so much reflect Jesus' conscious understanding as express Christian ideas that were developed later.<sup>30</sup>

As Rosanna Ciappa shows, this change was partly influenced by Loisy's study of German critical exegesis, which referred to the idea of the so-called eschatological school. Its followers believed that the eschatological perspective and the idea of the Kingdom of God which was to come were central to historical Jesus' preaching. Loisy agreed with the most radical conclusions of this school, which deemed all ideas that were inconsistent with the message of the coming Kingdom to be non-historical. This also influenced Christology because if Jesus had foretold the coming of the Kingdom, he would only become the Messiah in the future, and as such, did not announce his divine identity as a present state.<sup>31</sup> Hence, Loisy later concluded that the verses about Jesus' special knowledge of the Father did not reflect history but rather the future theological thought of the Gospel writers; this also applied to the words about bread and wine in the synoptic account of the Last Supper.<sup>32</sup> This significant evolution of Loisy's thought can also be seen in his rejection of the idea of an agreement between the historical and theological points of view, as expressed in Chapter IX of his unpublished apologetic work, which is in favor of emphasizing the difference and autonomy of theological and historical reflection.<sup>33</sup> As a consequence, Loisy would publish interesting, elaborate exegetic commentaries (e.g. *Le Quatrième Évangile*), and at the same time, would not take into account the Gospel data, which were regarded as unreliable from the historical standpoint, in the area of historical criticism.

<sup>28</sup> Loisy, *L'Évangile et l'Église*, VII–VIII.

<sup>29</sup> Loisy, *La crise de la foi*, 180.

<sup>30</sup> Loisy, *L'Évangile et l'Église*, 75–76.

<sup>31</sup> Ciappa, "La réforme," 580.

<sup>32</sup> Loisy, *Mémoires*, I, 456.

<sup>33</sup> Theobald, "L'apologétique historique," 679–680.

This allows us to draw the first conclusion. The historical-critical method adopted by Loisy cannot be considered neutral, a fact which was captured by Cesar Izquierdo in his discussion of the correspondence between Maurice Blondel and Loisy after the publication of *L'Évangile et l'Église*. The correspondence concerned the understanding of the Revelation in history, and especially the understanding of the person of Jesus Christ.<sup>34</sup> As noted by Izquierdo, after an exchange of views and further arguments, Blondel asked Loisy whether he believed that Jesus had a clear awareness of his divinity, emphasizing that this question revealed Loisy's assertion underlying his thinking, which led to the change in his beliefs. This is because the tension between faith and history can ultimately be understood by answering the question of whether it is possible to speak of Jesus' divine consciousness.<sup>35</sup>

It was the assumption that history as such cannot be influenced by God's actions and presence and should be studied only using critical methods seeking only human and natural causes that became one of the most crucial reasons why Loisy turned to modernist positions. Commenting on Joseph Ratzinger's thought on contemporary exegesis, Scott Hahn stated that this philosophical assertion, left at the point of departure, has enormous consequences for the fruits of exegesis.<sup>36</sup> Indeed, this assumption also influenced Loisy's theology-related thinking.

Accordingly, although Loisy wanted to show the historical character of Christian Revelation in his theology, he did it in the context of contemporary theology that regularly construed the Revelation in an ahistorical and intellectual way; in the end, he changed from an apologist into an apostate because he failed to see the threat hidden in the historical method and its assumptions. Here, Loisy touched upon one of the most difficult fundamental-theological issues, i.e., the foundations of credibility, or in other words, the principles based on which one should recognize something as truth. However, this problem goes far beyond the analysis carried out in this article.<sup>37</sup>

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<sup>34</sup> Cf. Izquierdo, "Correspondencia entre M. Blondel y A. Loisy," 199–227.

<sup>35</sup> Marlé, *Au coeur de la crise moderniste*, 110.

<sup>36</sup> Hahn, *Covenant and Communion*, 32.

<sup>37</sup> One of the latest theological works on this issue published in Polish is Kaucha, *Cóż to jest prawda?*, which is worth consulting here, esp. pp. 15–66.

#### 4. The Idea of Development as the Second Foundation of Loisy's Apologetic Thought

Loisy's second essential premise that served as a foundation for his apology for Catholicism was the idea of development. He was inspired by John Henry Newman's thoughts contained in his work *On the Development of Christian Doctrine* (1845). Newman pointed to the development of Christian doctrine and the criteria that would allow us to distinguish between an authentic development and a distortion of doctrine. Loisy first reflected on this subject in the unpublished apology<sup>38</sup> and later published his comments in *Revue du clergé français*.<sup>39</sup> Rosanna Ciappa notes that Loisy did not make any major changes in his published text.<sup>40</sup>

Loisy referred to Newman's work in two ways. On the one hand, he enthusiastically stated that Newman was able to show that development was at the heart of Christian doctrine. On the other hand, he accused Newman of not extending his reflection to the history of Christianity and religion but limiting himself to ideas. According to Loisy, it was precisely the principle of development that could help him respond to the challenges that the history of ancient religions posed to Catholic apologetics.<sup>41</sup>

Therefore, Loisy wanted to use the idea of development adapted to Christianity to present Catholicism as an authentic extension and development of earlier religions. In his opinion, Christianity was the proper fruit of the development of post-exilic Judaism that developed from faith in Yahweh in the epoch of the prophets and was preceded by primitive Yahwism that in itself arose from the religion of the patriarchs — a belief originating in the religion of prehistoric man.<sup>42</sup>

For Loisy, the law of development extended throughout history and the process of Revelation, which was always realized in the same way, both before and after Jesus' coming. Loisy's understanding of development was akin to that of biological development — proceeding from a seed to a mature plant.<sup>43</sup>

Considering this vision of religion's history and this understanding of the Revelation, two remarks must be made. Firstly, Loisy made an unauthorized transference of the principle of development from the sphere of ideas to historical reality, which resulted in a significant simplification and the adoption of the implicit assumption that the historical Revelation did not play a decisive role in the formation of Judaism, and then of Christianity. This way of interpreting the history of religion failed to consider the "breakthroughs" which could be observed in history, and which cannot

<sup>38</sup> Cf. Loisy, *La crise de la foi*, 75–84.

<sup>39</sup> The text was published as Firmin, "Le développement chrétien."

<sup>40</sup> Ciappa, "La réforme," 567.

<sup>41</sup> Loisy, *La crise de la foi*, 76.

<sup>42</sup> Loisy, *La crise de la foi*, 80–81.

<sup>43</sup> Laplanche, "Une Église immuable," 544.

be explained by referring only to the idea of development. Its most telling example is the rise of Christianity, which grew out of Judaism not only due to evolution — the adoption and transformation of what was the content of post-exilic Judaism — but also due to the separation from Judaism and emergence of completely new realities.

The second remark was formulated by Harvey Hill who claimed that while Loisy followed Newman's thoughts in terms of theory, he did not do so in terms of practice. Indeed, Loisy described in detail Newman's seven criteria for distinguishing between an authentic development and distortions of doctrine, yet he never applied them in his reflection on the historical development of religion, nor did he consider Newman's crucial remark that one should refer to the authority of the Church and its teaching because of the difficulties in applying these criteria.<sup>44</sup>

It is thus understandable why, after his excommunication, Loisy reduced the role of religion only to functions related to teaching morality and did not accept dogmas but rather interpreted them in a radically symbolic way, considering them to be incompatible with the scientific era since they contained mythological content.<sup>45</sup> This evolution of Loisy's thought — also caused by the fact that the Church condemned his books and that Loisy himself felt excluded — resulted from his conviction that development was deeply embedded in the history of mankind.

## Conclusion

Alfred Loisy was a well-known representative of modernism. Although the primary aim of his works was to renew Catholic exegesis, the idea of renewing all theology and defending Catholic thought against the challenges posed by modern science was a principal motif of his research. It was these works, created to provide an apologia for Catholicism, which largely contributed to the condemnation of his views and his departure from the Church.

This happened even though some of Loisy's postulates were not erroneous; for instance, the claim that the historical nature of the Revelation should be considered was accepted at the Second Vatican Council (cf. *Dei Verbum*, no. 2–4). Nonetheless, Loisy failed to implement a project of an apology that would lie within the boundaries of orthodoxy. This was due to several vital reasons. Firstly, one must note his lack of thorough theological preparation: he did not receive a solid education at the seminary and during his specialized studies. The second major reason was Loisy's acceptance of the historical-critical method in its radical form, thus introducing ambiguity

<sup>44</sup> Hill, "La Science Catholique," 56.

<sup>45</sup> Moran, "Loisy's Theological Development," 444.

into his reflection as to the possibility of God's revelation in history. Finally, the third reason was his illegitimate and wrong application of Newman's concept of development to the history of religion.

Thus, the statement "[t]he heresies of today are part of the orthodoxy of tomorrow" is sometimes recalled while evaluating Loisy's works. As regards his apologia, it should be said that it was unorthodox in two fundamental points: the inability to demonstrate God's manifestation in history and the misunderstanding of development in the history of religion.

*Translated by Maria Kantor*

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