



## Major Shifts in the Interpretation of Romans

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Exegetes and systematicians don't have to explain their presence at the table when the Scriptures are being opened, but a church historian may cause a cocked eyebrow: Look who's coming to dinner! And with Romans, no less!

### I. CHURCH HISTORY AND THE INTERPRETATION OF SCRIPTURE

In fact there's double reason for wariness. Lutherans in particular, and Protestants in general, have been interpreted to rule out any consideration of history, read as tradition, in dividing the biblical text. None other than Sidney Earl Mead, dean of American church historians, speaks of an "anti-historical bias of American protestantism,"<sup>1</sup> finding it in the assumption that exegetes may leap over the intervening centuries to the biblical text without acknowledging the history of interpretation. If *sola scriptura* means no tradition whatsoever, church historians shouldn't be at the dinner table set by the other theological disciplines.

It is also to be noted that historians who have gotten to the table have not always been such gracious guests. Since the Enlightenment, history has generally been used as a weapon. The historical development of dogma, such as the doctrine of the Trinity, was used by 18th and 19th century historians—full of the confidence of their age—to debunk claims to revelation. Historians since have often followed suit, deploying research to show the presence of extra-biblical factors in the church's use of Scripture. As Jarsolav Pelikan commented some years ago, "Historians have sought to assess the influence of everything from the theologian's vanity to the theologian's viscera upon the formulation of

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<sup>1</sup>Sidney Earl Mead, *The Lively Experiment: The Shaping of Christianity in America* (New York: Harper & Row, 1963) 108.

theological doctrines, meanwhile regarding as naive and uninformed the suggestion that the Bible may be the source of these doctrines."<sup>2</sup>

A generation ago, however, some European scholars began to raise the question of biblical interpretation in a different perspective. Setting aside for the moment the question of the ultimately proper interpretation and keeping a watchful eye on the presence of other factors influencing the interpreters, they asked a directly historical question: How has the church interpreted the Scriptures? What has actually happened as exegetes have gone to the text to open it to the church?

Three scholars are identified with the original academic impetus for this question: Beryl Smalley, whose work *The Study of the Bible in the Middle Ages* opened the field to English

speakers and is now in its third edition;<sup>3</sup> Ceslaus Spicq, a French Roman Catholic;<sup>4</sup> and Gerhard Ebeling, whose study of Luther's interpretation of Scripture broke new ground not only in Luther studies but for the whole area. It was Ebeling, in a programmatic essay, who suggested a definition of church history in terms of this type of research.<sup>5</sup>

The question can be commended for study on historical grounds alone—its consideration may open insights into how a major force in western life such as the church has dealt with its own sources. But as Ebeling argued, and has now been confirmed, research in the history of interpretation of Scripture can also be productive theologically. By giving access to historical interpretations of the text, such study can deepen—without controlling—a contemporary hearing. It can also open systematic perspectives, showing how particular texts have informed or been informed by the church's reflection on its witness.

After a generation of research, it is now possible to document some of the gains. Historical study has established a huge tradition of biblical scholarship, especially in the medieval church. A major accomplishment is cataloging the manuscripts available, the achievement of Friedrich Stegmüller.<sup>6</sup> Romans commentaries, well over 30 of them in the middle ages alone, have been catalogued by Werner Affeldt.<sup>7</sup>

Overall, this research has demonstrated a far deeper and more complex relationship between Scripture and the church than is portrayed in the stereotypes. There is more than enough evidence to justify the suspicion that exegesis can quickly become eisegesis, the text being merely an occasion for the interpreter's power. But it also appears that the biblical text can gain a life of its own, rising up against its readers to claim a sovereignty over them.

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<sup>2</sup>Jaroslav Pelikan, *Luther the Expositor: Introduction to the Reformer's Evangelical Writings* (St. Louis: Concordia, 1959) 7.

<sup>3</sup>Beryl Smalley, *The Study of the Bible in the Middle Ages* (3rd ed., London: Blackwell, 1985).

<sup>4</sup>C. Spicq, *Esquisse d'une histoire de l'exegese au moyen age* (Paris: J. Vrin, 1944).

<sup>5</sup>Ebeling's original study of Luther is *Evangelische Evangelienauslegung: Eine Untersuchung zu Luthers Hermeneutik* (Munich: Chr. Kaiser Verlag, 1942). The essay is "Church History as the History of the Interpretation of Scripture," *The Word of God and Tradition* (Philadelphia: Fortress, 1964) 11-31.

<sup>6</sup>Friedrich Stegmüller, *Repertorium Biblicum Medii Aevi*, (Matriti: Consejo Superior de Investigaciones Cientificas, Instituto Francisco Suarez, 1950-1955).

<sup>7</sup>Werner Affeldt, "Verzeichnis der Rombriefkommentare der lateinischen Kirche bis zu Nikolaus von Lyra," *Tradition* 13 (1957) 369-407.

A number of stereotypes have also fallen. For example, early medieval biblical scholarship is traditional—to the point where minor figures from the patristic period gain major influence through false ascriptions of texts: Pelagius arrives in the middle ages as Jerome, for example, a turnabout that may be more just than fair. But high medieval exegesis is both copious and methodologically sophisticated in relation to the text, requiring appreciation where Protestants going all the way back to Erasmus have harbored contempt.

Work in the history of exegesis has also demonstrated some problems with the enterprise. The sheer bulk of the material in formal commentaries and occasional reference raises questions about any possibility of comprehensiveness. The manuscripts of available commentaries are often questionable. Comparative study, in which various interpretations of particular passages are studied across the ages, is both complex and risky. It may require excerpting passages from

manuscripts little known beyond that point, glossing over lightly the connection between the commentary and its particular age as well.

There are many other methodological questions and problems in studying the history of the interpretation of Scripture. But that said, there is much to be gained. And there is probably no better starting point than the book Romans, with which the church has been as preoccupied as with any other book of the Bible save the Psalms.

## II. ROMANS IN THE PATRISTIC CHURCH

Ever since the early middle ages there has been interest in patristic interpretations of Scripture. The early medieval commentators compiled *catenae*, verse by verse chains of exegetical comments by the fathers. The same technique, with much more sophistication, has been followed in some modern scholarship. As a result, patristic interpretation of Romans is readily accessible.

There are three modern *catenae*. The oldest is the work of an Oxford don, J. A. Cramer, who compiled his *catena* of the Greek fathers in 1844.<sup>8</sup> A more recent compilation, which has been noted for its excellent editing, was assembled by Dr. Karl Staab of the University of Würzburg in 1933.<sup>9</sup> The most recent is that of Karl Hermann Schelkle, a Roman Catholic exegete formerly at Tübingen whose work covers Romans 1-11.<sup>10</sup>

There is also an index of patristic comments on various texts, including Romans, which has been assembled with computer assistance. While it does not contain direct quotations, like Staab and Schelkle, it is helpful in moving beyond commentaries to trace occasional references to particular passages.<sup>11</sup>

<sup>8</sup>J. A. Cramer, *Catenae Grecorum Patrum in Novum Testamentum* (Oxford: Oxford University, 1844).

<sup>9</sup>Karl Staab, *Pauluskommentare aus der griechischen Kirche* (Münster: Verlag der Aschendorffschen Verlagsbuchhandlung, 1933). Maurice F. Wiles comments on Staab's editorial work in *The Divine Apostle: The Interpretation of St. Paul's Epistles in the Early Church* (Cambridge: Cambridge University, 1967) 8.

<sup>10</sup>K. H. Schelkle *Paulus: Lehrer der Väter* (Dusseldorf: Patmos Verlag, 1956).

<sup>11</sup>A. Benoit et al., *Biblia Patristica, Index des Citations et Allusions Bibliques dans la Litterature Patristique. Des Origines à Clement d'Alexandrie et Tertullian.* (Paris: Éditions du Centre Nationale de la Recherche Scientifique, 1975).

There are a number of patristic commentaries on Romans. Origen's, which is the oldest, is only available in a Latin version translated by Rufinus.<sup>12</sup> The one extended patristic treatment of Paul's letter available in English is not a commentary but a collection of homilies by John Chrysostom.<sup>13</sup> Other patristic commentaries are from the Latin church, and a side aisle of it at that: the work of an unknown author remembered as Ambrosiaster,<sup>14</sup> and an interpretation by Pelagius.<sup>15</sup> Augustine attempted a commentary on Romans but broke off after 1:17, considering the epistle too much for him. At another point, he took on questions concerning the epistle, but he never completed a formal exposition beyond the first chapter—a warning to the intrepid.

With this selection of commentaries, a survey of Romans interpretation in the patristic period can also consider the *catenae* and the occasional comments of the fathers on particular texts. They provide a useful and generally reliable supplement, so that it is possible to gain a fairly detailed analysis of the use of the letter in the period.

Characterizing the early commentaries on the Pauline letters, Maurice Wiles has

compared Marcion to the off-stage voice in a dramatic dialog.<sup>16</sup> Marcion's attempt to do away with the law by fiat elicited extended orthodox consideration of its place in the Christian witness. Early or late, the issue of the relationship of law and gospel dominates the discussion, with Alexandrians, Antiochenes, and eventually Latins taking up the problem. Generally any dialectic in the Pauline argument is sharply attenuated, however. Whether in response to Marcion or as a result of some other factor, patristic commentators are at pains to demonstrate a direct continuity between the law as given in the Old Testament and the gospel declared in Christ.

There are fathers who press a more dialectical understanding of law in Paul's discussion. Some of the more literally minded Greeks, such as Theodore of Mopsuestia and lesser known students in the tradition of Diodore of Tarsus—the teacher of both Theodore and John Chrysostom—pressed more tension between the law given to Israel and the work of Christ. In the west, Irenaeus especially but also Ambrose and Augustine, speak of Christ's work not merely in terms of ratification of the law but also in terms of its fulfillment in Christ.

Overall, however, there is not a major shift within patristic Romans interpretation but a shift to it. As controversial as Ernst Käsemann's thesis about nascent catholicism may be,<sup>17</sup> he is undoubtedly right when he contends that the Pauline witness survived in the early church only by being drastically reinter-

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<sup>12</sup>PG 14, 836-1292. For a discussion of the translation, see H. Chadwick, "Rufinus and the Tura Papyrus of Origen's Commentary on Romans," *Journal of Theological Studies*, (New Series 10, 1959) 10-42.

<sup>13</sup>John Chrysostom, *Homilies on Romans*, ed. and tr. J. H. Parker (London: J.E.F. Rivington, 1841).

<sup>14</sup>PL 17, 45-508. For a discussion of the problems of authorship, see A. Souter, *The Earliest Latin Commentaries on the Epistles of St. Paul* (Oxford: Oxford University, 1927) 49.

<sup>15</sup>*Pelagius' Expositions of Thirteen Epistles of St. Paul*, ed. A. Souter (Cambridge: Cambridge University): cf. also Robert F. Evans, *Pelagius: Inquiries and Reappraisals* (New York: Seabury, 1968).

<sup>16</sup>M. F. Wiles, *The Divine Apostle*, 6.

<sup>17</sup>Ernst Käsemann, "Paul and Nascent Catholicism," *Distinctive Protestant and Catholic Themes Reconsidered*, ed. Robert W. Funk (New York: Harper & Row, 1967) 14-27.

preted. The Pauline eschatology of the two ages lost its force and a static interpretation arose in which the law serves as guarantor of the continuity of all things. Sin, the work of Christ, and the shape of life in Christ are all reinterpreted accordingly.

Thus the law, instead of being a provisional means, serves to guarantee an order structured into the world from the beginning. Sin is understood as amoral problem, the breaking out of disorder that the law alone could not rectify. And justification is the restoration of the moral order worked by Christ either by clarifying the law or by effecting a new obedience in the heart of the believer. While there are minor differences in the way it is developed, this assumption about the law—an assumption which may be considered characteristic of Greco-Roman thought—sets the basis for the consensus of Romans scholarship in the early church.<sup>18</sup>

### III. A NEW SCHOLARSHIP: ROMANS IN THE MEDIEVAL CHURCH

Biblical scholarship at the beginning and end of the middle ages could be used to justify the old pejorative, "the dark ages." Early, up until the 10th and 11th centuries, traditionalism so controlled that commentators simply gathered the comments of others; later, from the second third of the 14th until late in the 15th century, there was only one commentary on Romans—the

first ever done in German—but it too was an assembly line of comments by others.

In the middle of the middle ages, in the 13th and early in the 14th century, there was an explosion of biblical scholarship to shock the sensibilities of Protestants and gladden the heart of the biblical critics. Roman scholarship flourished to the point that in 13th century Paris commentaries practically flooded the market.

The major achievements in scholarship in the history of exegesis have been centered in the medieval church. But the scholarship has not yet produced, and may never, the compact resources available for the patristic period. Beryl Smalley's *Study* provides a superb introduction. Karlfried Froelich published an excellent article on the early 15th century a few years ago.<sup>19</sup> But there are no medieval *catenae* comparable to Staab or Schelkle and there are no indices.

What remains for Roman research is a couple of resources, one too concise, the other sprawling, frustrating, and often not much of a basis for confidence. The too concise source is a survey of Roman scholarship on particular passages by Heinrich Denifle, the *Quellenbelege* to his *Luther und Luthertum*.<sup>20</sup> Denifle, whose name made Luther scholars quake earlier in the century, was an outstanding medievalist. He took up Luther's claim to an unprecedented hear-

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<sup>18</sup>On the pervasiveness of this assumption in the Greco-Roman philosophical tradition, see R. H. Barrow, *Introduction to St. Augustine, The City of God, being selections from De civitate dei with translation and commentary* (London: Faber and Faber, 1950) 223.

<sup>19</sup>K. Froelich, "'Always to Keep the Literal Sense in Holy Scripture means to Kill one's Soul': The State of Biblical Hermeneutics at the Beginning of the 15th Century," *Literary Uses of Typology from the Late Middle Ages to the Present*, ed. Earl Miner (Princeton: Princeton University, 1977).

<sup>20</sup>H. Denifle, *Luther und Luthertum, I: Quellenbelege: Die Abändlandischen Schriftausleger bis Luther über Justitia Dei (Rom. 1: 17) und Justificatio* (Mainz: Kirchheim, 1905).

ing of Paul's assertion on the righteousness of God in Romans and tested it against medieval sources to show Luther wrong. Only a few passages, such as Romans 1:17 and 10:4, are considered, but their interpretation is examined from the beginning of the middle ages all the way to the end. Denifle's scholarship was substantially better than his argument.

The sprawling and frustrating source is Migne's *Patrologia Latina*. Edited in the 19th century, its texts are not always reliable and are often hard to track down. New editions, or some reliable old ones, are available for the most important medieval commentators, such as Abelard and Thomas Aquinas.<sup>21</sup> But again, aside from a few excerpts, there is not much to be had in English.

The upturn in medieval Roman scholarship came as part of a renaissance in biblical scholarship toward the end of the 11th century. If the literary remains are complete, there were three commentaries on Romans in that century; there were 11 in the 12th century, and 13 were completed between the early 13th and the first quarter of the 14th. Not all were devoted exclusively to Romans; several treat the book in the course of exposition of the Scriptures in their entirety. But even in such *Postillae*, Romans retains a priority. The list of commentators includes such well known figures as Peter Lombard and Nicholas of Lyra; many not so well known, such as Odo Gallus, Peter John Olivi, Augustine and Ancona, Giles of Rome, and Peter Aureoli; and a number of lesser lights.

There is enough of a shift in medieval Roman scholarship to speak of two traditions. The patristic consensus of interpretation clearly holds throughout the period, but the tension between

law and gospel in the work of theologians like Irenaeus and Augustine is now observed by commentators in Paul's own text. This is the beginning of a second tradition, the first holding along patristic lines.

The older tradition, which finds a direct continuity between the old covenant and the new in the law, is characteristic of both earlier and later medieval Romans commentators. Nicholas of Lyra, for example, who among other things has been remembered for his alleged influence on Luther, describes the relation of the law and Christ in terms like those used by the Venerable Bede, Rabanus Maurus, and other earlier commentators: Christ perfects the imperfections of the law, in effect purifying it so that the believer might render a more perfect obedience in his spirit.<sup>22</sup>

The *Glossa ordinaria*, a huge collection of patristic exposition of the texts that was itself apparently assembled around the cathedral school of Laon in the late 11th century, sets out a different interpretation. Originally attributed to Walfrid Strabo and published under that name in Migne, the *Glossa* brings Augustine's more dialectical understanding of the relation of law and gospel into the succession of formal commentary.

So in discussion of Romans 10:4, for example, where Christ is spoken of as the end of the law, the *Glossa* takes up a standard interpretation of the *telos* which goes back to Augustine: “*non consummens, sed perficiens*” (“not ending, but completing” or “perfection”). But where this comment is usually employed

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<sup>21</sup>Peter Abelard, *Commentarius in epistolam ad Romanos*, CCCM 11, 41-330; Thomas Aquinas, *In Epistolam Pauli Apostoli ad Romanos Commentaria*, ed. R. Cai (Rome: Marietti, 1953).

<sup>22</sup>Nicolaus de Lyra, *Postilla super totam Bibliam* (Roma: Conradus Sweynheyn and Arnoldus Pannartz, 1471-72); cf. H. Denifle, *Luther und Luthertum*, 184.

to protect the continuity, by showing that the law has not been stopped but perfected in Christ, the *Glossa* goes another direction. It takes up the Pauline contrast between works of the law and works of faith, concluding that “righteousness is from Christ, because if it is through the written or the natural law, and not through faith in Christ, Christ would have died for nothing.”<sup>23</sup> This tradition is carried from the cathedral schools into the emerging academic tradition of the high middle ages, especially at the University of Paris.

The high water mark of medieval Romans interpretation, and a source of Dominican pride even in Luther's day, is the work of Thomas Aquinas.<sup>24</sup> Besides all of his other gifts, Thomas was blessed with great exegetical ability, evident in his relentless pursuit of the text. He belongs in the tradition of the *Glossa*, pushing the tension between law and gospel further than anyone before him. Completed and revised late in his life, the Romans commentary reflects the growing importance of what Thomas himself termed “actual grace,” a development noted by Bernard Lonergan in his careful study of Thomas.<sup>25</sup>

#### IV. THE REFORMATION AND BEYOND

One of the mysteries of the history of Romans interpretation is the dropoff in commentaries after 1325. Whatever the cause, there was almost a century and a half of virtual silence before 15th century renaissance humanism, and then the Reformation fired scholarly interest once again. The sparks ignited a roaring flame, as commentaries proliferated through the

16th century.

Most all of the major Reformers wrote Romans commentaries, Luther's and Calvin's being among the best known. Many minor figures wrote them as well, so that there was another explosion of scholarship to rival and carry beyond that of the 13th century.

Extensive interest in the Reformation and its aftermath has made the biblical scholarship of the time a common topic of study.<sup>26</sup> More recent scholarship has concentrated on the relationship between the Reformers, especially Luther, and medieval exegesis. A number of Heiko Oberman's students have worked in the history of the interpretation of Scripture. Kenneth Hagen's study of Hebrews interpretation in Luther and the tradition before him is especially helpful.<sup>27</sup>

As would be expected, the Reformation marks another major shift in the interpretation of Romans. The two traditions of the middle ages become three, and they remain definitive of most Romans scholarship until fairly recently.

<sup>23</sup>PL 114, 504.

<sup>24</sup>Cf. K. Froelich, "Always to Keep the Literal Sense," 35; cf. also Paul Rorem, "An Influence of Peter Lombard on the Biblical hermeneutics of Thomas Aquinas," *Rivista di Storia e Letteratura Religiosa* 16 (1980) 429-434.

<sup>25</sup>Bernard J. F. Lonergan, *Grace and Freedom: Operative Grace in the Thought of St. Thomas Aquinas*, ed. J. Patout Burns (New York: Herder and Herder, 1971).

<sup>26</sup>A helpful selection of research is available in *The Cambridge History of the Bible 3: The West from the Reformation to the Present Day*, ed. S. M. Greenslade (Cambridge: Cambridge University, 1963). The Cambridge volumes provide a fine introduction to the history of exegesis.

<sup>27</sup>Kenneth G. Hagen, *A Theology of Testament in the Young Luther: The Lectures on Hebrews* (Leiden: E. J. Brill, 1974).

The medieval traditions do not survive the Reformation unaltered, however. Given Thomas Aquinas' authoritative position in Catholicism, it is to be expected that his interpretation of the letter becomes definitive. Even before his authority was fully defined, it appears that he drove out the competition. There is not another great Roman Catholic commentary on Romans until the modern period. Whatever its standing may have been theologically, the earlier—and later—medieval tradition of a straight line continuity of law and gospel is not carried on in Catholic Romans commentaries. Even today, Thomas' interpretation is more likely to be representative.<sup>28</sup>

The second tradition emerging out of the Reformation itself comes from Luther. Luther's lectures on Romans, originally delivered in 1515-16, were lost until Denifle began using them against the Lutherans around the turn of the century. After lecturing on the book just this once, Luther turned the task of teaching Romans in Wittenberg over to Philip Melanchthon. Philip's *Loci Communes* is in effect a commentary on Romans, following the methods of renaissance humanism.

These factors, the loss of the lectures and Melanchthon's assignment, are among several which show how difficult it is to trace a direct line from Luther's interpretation of Romans to those who name themselves in his lineage. But with this qualification, it can be suggested that Lutheran interpreters generally radicalize the dialectic by emphasizing a stronger tension between law and gospel. This is not fully apparent in Luther's own commentary, which reflects the *Glossa*

*ordinaria* and is a fairly standard Catholic interpretation. But it is clear, for example, in Melancthon's 1521 *Loci*, where Christ is spoken of as the termination of the law.

The key to the dialectic is the recovery of a more Pauline eschatology. Instead of beginning with an assumption about the law, defining it morally as the guarantor of the continuity of the structures of life, Luther and the early Melancthon view the law christologically. Thus it is not simply a moral law, but law in its widest sense—law as an existential force manifest in the accusing voice which attacks the conscience. The law in this existential sense ends by being silenced through the forgiveness of sins. Silenced, the law can be fulfilled—not now simply as a moral demand but in its deepest sense, as a requirement growing out of the conditions of creaturely life.<sup>29</sup>

The third tradition emerging from the Reformation is the Calvinist. Calvin was an exacting student of Scripture whose capacity for work, in spite of his frequent illness, is reflected in commentaries covering virtually all of the New Testament and most of the Old. The commentary on Romans is one of his early works, originally published in 1540.<sup>30</sup>

<sup>28</sup>For a contemporary example see Stanislas Lyonnet, S. J. "St. Paul: Liberty and Law," *The Bridge: A Yearbook of Judaean-Christian Studies*, ed. John M. Oesterreicher (4 vols; New York: Pantheon Books, 1955-62) 4.229-251.

<sup>29</sup>Luther's commentary is available in both the Library of Christian Classics and the American Edition, *Luther's Works*, volume 25. The latter is a more literal translation; Melancthon's *Loci Communes* has been translated by Lowell Satre in LCC 19; a representative Lutheran exposition of Romans, though always with his unique gift, is Ernst Käsemann's *Commentary on Romans*, (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1980).

<sup>30</sup>*Johannis Calvini Commentarius in Epistolam Pauli ad Romanos*, ed. T. H. L. Parker (Leiden: E. J. Brill, 1981).

It could be said that Calvin's interpretation of Romans has more in common with the older tradition of a straight line continuity between law and gospel than it does with either the traditional Catholic or the Lutheran interpretation. If that is pressing the point, the dialectic is clearly smoothed out in Calvin's interpretation so that the law once again appears as primarily a moral force; Christ's fulfillment of the law taken as the fulfillment of the law's ultimate purpose or meaning; and the believer is then empowered to render the obedience of faith to a law which now provides guidance in the Christian life.<sup>31</sup>

Typologies are always as dangerous as they are helpful. There is enough variety within the confessional traditions to make prediction based on such identifications a gamble at best. But the three traditions have held with surprising vitality through the modern into the contemporary discussion.

There is a growing number of exceptions to the confessional traditions, however, going all the way back to the birth of historical critical study in the Enlightenment. While clearly not dispelling the older traditions, the exceptions have become so numerous that it is necessary to speak of a fourth tradition in Romans study in more recent scholarship.<sup>32</sup>

This fourth tradition cannot be distinguished by either methodology or a particular type of theological interpretation. Historical-critical methods are employed across the board in Pauline scholarship, and exegetes of the fourth tradition disagree as much with each other as they do with those identified with particular churches. Rather, if there is a common characteristic that unites this group, going all the way back to Albert Schweitzer, it is alienation from the given traditions.

Such alienation may be helpful in some ways. Certainly Schweitzer himself and now E. P. Sanders have provided critical stimulus for reappraisal of Romans and the whole Pauline corpus. But as M.-D. Chenu, the greatest French medievalist, once suggested, the transition of theological education from the monasteries to the universities brought important changes with it. By analogy, the most important shift in contemporary study of Romans may not be as exegetical or theological as it is sociological, in the professionalization of exegesis.

Thus the exegete is not necessarily any longer a pastor or a teacher closely identified with a particular confession but comes as a free agent, a pleasantly alienated upper middle class scholar in the possession of skills and with either the leisure to pursue a hobby or recommendations for employment. Exegesis is commodified—if not shrink-wrapped, then hyped like any other professional service. And the American Academy of Religion-Society of Biblical Literature resembles a gathering of dentists, with comparisons of techniques, offerings of uniqueness, and the patient who finally foots the bill comfortably silent. In such company a few church historians may be needed—if only to keep alive the memory of a time before the text was professionalized.

<sup>31</sup>A representative Calvinist discussion, replete with a common misunderstanding of Luther, is C. E. B. Cranfield, “St. Paul and the Law,” *New Testament Issues*, ed. R. Batey (New York: Harper & Row, 1970) 148-172.

<sup>32</sup>There is a very helpful survey of 20th century Romans study by Robert Jewett, “Major Impulses in the Theological Interpretation of Romans since Barth,” *Interpretation* 34 (1980) 1-31.