

CORRESPONDENCE

TO THE EDITOR, LIFE OF THE SPIRIT

Sir,—Father Leahy's article, 'Back to the Fathers', in your March issue was most suggestive. I am not as fully acquainted with the patristic-scholastic categories of Biblical Criticism as to justify a thorough judgment. But it seemed very apparent to me that these categories, although perhaps useful in their time, are gradually tending to obscure rather than enlighten our understanding of the Bible.

You will not be unaware of the recent trend in French and English biblical research which goes by the name of 'typology'. This study—so prevalent in Protestant circles nowadays—is tending to develop a thoroughly theological, and, therefore, a Catholic approach to the Bible. But I feel it is most misleading to suggest that this is a conscious return to the Fathers.

If the Biblical scholarship of the nineteenth century was critical and therefore concerned with the category 'literal', then such scholars as Dr Farrar and A. G. Hebert are 'literal' scholars. It is their preoccupation with the 'literal' sense that has brought them to give an interpretation which Fr Leahy would call 'spiritual' or 'allegorical'. Dr Farrar would, I am sure, argue that certain passages in St Mark, for instance, do not make sense unless they are seen against the Old Testament types or even the types prefigured in the Gospel itself. If such an interpretation is spiritual, then how are we to make a literal approach to these passages without making nonsense? I wish Fr Leahy had dealt with this problem. I am certain that these scholars of the typological school are making a momentous contribution to Biblical scholarship. They are teaching us to look for the real meaning of the Bible and their conclusions shed new light on the theology of the Church and the Mass—to mention only two elements. . . . Undoubtedly much that the typologists are saying is very similar to St Augustine, but their method is different and their conclusions defy the traditional language.

It is just impossible to squeeze typology into arbitrary classes.

Yours, etc.

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