

Contents

Acknowledgments vii

Preface:

The Irreducible Strangeness of the Biblical Scholar ix

1

THEORY AND METHODOLATRY

Theory's Obituaries	2
Theory in the Cafeteria	11
Theory before Theory	15
The Inhumanity of Theory	19
Method Is Our Madness	31
Unhistorical Criticism	41

2

THE INVENTION OF THE BIBLICAL SCHOLAR

The Epistemic Abyss	46
The Invention of "Moral Unbelief"	49
The Eclipse of Biblical Immortality	58
The First and Third Quests for the Moral Jesus	64
The Moral Minority	70
The Problems of the Biblical Scholar	75

3

ONWARD TOWARD THE PAST

- I. **Theory in the First Wave:
When Historical Critics
Ruled the Earth 84**
 - The Biblical Sub-Sub-Sub-
Specialist 84
 - Political Theory 86
 - The Dirt on Politics 89
 - The Dirt on Biblical
Scholars 91
 - The Good Book as Great
Book 92
 - Theory as Second
Honeymoon 98
 - Revolutionary Old
Discoveries 99
 - Reader-Response Criticism
Is No Picnic 101
 - Civil Servants of the
Biblical Text 107

- II. **Theory in the Second Wave:
The Turn to Religion 115**
 - Marginalizing the
Margins 116
 - The Return of the Big, Flabby,
Old-Fashioned Words 123

Index 133