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gradual ascent to the novitiate, which forms very subtle stages in the rehabilitation of those whose sin is forgiven but who have an even fiercer struggle than is the lot of most men against the ravages of former sin—a whole gamut of warped inclinations calling for the most delicate and often quite special spiritual therapeutics, but especially for the work of grace. No clogging introspection; instead a steady advance of the will, despite numerous set-backs and failures, along the broad, joyous high-ways of Dominican spirituality.

Few books could have better treated of such *jeux de l'enfer et du ciel*, and of the seemingly general law, often re-enacted—desperate sinfulness as a great jumping-off base in an advance to consummate love of Our Lord. The St. Mary Magdalens, like the poor, are always with us. Père Lelong tells much. Much is untold: *le monde ne le supporterait pas*. The book is steeped in stark realities: purity, and extremes of sin, and innocence restored so as to cause joy to the angels. There are touches of exquisite delicacy: thus nothing in the material dispositions of the community must suggest prison régime—hence no grill to the enclosure; the *réhabilitées* have no family photos (the past must be completely buried), the *réhabilitantes* spontaneously make the same sacrifice so as to be more at one with their sisters. All through there is suggested to us the mysterious triumph of Christian compassion in the face of sinfulness. This book is more engrossing than any novel, and has cathartic qualities; it may even save us from thanking God that we are not as other men are, and certainly from despair, for all through there is re-echoed the French equivalent of those noble words of Walter Hilton: "for not what thou art, nor what thou hast been, beholdeth God with His merciful eye, but what thou wouldst be."

ROLAND POTTER, O.P.

BIBLICAL STUDIES

A SYNOPSIS OF THE FIRST THREE GOSPELS. By Albert Huck. Ninth Edition by Hans Lietzmann, English Edition prepared in conjunction with the above by Frank Leslie Cross. (J. C. B. Mohr, Tübingen; RM. 3.60.)

THE STUDENTS' INTRODUCTION TO THE SYNOPTIC GOSPELS. By E. Basil Redlich, D.D. (Longmans; 7/6.)

THE LIFE OF JESUS CHRIST IN THE LAND OF ISRAEL AND AMONG ITS PEOPLE. By Franz Michel Willam. Edited by Rev. Newton Thompson. (Herder; 15/-.)

ABRAHAM. Recent Discoveries and Hebrew Origins. By Sir Leonard Woolley. (Faber & Faber; 7/6.)

I. The recent ninth edition of Huck naturalized for us; the prolegomena turned into English, English titles added to the

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sections of the body of the Synopsis and a key provided to such scraps of German as still lurk in its margins (the body of the Synopsis in this English edition having been printed from the same set of plates that was used for the German). Prof. Lietzmann in his preface summarizes the value of Huck as follows: "The plan of this synopsis differs from that of other similar works in that each of the three Gospels is printed continuously word for word in its proper column and in unaltered order, and the corresponding parallel passages are repeated as many times as this principle demands. As a result, the form of it is independent of any particular theory about sources and can be readily used for studies from any angle." What is new in this edition is chiefly concerned with the *apparatus criticus*, which has been revised, rearranged on an improved plan and at certain important points amplified.

2. A marvellously clear exposition of a form of solution of the Synoptic Problem which can be taken as classically representative of the Critical position as a whole (i.e. the body of opinion formed by the trend of the views of those scholars whose solution of the problem is based on internal criticism, to the neglect—as we should say—of the evidence of tradition). A book of great value for Catholic students of the New Testament: first, as providing an authoritative statement of that standing challenge to their own position which it is their duty to meet; secondly, inasmuch as the discussion of the terms, the matter, of the problem is so clear and concrete as to be extremely useful even to those who reject the conclusions. The solution arrived at is that of the Four Source theory, as propounded, for example, by Canon Streeter (Matthew = a Roman Gospel, Mk + an Antiochene document, Q + Jerusalem tradition, M. Luke = a Roman Gospel, Mk + an Antiochene document, Q + a Caesarean Gospel, L + Source of chapters i and ii)—and Streeter's view of the disparate employment of Q by Matthew and Luke is subscribed to, and his arguments for a proto-Luke (Q + L) favoured. It is rather misleading that it should not be made clearer that the solution offered contains a good deal that is highly controversial among the critics themselves.

3. This book provides, definitely not a Life of Christ—there is not the cohesion, the dramatic impetus that that would entail—but a series of little commentaries on the pericopes of the Gospel taken in would-be chronological order. It is not a work of art, it falls into the disjointedness that the method made it so hard to avoid. Nevertheless it is a useful book. It contains, that is, a great deal of useful information, archæological, historic, rabbinic, etc., much of which could not easily be found elsewhere. But at the same time its own use of this information is often eccentric

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and trivial. It is a work that has to be ground down, to get at its valuable contents.

4. In its argumentative purpose this book does not altogether succeed. The handling of the historical questions involved is too facile to maintain the thesis. The contention is principally this: that the biblical history of Abraham does not merely harmonize with what archæology has to tell of life in Ur at the period of about 2000 B.C., but that certain parts, elements, of it are unintelligible away from this background; and that it would have been impossible at any appreciably later time for popular or literary imagination to fabricate this perfect correspondence.—But it is in the central chapters of the book, forming the bulk of it, that its true value lies. There the data of the Ur excavations are used to reconstruct the religious, social, physical conditions of life in that great Sumerian city at the beginning of the second millennium B.C. It is made possible for us to visit the home of Abraham with a great deal of information in mind as definite and pretty well as reliable as a Baedeker would give us. New knowledge of a vast potential importance and of the greatest actual interest.

RICHARD KEHOE, O.P.

MEDIÆVAL STUDIES

Although scholars are well acquainted with the original language of this book yet we heartily welcome the English translation of *L'Esprit de la Philosophie Médiévale*,¹ so that it may reach even a wider public and its usefulness be still further increased. It contains the Gifford Lectures delivered in the University of Aberdeen by Professor E. Gilson, of the Sorbonne, in 1931 and 1932. The name of Prof. Gilson is a familiar one to all students of mediæval philosophy, and is a guarantee of sound doctrine and thorough scholarship.

Mediæval philosophy has been belittled, despized, misunderstood. Yet it demands but one thing: not to be dismissed and condemned unheard, *Hoc unum gestit interdum, ne ignorata damnetur*. This book is not a piece of apologetic, in the sense that it is set up to prove a thesis, whether true or false. Nevertheless, it offers a help in the light of history to an exhaustive and impartial examination of the case. It calls for deep meditation. With acute powers of reasoning, with precision of statement, with vigour and vivacity, and above all with clearness of exposition, Prof. Gilson propounds the difficult problems of

¹ ETIENNE GILSON: *The Spirit of Mediæval Philosophy*. Translated by H. C. Downes. (Sheed & Ward; 15/-).