

word civilized into European society. In Mr Dawson's words, 'it transformed the knight from a mere fighting man into a gentleman and a man of the world', but in doing so it became itself christianized. It is true that an unresolved element remained specifically in literature, a mingling of idealism and sensuality, and it is this which has given spice to the poetry of romantic love right down to the nineteenth century.

We are the heirs of this Christian culture and, in spite of much that is inimical to it, its influence may still be potent. Catholics at least should welcome, and study, Mr Dawson's exposition of it.

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HÉLOÏSE AND ABELARD. By Etienne Gilson, translated by L. K. Shook. (Hollis and Carter; 16s.)

In his Introduction M. Gilson notes that whereas the story of Héloïse and Abelard has provided more literary inspiration in England, from Pope to Miss Helen Waddell, 'France has done better in the field of pure history'. His own work has certainly filled a gap on the French side; and now, with the appearance of this English translation, surely even more so on the English side. For this book is, first and foremost, a work of meticulous scholarship. Thus M. Gilson explains to us why 'this little book is full of notes', and noting the disfavour with which certain literary opinion eyes books burdened with notes, goes out of his way to refuse an apology for their presence. (Notwithstanding this, the publishers have seen fit to conceal them at the end of the volume.)

To those accustomed to the historical sympathy which pervades M. Gilson's scholarship, the quality which invariably enables him to revive the past which he studies, this book will reveal an added dimension of his insight: that of a profound, imaginative understanding of a personal drama. He reconstructs the story on the basis of the available evidence; an Appendix is devoted to vindicating the authenticity of the Correspondence. The outward events are too well known, their inwardness revealed by M. Gilson's careful analysis and dramatic tact at once too subtle and too solid, to be summarized here. In his hands the documents are made to speak of the encounter and struggle of two great souls great even in their faults: 'we cannot measure the real depth of their fall save from the height of the ideal to which they refer', M. Gilson writes. The coherence and unity of the drama as it is allowed to develop under its own momentum in this account, surprises us only by the strictness of its dependence on the evidence we have—even to its very silences.

The final chapter of the book is a challenge to the various arbitrary ways which used to be fashionable among historians (and are, perhaps,

still current in other circles) of dividing the Middle Ages from the Renaissance. The various formulae in which this prejudice has from time to time found expression are here shown to be inadequate: the mythical figures of 'Medieval man' and 'Renaissance man' can be seen to merge in the men and women of their time as soon as we look at them closely enough to see them as they really were. That M. Gilson has achieved this in this case, at least in the main lines of his presentation, will hardly be doubted by readers of this book.

A.M.

**KERYGMA AND MYTH: a Theological Debate.** Edited by Hans Werner Bartsch, translated by R. H. Fuller. (S.P.C.K.; 22s. 6d.)

The debate is over the 'demythologizing' of the New Testament, or rather of the 'kerygma', 'the oral preaching which lies behind our gospels', the oral preaching which for these Lutheran theologians is a sacramental event, since in it man encounters God (p. 115). If, as Bultmann contends, opening this volume as he opened the battle with his essay 'New Testament and Mythology', myth has entered not only into the expression but into the essence of the kerygma, myth from Jewish and Gnostic sources which no preacher or theologian can ask intelligent modern man to accept, it must be got rid of, not by rejection as the older Liberal Protestants did, but by interpretation. The weakness of Bultmann's thesis is that no satisfactory criterion is given of what is in fact mythological; at one point it seems to include everything except the language of personal relationship, which, as Dr Farrer points out in the last essay 'An English Appreciation', Bultmann seems to suggest we may use 'literally, as near as makes no difference'. The meaning and role of myth are discussed by other contributors with much interest. As for interpretation, this again is a source of controversy, not so much because Bultmann has chosen existentialist philosophy as an instrument of interpretation, but that interpreting the kerygma 'existentially' has led him to find an ally in Heidegger and laid him open to the charge of reducing the kerygma to a philosophy. A Catholic will echo the words of another contributor, F. K. Schumann, 'the crux of the matter is always: from what source is the interpretation derived' (p. 176, footnote), and will suggest that the Church and her theologians are already aware of the problem; as when, for example, St Thomas devotes two Questions to the effects of the Passion, that 'hotch-potch of sacrificial and juridical analogies' (Bultmann, p. 35), and demythologizes them as far as they can be. The problem is in fact very much a live one for Catholics and much in this volume is relevant and interesting.

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