

synoptic problem, he puts forward a theory on the composition of the great discourses which, though conjectural as he admits, is both interesting and stimulating. Next come three detailed studies on the synoptic condition of three isolated passages. X. Léon-Dufour, S.J., examines the episode of the epileptic child, and the outcome of his analysis is that the literary evidence does not permit us to speak of an immediate dependence on one or several source texts but only of literary contacts. N. van Bohemen, O.F.M., in his study on the institution of the twelve, comes to the conclusion that Mark's account of this is dependent on passages of Matthew, and that Mark has displaced the incident from its position in Matthew to suit his own literary intentions. The third, a study of the community discourse of Mark ix, 13-50, by A. Descamps, concludes that whatever the answer to the synoptic problem of the passage may be, it is for all the evangelists, and for the Aramaic prototype, an artificial composition and not as such a sermon of Jesus. These three studies form a valuable testimony much more instructive than the theories and hypotheses that have been elaborated, for it is only on the basis of such analysis of the Gospel episodes that an over-all solution will eventually be worked out. W.-C. van Unnik gives us a very interesting study on the word *sozein* and its derivatives in the synoptic Gospels, in which he shows how in the Gospels this word is used in a sense anterior to the use of St Paul, for whom it already has a technical sense. J. Cambier, S.D.B., in his paper 'Formgeschichte and the Historicity of the Synoptic Gospels', resolves any doubts that may have been raised by the method used in the other papers. In conclusion he lays down the wise advice that we show greater respect to the sacred historian when we seek with minute care to keep to the exact tenor of his words and avoid hardening his thought or attributing to him precisions or completions of which he has not thought. Mgr Bruno de Solages gives us a very brief outline of the book he hopes soon to publish, in which he applies the method of combinatory analysis to the synoptic problem and arrives at a result similar to the two-document theory. The conclusions to be gathered from all these studies are drawn for us by B. Rigaux, O.F.M., with great clarity in a final address. This group of studies shows, more clearly than any book that has yet appeared, the new direction which is being given by many scholars to synoptic studies and the re-posing of the question which it entails. No student of the synoptic problem can afford to ignore it.

P.M.

A GUIDE TO THE 'CITY OF GOD'. By Marthinus Versfeld. (Sheed and Ward; 10s. 6d.)

This is an admirable commentary of Books XI-XXII of the *De Civitate Dei* and a very useful short introduction to Augustinian

studies. Book XXI on the Fate of the Lost is treated with particular perception, and the Platonic roots of so much of the *De Civitate* are analysed with careful clarity. Of course, there are emphases with which other scholars will disagree; it seems anachronistic to read African nationalism into any of the writings of St Augustine. Naturally there are omissions; books XVI-XVIII are barely glanced at.

The treatment of the place of the family in the 'civitas terrena' would have gained in depth by a comparison with the teaching of Lactantius. Dr Versfeld rightly stresses the vital significance of St Augustine's conception of time for any understanding of the *De Civitate*; this is a point which should have been expanded into a chapter. But it seems unjust to criticize a book of 138 pages for omissions. It is more important that Dr Versfeld is always clear, always concise, and at times profound.

GERVASE MATHEW, O.P.

HE DIED OLD: MITHRADATES EUPATOR, KING OF PONTUS. By Alfred Duggan. (Faber; 18s.)

Mithradates would form an admirable subject for an historical novel; he is not really suited for a formal biography. The facts known of him are relatively so few, so sporadically placed in his long life and often so doubtfully authenticated that he can only really be interpreted through imaginative reconstruction. It is to be regretted, therefore, that Mr Duggan, the most distinguished historical novelist of our time, has chosen to attempt a biographical study.

G.M.

AND YET SO NEW. By Sir Arnold Lunn. (Sheed and Ward; 15s.)

This is the third of the trilogy that began with *Now I See*. It is so much the most enjoyable of them and also the best. Perhaps it is only fancy that it seems more light-hearted, more mellow and more kindly than its predecessors: certainly it is more amusing. No one who has read it will forget the memorable argument that the Catholic who refuses to speak of Anglican priests should change the Lays of Ancient Rome into 'The Parson who slew the slayer, and shall himself be slain'. Sir Arnold was always free of Catholic Bogosity, now the last touch of Catholic pomposity has vanished; this is admirably shown by his recollections of Monsignor Knox and of Mr Belloc. In its very different genre *And Yet So New* will rank with that great book *The Flight from Reason*.

GERVASE MATHEW, O.P.