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that I knew where I might find him, that I might come even to his seat!" must we see an Egyptian background? Were gods enthroned only in Egypt? The Code of Hammurabi, for example, represents Shamash, the sun-god, as seated upon his throne delivering the laws to the king. Is it to be supposed that contemporary Persian or Greek god were never thought of as sitting down? Need we go abroad at all to account for Yahweh's being thought of as seated upon a throne? Such claims as these weaken an otherwise good case. In so far as Mr. Knight succeeds in impressing upon his readers the fact that the relations between the life of Egypt and the life of Palestine were continuous and intimate, his work will be of service in enlightening the present age regarding the unity of the civilization of the ancient oriental world.

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A NEW THEORY OF GOSPEL ORIGINS¹

Mr. Robinson Smith's solution of the Synoptic Problem, as readers of his earlier publications know, is the simple one "that Luke followed on after Matthew and used him as a source, even as Matthew followed on after Mark and used him as a source." To the demonstration and elaboration of this thesis, with related investigations, the present volume is dedicated. There are five main lines of argument, summarily presented in the first chapter. Proof 1, which Mr. Smith seems to regard as most telling, consists of a list of twenty-two passages in Mark, of which Matthew in eighteen cases chose the first part and Luke the second, or what was left after Matthew had had "first choice." Proof 2 consists in over one hundred and fifty passages in which Luke "consciously or unconsciously" agrees with Matthew in the latter's alterations of his Markan source. Only a half dozen of these are given; for the rest reference is made to E. A. Abbott's *Corrections of Mark*, and to Sir John Hawkins. Proof 3 is the citation of nineteen passages in which Luke seems to change further Matthew's changes from Mark. Proof 4 is based on eleven passages in which Luke pieces together a detail from Mark and a detail from Matthew. Proof 5 consists of four doublets in Luke, one of which comes from Mark, the other, says Mr. Smith, from Matthew.

If these five lines of proof could be substantiated, without discount, they would indeed make a very strong case. But a careful examination

¹ *The Solution of the Synoptic Problem*. Robinson Smith. London: Watts and Co., 1920. 10s. net.

will show that they are subject to a considerable discount. The citation of passages is always in English. In the discussion of Proof 1, to be sure, Mr. Smith says, "Let us see that the demonstration holds good in the original Greek as well. We find that it does." If he had printed the passages in Greek the critical reader would often be dubious. We are asked to believe, for example, that Luke having Mark and Matthew both before him, read in Mark 10:38, *δύνασθε πιεῖν τὸ ποτήριον ὃ ἐγὼ πίνω ἢ τὸ βάπτισμα ὃ ἐγὼ βαπτίζομαι βαπτισθῆναι*; he then read in Matt. 20:22 *δύνασθε πιεῖν τὸ ποτήριον ὃ ἐγὼ μέλλω πίνειν*; and decided that he could not use this phrase, since Matthew had already done so. But there was left the question as to the baptism, which he took and used in a wholly different context and setting, as well as in a wholly different wording (12:50) *βάπτισμα δὲ ἔχω βαπτισθῆναι καὶ πῶς συνέχομαι ἕως θου τελευτῆς*. Who can make such a procedure on Luke's part plausible, or assign to it any possible motive? And what of the numberless cases where Matthew or Luke, or both, take over the *whole* of the Markan original?

Alternative hypotheses, which would explain the alleged phenomena, are not given a hearing. The existence of Q is flatly denied, as is that of any *Ur-marcus*. No allowance is made for accidental agreement or divergence, for scribal conformation of one text to another, for the influence of other possible sources. The whole line of argument has something mechanical about it; in the author's own words, it is "almost mathematical in its precision." Not thus is justice done to those who are writing the Gospel.

But the general student will probably be most interested in Mr. Smith's further demonstrations. The earliest gospel, he argues, is the Gospel according to the Hebrews, written about 80 A.D.; on this is based our Mark (*ca.* 105 A.D.). Our Matthew follows about 120 A.D., based on Hebrews and Mark, written in Syriac, then translated into Greek. About 140 A.D. comes John, and about 145 A.D. Luke; each of these is based upon all its predecessors.

The earliest epistles (Pauline and non-Pauline alike) are written in the last two decades of the first century, and are sources of the Gospels. The Pastorals are probably written by Luke. This sequence is arrived at in a perfectly mechanical fashion; if similar (even slightly similar) language occurs in two separate documents, one has borrowed from the other and is therefore later. Just how one is to decide infallibly which is borrower is not always made clear. The general result of all this Mr. Smith sums up as follows: "Nearly every road that one follows up

leads, not to negative results, but to the negation of some fact in the Christian religion or the life of Christ." The essentially supernatural elements of the gospel story are "falsified accounts." The crucifixion story is made up of elements borrowed or invented. The evangelists seem to have had singularly little conscience, moral or literary. Luke is peculiarly culpable. "He knew very little of what he was writing about, committing blunder after blunder, and thus discredits the Christian message as a whole." Thus the primitive Christian documents, proven so very corrupt, can no longer serve as the basis of our faith. "Until we learn better, then, it would seem our duty to base our religion on the safe and simple practice of wisdom and goodness, rather than on the uncertainty of anything come down from above."

Exactly one-half of the book is given up to a reprint of the author's *Consecutive Life of Christ*, a fusion of the four Gospels into one continuous narrative, which originally appeared in 1911. The text has been revised.

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GEORGE BURMAN FOSTER'S LECTURES ON THEOLOGY¹

At the time of his death, December 22, 1918, Professor Foster occupied the chair of the Philosophy of Religion in the University of Chicago. Some years previously he had been professor of Systematic Theology in the Divinity School of the same institution. A comprehensive statement of his theological views was never prepared for publication by him but, fortunately, extensive notes of his classroom lectures were left in manuscript. These, supplemented by student notes taken substantially verbatim by the editor, are now made accessible to students of theology in the work under review. The preparation of this work for publication by the editor is a labor for which all the old students of Dr. Foster will be profoundly grateful. It is true that this work represents his interpretation of Christianity some twelve years prior to his death and one must presume that such a keenly inquiring mind as his must have moved forward beyond some of the positions taken here. But Professor Macintosh, who had singular opportunities to know his opinions, says in the Preface, after referring to Dr. Foster's confession of the deepening of one's faith in God through the experiences of tragedy in one's life:

¹ *Christianity in Its Modern Expression*. George Burman Foster, edited by Douglas Clyde Macintosh. New York: Macmillan. xii+294 pages. \$3.75.