

The Doctrine of the Person of Jesus Christ. By H. R. MACKINTOSH, D.Phil., D.D., Professor of Theology, New College, Edinburgh. 8vo, pp. xiv + 640. New York: Charles Scribner's Sons. Price, cloth, \$2.50, net.

THE faith of the church during all the centuries has given Jesus Christ the place of central and supreme importance. There have been differences in methods of work, in creedal accents, in ecclesiastical propaganda, but there has been impressive unanimity in regarding him as the sole and supreme object of faith. "Christ is more precious to us," says Forsyth, "by what distinguishes him from us than by what identifies him with us." He is the creator of faith and not its pattern. His authority is supreme because Christian men have had the certainty that in him they were face to face with God. Even the heresies that disturbed the church were attempts to construct adequate conceptions of the person of Christ, and in meeting them the church was compelled to establish its faith on reasoned convictions. But it is the standing task of the church to interpret Christ afresh to every age, and in these days of chaotic thinking nothing is more needed than the clear and courageous preaching of Christ in the fullness and sufficiency of his divine imperial claims. Three important books have appeared in recent years which chronologically and logically present impressive argument concerning Christ. *Jesus and the Gospel*, by Dr. James Denney, is marked by close reasoning, keen criticism, and spiritual fervor. It is an attempt to show that the Christianity of the New Testament is the life of faith in Jesus Christ, and that this attitude is fully justified by an appeal to Jesus himself. The section of the book dealing with the self-consciousness of Jesus (pages 143-328) is one of the finest specimens of text criticism and exegesis and will well repay careful study. A worthy sequel to this book is *The Person and Place of Jesus Christ*, by Dr. P. T. Forsyth. The moral note, the experimental strain, the vigorous thinking, and the mystic tone combine to make it a most searching utterance. In his lecture on the "Self-fulfillment of Christ" there is a sentence that expresses the gist of his thought: "The soul's Redeemer was the soul's Creator, divested of everything but the holy love in which he created, and raised by the deep and long renunciation to a power in which

lies the salvation for ever and ever of the whole created race and world." And now we have this thorough treatment of the whole subject by Dr. Mackintosh. One is impressed by the rich note of experience that recurs again and again throughout this invaluable treatise. "Only those who owe him salvation can realize his higher nature, and it is moral regeneration which gives the vision of his glory." The fact of Christ's deity is testified by the fact of redeemed souls. But the tendency toward spiritual individualism is guarded by a recognition of the consentient experience of the Christian community. The ethical note is no less carefully conserved by this writer. Christ is the maker of a new conscience, and wherever his authority is accepted he reigns supreme in this realm, imparting indescribable benefits to those who offer him submission and obedience. Another important consideration is expressed in the sentence: "There will always be metaphysic in Christology, but it ought to be a metaphysic of the conscience, in which not substance, but holy love is supreme." In this connection we recall Eucken's approval of Hegel's saying that a civilized nation which has no metaphysics is like a temple decked out with every kind of ornament, but possessing no holy of holies. But the metaphysical is the ethical, and *vice versa*. If this fact is remembered, we shall be delivered from rhetorical pyrotechnics. Dr. Mackintosh states that "it does not seem possible to hold or vindicate the absoluteness of Christ as an intelligent conviction except by passing definitely into the domain of reasoned theory." He needs no apology for his own constructive contribution in the third and largest part of his volume. The first section of his work deals with the Christology of the New Testament, and he expounds the six types of apostolic testimony with lucid insight and a full knowledge of the relevant literature. The profound impression made by Jesus on the apostles resulted in the King displacing the Kingdom as the subject of their preaching. For the same reason they realized that he could be explained only in terms of the fullness of the Godhead. The second part deals with the history of Christological doctrine from the subapostolic age to the nineteenth century. His characterization of Athanasius is worthy of the man who rescued Christianity from the quicksands: "Statesman, saint, thinker, he gave his life as a long sacrifice for truth, with hardly one lapse from consistent greatness." The discriminating treatment of the several writers makes this section of the book a helpful guide to Christological thought, and it will be consulted as a reference work for many years. The modern radical school is severely scored for ignoring history and relying on its own presuppositions. The testimony of all the centuries unites in declaring that Christ is not one of a class, or even first among his compeers, but in a solitary and unshared sense the Lord and Redeemer of the world. The author's powers are seen at their best in the third part of the book. The prime equipment of an investigator in this central region of Christianity is a decided experience of Christ as Redeemer. Christology has always been controlled and inspired exclusively by a soteriological interest, so that here, more than anywhere else, the heart makes the theologian. For instance, we accept the pre-existence of the Son, not on metaphysical or psychological grounds, but,

in virtue of what we already know of him as sole Mediator and our indwelling life. His work as Reconciler and our experience of vital union with him lead us far more impressively than theories to conclude that he is a Saviour at once divine and human. His holiness is the greatest moral miracle of the ages; and yet it was not automatic, but was won anew by self-committal to the Father from whom he had an uninterrupted derivation of life. If we begin to believe like him we will inevitably come to believe in him. "Faith in Christ will always constrain thoughtful men to construe in reason his ultimate relation to God and man, so far as this is possible; and the limits of possibility can be ascertained in no other way than by actual experiment." Dr. Mackintosh is not lost in subtle dialectics because he always stays by history and life. He is not afraid to acknowledge the limitations of the intellect in comprehending the mysteries of the Godhead, but he immediately points out that the student of Christology has the mystery of grace. So, while he concedes, he finally concludes in indorsing the unanimous confession of the church concerning the eternal God our Saviour. This is a rare volume and goes to the depths. It will feed the mind and soul of any preacher who gives time and thought to it, and the result will be seen in an enhanced ministry.