Concerning Jesus Christ the Son of Man. By William Cleaver Wilkinson. The Griffith & Rowland Press. 1918. 333 pp. \$1.75 net.

In order to fully appreciate this latest volume from the gifted pen of Dr. Wilkinson, the reader needs to grasp clearly the purpose of the author. The volume is not primarily an apologetic presentation of the life of Christ to answer unbelief and set forth the deity of Christ with convincing logic. This was the aim in another volume by Dr. Wilkinson reviewed in these columns about a year ago and entitled "Concerning Jesus Christ the Son of God". And yet, after all, nothing is so convincing as to all the great verities concerning Jesus Christ as an unbiased and attentive perusal of the matchless life itself, and if this can be done under the guidance of a skillful interpreter and guide, such as is supplied by this volume, the result cannot be other than highly fruitful for faith and life.

There are forty-nine chapters, covering every phase of the life and activity of Jesus. The story is told with all the clarity and charm of style so characteristic of Dr. Wilkinson. We sometimes say a man "clothes" his thought in a particular kind of language. Thus the thought may be overweighted with the superabundance or partially concealed by excessive adornment of the clothes. Dr. Wilkinson's style is like a close-fitting garment of silk which follows all the sinuosities of the body of his thought. In its flexibility and simplicity and accuracy of language in relation to the idea it sometimes suggests the skin rather than a silken vesture. It is a delightfully told story of the greatest of all lives which we have here.

I have long ceased to be troubled with the inevitable question: "Why another life of Christ?" There will never be an end of these efforts to interpret Jesus. The eternal fascination of the Master is that men never fathom Him fully. Should they succeed, they would lose interest in Him. He would then become for them like a book mastered and laid away. But the marvelous story of Jesus is like the firmament in its wealth of beauty and in its range and depth. We may forever explore it anew and come back with fresh spoil.

There is one group of possible readers who will be disappointed in this book because of its omissions. For example, there is the barest minimum of recognition of the many issues raised by historical criticism concerning the Gospels. There is no discussion of the Q document, or sources of Matthew and Luke or other inquiries of this nature. There is almost no reference to alleged contradictions in the various records given in gospels on certain details. And it is true that a school of students of the life of Jesus, or rather of the Gospels, has arisen in modern times whose chief interest is in these and related matters. But we have really had a surfeit of these "critical" lives

of Christ. Many of the controverted points are practically insoluble, and outside of scholastic circles there is no great interest in them. What men need today is the power of the life of Jesus for their own lives. We must now seek to reincorporate the life of Christ in the life of the new world. The great war with its victory for the Allies is, in a real sense, a new chapter in the life of Christ. He is the inspirer of all our higher ideals. Dr. Wilkinson's new account of Jesus will very greatly aid in giving us a new appreciation of the Master.

There is scarcely space here to dwell upon details. The story flows along smoothly and delightfully. Extraneous matters of all kinds are barred. The literary sense and quality appear in the unity and progress of the narrative. If one looks for doctrinal interpretation in any great measure there is disappointment in store. In fact, the reader will sometimes be disposed to complain that the author practiced so much restraint in interpreting and applying the spiritual meaning. Occasionally, luminous insights appear as in the story of the temptation and elsewhere. But the author expressly informs us that his aim is not interpretation and commentary but only faithful narration. It is from this point of view that we must estimate this book.

It is inevitable of course that thoughtful readers will occasionally dissent from the positions of the author. For example, on page 65, dealing with the temptation, in referring to the "season" during which Satan departed from Jesus, the author, referring to the Gethsemane experience of Jesus, says: "The 'season' during which our Saviour should enjoy exemption from the access of Satan was perhaps then, and not till then, concluded." Here one cannot forget the words to Peter: "Get thee behind me, Satan" (Matt. 16:23), and the other word to the disciples where Jesus declares that they had been with Him in His "temptations" (Luke 22:28). It is very probable that Satan made frequent attacks upon Jesus throughout his earthly life. Again, it is doubtful whether Dr. Wilkinson is correct in the minor emphasis he places upon the healing of the sick (p. 108) as compared with teaching. He says little about it, it is true, and few would dispute the statements as to the importance of teaching. But surely the message and activity of Jesus require us to believe that a "social gospel" is part of his teaching. It is not to be taken in place of the "spiritual gospel" of salvation, but it is the necessary result of the regeneration of individuals. We are bound to apply the teachings of Jesus to every phase of human life if we are to adequately represent Him.

In conclusion, I wish to say that the closing chapters dealing with the last scenes and especially the Resurrection are among the best in the entire volume. The discussion of the reasons for the appearance of Jesus after the resurrection to the disciples only is exceptionally interesting and suggestive. A hearty welcome to this simple, fascinating, and luminous life of Jesus.

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