

VII. PHILOSOPHY AND RELIGION.

THE PSYCHOLOGY OF JESUS. A Study of the Development of His Self-Consciousness.

By Albert Wellman Hitchcock, Ph.D. Boston and Chicago: The Pilgrim Press. Pages xvii.—279.

This is a thoroughly modern work on a most fascinating subject. The spirit is reverent, the attitude critical, the style vigorous, but epigrammatic and decidedly marked by all the faults of such a style. The author is fond of contrasts, and in order to make the most striking it is necessary sometimes partially to misstate one or both sides in the contrast. Epigram is always to be observed closely lest it be a half-statement of truth or fact. The author has also numerous examples of a statement of truth striking and even shocking, a pedagogical method in which the Lord Jesus himself was a master. Altogether the style is highly attractive and engaging. The matter is the main thing, and here again we find it very fine with serious faults. Part I. presents in four chapters the environment of Jesus, a field in which there is little new to be said, but in which our author has made an excellent summary in an independent way. One can hardly give him credit for close discrimination or just perspective in his use of the Apocryphal writings. He makes entirely too much of these as an element in the influencing environment of Jesus, and he does not sufficiently guard against treating some of the post-Christian writings as if belonging to the environment of Jesus. This apocryphal field is so fascinating that it seems a common fault of those who use it to overdo it.

Part II. gives us in eight chapters the study of Jesus in his soul development. Nothing more incisive, more sympathetic, and more calculated to assist in understanding Jesus' inner life has appeared, provided it be read with care, for it is only fair to say that the work is intensely subjective. Any work of this nature must be subjective, but there are safeguards against the errors of this method. Like so many others of to-day, the author deals with the history in a thoroughly free, subjective manner. What appeals to him as veracious he accepts; what appeals to him as literal is taken so, and what seems to him fig-

urative, or mythical, or spurious, or exaggerated, is accepted and stated so without hesitation and with utter disregard of evidence. It modifies the results, but does not justify the method, that this author accepts as historical the main features of the Synoptic Narrative and the Evangelists' records. It cannot escape us, however, that such subjective dealing with history will not likely leave two men with the same facts of history, nor the same man at two stages of his thinking, with the same facts of history. No doubt our author would readily have owned this charge against his method and accepted its consequences cheerfully. Yet there ought to be at least some tests for historicity that lie outside the man who deals with the facts of history.

One assumption of the author (Preface X.) is a common plea of many writers who deal freely with Jesus in his relation to modern critical notions. "He would not acquire knowledge otherwise than as his fellows do, nor would he become an authority upon matters he never studied." So we read and agree, but the inference drawn, and drawn upon constantly, by writers is that outside the sphere, or spheres, in which Jesus was a "specialist," or an "expert," the modern critic is free to detect and correct the mistakes of the Master. It needs hardly to be pointed out that there is no definite agreement as to the field in which Jesus may be allowed to be the chief expert, and so of the matters where he may speak with authority. It must be a serious question, too, what we shall think of Jesus if we must admit either that he did not know his limitations, or that knowing them he dared speak outside his limitations; and that in either case he fell into the fault common to any other man. Our author adds, in his next sentence, that "His mind would be keen, and his intuitions acute and accurate," etc.

In dealing with the Youth of Jesus the author says (p. 92): "In accordance with what I take to be the widest and earliest tradition, then, I assume that Jesus was born of a mother named Mary, in the home of Joseph, the carpenter of Nazareth, his father, who died while Jesus was still young." He does not begin with this assumption, however, until after three pages of argument against "the Virgin Birth," in which he handles the material with remarkable lack of logical insight. Of the inci-

dent recorded of Jesus at the age of twelve we read: "The normal, universal change which we call conversion had come to him, and with fullest effect, because it was in no way hampered or resisted." What he means by this may be true enough, but is in no way made clear.

After laying a thoroughly sound and complete basis for the miracles of Jesus the author proceeds to explain the miracles so that none are left. The Resurrection is treated very unsatisfactorily, and there seems to be a multiplication of words without knowledge. His own position is not at all apparent. In an introduction to the work by Dr. G. Stanley Hall we read: "The historicity of the three resurrections which the Gospels report Jesus to have effected, the author could possibly resign with no sense of essential loss," and so far as we can gather the statement would apply equally to the bodily resurrection of the Lord himself.

In the last chapter, "The Psychological Approach to Jesus," the author begins by saying, "Unless our study has brought us to a new and richer appreciation of Jesus Christ, it has failed in its purpose and its possibilities." There speaks a noble lover of the Son of Man and truly does he help us to appreciate Jesus as also the Son of God, for in spite of a critical attitude that logically would leave Jesus far less than the author found him, like so many others he evidently knew Jesus first and approached him from a false, critical attitude afterward.

Although "suddenly removed by an untimely death," the author may in this volume speak helpful words to many who would see Jesus and to more who are held back by current scientific doubts. The discussion of "the Messianic titles as used by Jesus" is particularly helpful and gratifying at a time when so much nonsense is being written on this subject under the guise of learned investigation. The ignorance of much of the current argument on this point is keenly exposed here. The author knew Jesus well, however faulty may be his explanations of our Lord's relation to God.

W. O. CARVER.