

## REVIEWS

## PHILOSOPHY AND THEOLOGY

JESUS CHRISTUS. By Karl Adam. (Augsburg : Haas und Grabherr ; Rm. 8.)

Although, as Dr. Adam says in his preface, 'the fullness of Christ is too rich for a single man and a single book to exhaust it,' his magnificent study of the Person of our Saviour may rank as the most comprehensive of the many which have appeared in recent years. Its particular merits are largely due to the fact that he has, at the outset, so clearly stated the essence of the doctrine of the Incarnation in its entirety and never loses sight of it. 'The Mystery of Christ consists not in the fact that He is God but that He is God-*Man*.' We are shown how exclusive preoccupation with the Divinity of Christ leads to a failure to appreciate the unique wonders of the central truth of Christianity and has given all too much plausibility to syncretistic theories of Christian origins.

The second chapter is perhaps the most valuable of all. In it the author discusses the epistemological method and the subjective dispositions with which the problem of Christ must be approached. He appeals to Phenomenology to confirm the Catholic insistence that the act of cognition must be conditioned by its object, and shows the consequent futility of any critical approach to Christology which of its nature precludes the attainment, even hypothetically, of the Divine. Such 'criticism' is grossly uncritical and is guilty of an apriorism which condemns it on purely scientific and methodological grounds alone; and since the question and its solution are of no mere academic interest, but of paramount ethical and religious importance in time and eternity, Dr. Adam does not hesitate to charge the mass of modern pseudo-critical theorising with being 'not only a violation of historic truth and reality, but a frivolity, a blasphemous game with the risk of abusing and denying the incarnate Word of God. A scholar or critic who prays not, who does not cry from the depths of his heart "Lord teach me to pray!" "Lord help my unbelief!" has no business to lay hands on the Gospel.' This is not pietism; it is the only *scientific* approach that the historical sources warrant.

For the 'historic Jesus' of the liberal critics is utterly unhistorical and has no historic existence. The sources know only of Jesus the Christ, the Kyrios of Faith and Dogma, the Word made flesh. If we deny the historicity of Christ we are compelled to deny the historicity of Jesus. The more recent theories which seek to account for Christian origins by a primi-

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tive creative *Gemeindetheologie* defy elementary historical and psychological realities. The Incarnation as understood by the first Christians has no parallel in Jewish thought or pagan mythology. No naturalistic explanation of Christian origins is, in fact, possible, and Dr. Adam demonstrates the overwhelming evidence for the historicity of the Christ of the Gospels and St. Paul, confirmed by the witness of Tacitus, Suetonius, the Younger Pliny, Josephus and the Babylonian Talmud. He considers that the newly-discovered Old-Slavonic version of the *Wars* of Josephus confirms beyond doubt the substantial authenticity of the celebrated passage in his *Antiquities*.

In subsequent chapters will be found profound and lucid studies of the human Psychology and teaching of Christ, of His inner Life and its relations to His Father, of His own verbal witness to His Person and Mission, of His Passion and Resurrection. Scholars may take exception to the author's dogmatism on one or two points of chronology and exegesis, and Thomists may see reason to modify the over-sharp antithesis, which he has accepted from M. Gilson, between the thought of SS. Albert and Thomas and that of traditional 'Augustinianism.' It may be true that the Thomist 'emancipation' of the natural sciences did, as a matter of historic fact, prepare the way for the dualism of the 'modern mind' and its consequent inability adequately to envisage the supernatural Mystery of the God-Man. But this is because the 'modern mind,' while taking the utmost advantage of the Thomist 'emancipation' has abused it by ignoring the Thomist metaphysic which, no less than the Bonaventuran, postulates the Supernatural for its ultimate *raison d'être* and justification.

These are minor reservations in our praise of a book which should prove of immense value alike to the devout, the scholar and the unbeliever. An English translation is, we understand, in preparation.

V.W.

ALBERT THE GREAT, SAINT AND DOCTOR OF THE CHURCH. By Hieronymus Wilms, O.P. English version with additional notes and appendices by Adrian English, O.P., S.T.L., B.Sc., and Philip Hereford. Foreword by Vincent McNabb, O.P., S.T.M., and many illustrations. (Burns, Oates & Washbourne, Ltd.; 15/-)

To those who think of the thirteenth century as an age of superstition, and, strangely, there are still many who use medieval as a term of derision for the foolish and antiquated, it will come as a surprise to learn that St. Albert the Great might well be called 'the first of the scientists.' And from a reading of