

## THE HUMILIATION OF CHRIST.\*

BY THE REV. E. B. HARPER, D.D.

The author of this learned treatise occupies a conspicuous position among Christian theologians as a scholar of depth, liberality and suggestiveness. Whether we agree with, or dissent from, Dr. Bruce, we must allow that he has produced a masterly work. Let us then ask, what has he undertaken to perform, and how has he fulfilled his purpose? Theories concerning the humiliation of Christ have come down to us from almost the apostolic age. These are here presented to us. These speculations have engaged the attention of Christian theologians from the Council of Chalcedon (451) to the time in which we live, and Dr. Bruce has stated them with amplitude and clearness. His method is based on the theory that "the whole doctrine concerning the person of Christ and His work may be advantageously surveyed by taking the two states of Christ—His humiliation and exaltation—as one's point of view;" from which it follows that he employs "the teaching of Scripture concerning the humiliation of the Son of God, as an aid to the formation of just views on some aspects of the doctrine of Christ's person, experience and work, and so a guide in the criticism of various Christological and soteriological theories."

Our author's plan is worked out by presenting certain Christological axioms fairly drawn from Holy Scripture, and by supplying the historical Christologies of the Patristic, Lutheran and Reformed Churches: then follows the modern Kenotic theories; after which we have "Modern Humanistic theories of Christ's person considered." These are followed by "Christ the Subject of Temptation and Moral Development." The concluding lecture views "The Humiliation of Christ in its Official Aspect." He neither states nor defends theo-

ries of His own, but presents and defines those of the men whose ideas for a time moulded the opinions of the Church. At much length and with great lucidity, the opinions of these great thinkers are then set forth, and with equity and judgment are correctly analyzed. Thorough research, acuteness of insight, and fulness of acquaintance with theology, and a reverential spirit, are evinced by the learned author; but a disappointment is felt by the reader in not finding his own conception or theory of the *Kenosis*. For this he apologizes by saying, "One may well be excused indeed for assuming this attitude of suspended judgment, not merely in reference to kenotic theories, but toward all the speculative schemes we have had occasion to notice. The hypothesis of a *double life*, of a *gradual incarnation*, and of a *depotentiated Logos*, are all legitimate enough as tentative solutions of a hard problem. . . . Faith can afford to dispense with their services. For it is not good that the certainties of faith should lean too heavily upon uncertain and questionable theories. Wisdom dictates that we should clearly and broadly distinguish between the great truths revealed to us in Scripture and the hypotheses which deep thinkers have invented for the purpose of bringing these truths more fully within the grasp of their understandings." We think this is the proper view to take of Christological theories, inasmuch as the incarnation involves mysteries which are incapable of explanation by finite understandings. As students of Divine truth will wish to become acquainted with the theories which men have formed on this great mystery, we commend without hesitation this able treatise to their attention.

\* *The Humiliation of Christ in its Physical, Ethical and Official Aspects.* The Sixth Series of the Cunningham Lectures. By ALEXANDER B. BRUCE, D.D., Professor of Apologetics and New Testament Exegesis, Free Church College, Glasgow; Author of *The Parabolic Teachings of Christ, Miraculous Elements in the Gospels*, etc., 8vo, pp. 457. New York: A. C. Armstrong & Son. Toronto: William Briggs. Price, \$2.50.