

THE HISTORIC CHRIST

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The Historic Christ by T. A. Lacey

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*Εἰ καὶ ἐγνώκαμεν κατὰ σάρκα Χριστόν,
ἀλλὰ τὴν οὐκ ἐτι γινώσκουμεν*

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PREFACE

Dogma is simply the maintenance of the historic Christ against imperfect definitions.—MANDELL CREIGHTON.

THE first five of these lectures were read in the Church of St. Philip and St. James at Oxford during the Lent of this year. The sixth was also to have been read, but its delivery was accidentally hindered. The last three were read at a much earlier date in the Church of St. Mark, Marylebone; but they followed a preliminary essay looking the same way as the other six, and they seem to cohere sufficiently with them to be gathered under a common title.

A short pamphlet on *Harnack and Loisy*, in which I first sketched the argument of these lectures, was honoured in the spring of last year with a remarkably hostile notice in the Oxford University pulpit. I should possibly have received in silence the castigation intended for myself, but Mr. Inge's sermon seemed to compass so complete a misapprehension of M. Loisy's position, that I was moved to call public attention to it. He represented the French critic—and me in agreement with him—as acknowledging "two Christs—the Christ of the Synoptic Gospels and the

Christ of faith"; as identifying this second Christ with "the Gnostic *Aeon Ecclesia* invested with Divine attributes"; as forbidding men to "look back" to Jesus of Nazareth; as making a "conscious, deliberate severance between Christ as an object of worship and Jesus of Nazareth"; as cutting faith "entirely loose from the world of physical phenomena." Against these imaginary enormities he earnestly protested. With some inconsistency he rebuked me for saying that Jesus of Nazareth was "dynamically the Christ of Chalcedon," adding "and, I suppose, the Christ of Trent." I should understand this implied reproach the better if I could find that Trent had made any addition to the Christology of Chalcedon. In subsequent correspondence, he complained of my remark that "a sound historic criticism will endeavour to identify Jesus of Nazareth in his habit as he lived, distinguishing this from all that he was to become." He took this to be an assertion of personal development, and replied: "There has been no change, no 'becoming,' in our Lord's Person since the Ascension." That is unimpeachable, if beside the mark as a criticism of Christological development. But Mr. Inge went on to say:—

"M. Loisy, no doubt, thinks otherwise. For him, the history of the Catholic Church has been a real development of the Incarnation, and the growth of Christological dogma has been a real becoming, for