

**CHRIST OF
ONTENTION.
THREE ESSAYS**

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Christ of ontention. Three Essays by E. G. Punchard

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E. G. PUNCHARD

**CHRIST OF
ONTENTION.
THREE ESSAYS**

CHRIST OF CONTENTION.

THREE ESSAYS

BY

E. G. PUNCHARD, D.D. OXON.

VICAR OF CHRIST CHURCH, LUTON.

οἱ μὲν ἐξ ἐριθείας τὸν Χριστὸν καταγγέλλουσιν . . .
οἱ δὲ ἐξ ἀγάπης . . . τί γὰρ; κλησὶ κατὰ τρέψω,
εἴτε προφάσει εἴτε ἀληθείᾳ, Χριστὸς καταγγέλλεται·
καὶ ἐν τούτῳ χαίρω, ἀλλὰ καὶ χαρήσομαι.

PHIL. I. 15-18.

LONDON:
KEGAN PAUL, TRENCH, & CO.
1 PATERNOSTER SQUARE.
1885.

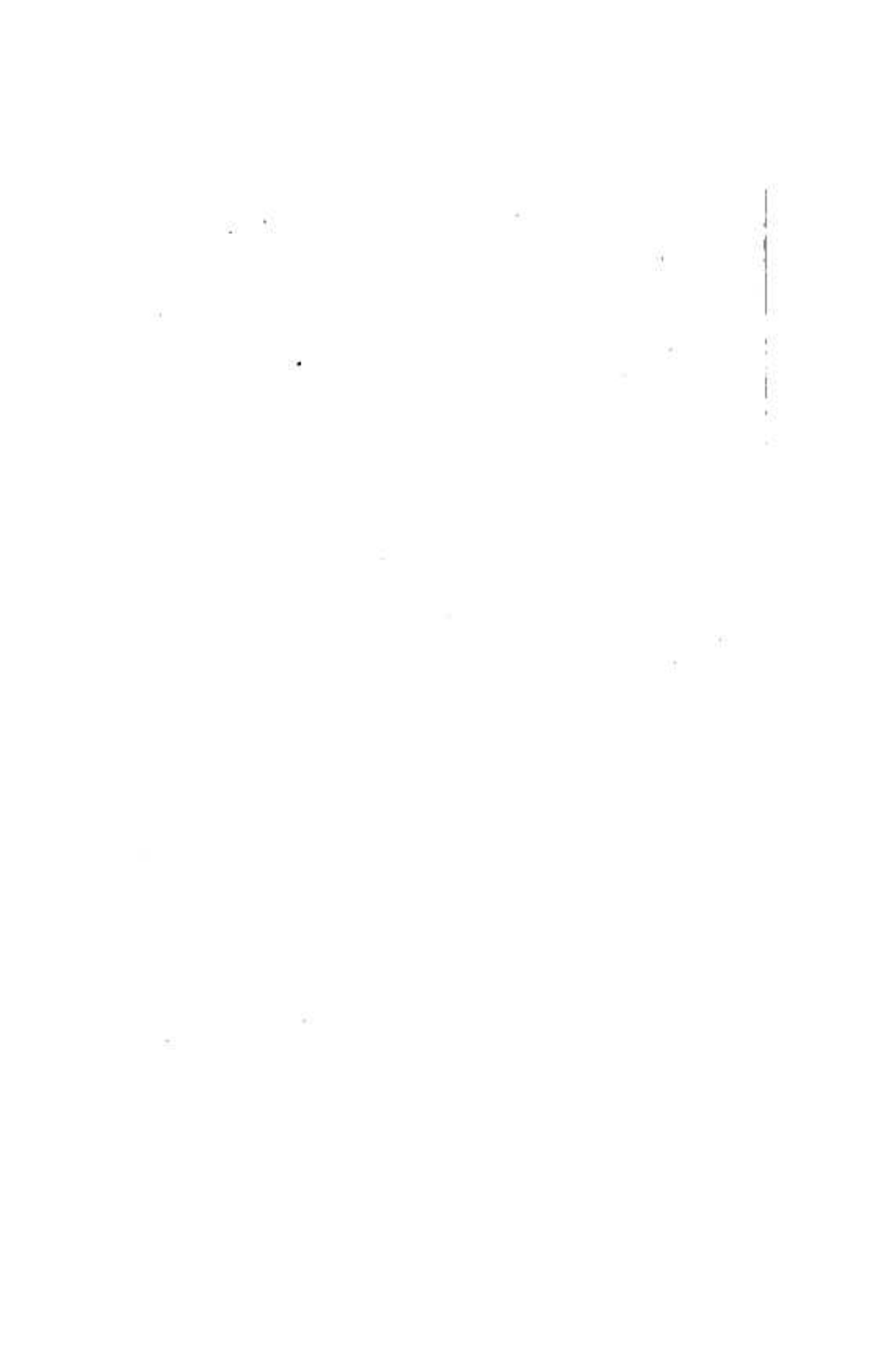
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CHRIST OF CONTENTION.



I.

CHRIST THE SON OF GOD.

I. To estimate at all adequately the claims of Jesus of Nazareth to be the Messiah and the Son of God, it would be necessary to understand the spirit of the age when such a claim was advanced, and, moreover, the condition of the men amongst whom it was made.

The popular mind in Judea, according to M. Renan,¹ was ready for such

¹ "Vie de Jesus," p. 248 *et seq.*

2 *CHRIST OF CONTENTION.*

a declaration, and not likely to be shocked at it. The doctrine of Hillel, himself the development of the best traditions of Jewry, had prepared not only the people who were to be taught, but even the new Teacher himself.¹ And further still, we have been informed by modern Rabbis that "Jesus was a Pharisee, who followed in Hillel's footsteps. . . . He never gave utterance to a single new idea."² But the effort to explain the appearance of Christ by the sequence of natural events has reached, we may think, its limit; and comparative views are failing likewise from the attention which at first they won; since their

¹ "Vie de Jesus," p. 248 *et seq.*

² Delitzsch, "Jesus and Hillel," p. 133. Quoting from Dr. Geiger's "Lectures on Judaism."

arguments appear oftentimes, on sober investigation, to have had a slender foundation in fact.¹

There seems, more happily, now on all sides a growing conviction that, to use the words of a new apologist,² "the coming of Christ was the greatest surprise of human history." . . .

¹ Notably, *e.g.*, the famous article of Emmanuel Deutsch on the Talmud (*Quarterly Review*, October 1867), in which he brought forward parallels to the teaching of our Lord. Nor could the attempt, from such a scholar, have been without guile; for many of the sayings, especially those of Rabbi Simeon, were uttered at least a century after Christ. F. Delitzsch says ("Jewish Artisan Life in the Time of Jesus," p. 29), "With the exception of Hillel, all the writers in the Talmud, whose teaching corresponds to the words of the New Testament, are of later date than Jesus and the archives of Christianity." Compare with this a writer in the *Pall Mall Gazette*, October 21, 1867, on the *Quarterly Review*, "An hypothesis that the Talmud borrows from the New Testament is very like deriving Sanskrit from Greek!" Here is a qualified critic indeed.

² Dr. Newman Smyth, "Old Faiths in New Light," p. 167.