

THE CHRIST OF THE GOSPELS

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The Christ of the Gospels by W. W. Holdsworth

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W. W. HOLDSWORTH

**THE CHRIST
OF THE GOSPELS**

THE CHRIST OF THE GOSPELS

The 41st Fernley Lecture

THE CHRIST OF
THE GOSPELS

BY THE

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London

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I DEDICATE THIS WORK
TO THE MEMORY
OF
MY FATHER

*Extract from the Trust-Deed executed by the
late John Fernley.*

... 'The design of the Sermon or Lecture shall be, to explain and defend the Theological doctrines or the Ecclesiastical polity of the Wesleyan Methodist Connexion, with special reference and adaptation to the necessities of the times, and with a view to the benefit of the Candidates who are about to be ordained by the Conference to the Ministry, and of other Ministers, and also of the Laymen who usually attend the Conference Committees, and the subject of the Sermon or Lecture shall be fixed in accordance with this design.'

PREFACE

I HAVE sought to carry out the purpose of the Founder of this Lecture as indicated in the Trust-Deed, and, with others, I have found it difficult in a single treatise to meet the needs of a popular audience, and to satisfy the demands of those already versed in biblical study and criticism.

The subject committed to me is one which will exhaust powers far greater than those which I possess, but such study as I have been able to secure has convinced me of its supreme importance at the present time, and I have endeavoured to bring before those who have entered into the Methodist Communion of the Christian Church the findings of recent criticism of the Gospels, and to indicate the effect of such criticism on the message which those Gospels declare.

The lecture makes no claim to originality. Thoughts gathered from many authors will appear in the pages which follow; and while I have sought

Preface

to make what acknowledgement was possible, a considerable amount of indebtedness must remain unexpressed. My colleagues on the Staff of Handsworth College have laid me under great obligation for wise counsel generously given. I am specially indebted to Dr. Tasker and to the Rev. H. N. Flew, the latter of whom has been kind enough to read and correct the proofs.

W. W. HOLDSWORTH.

HANDSWORTH COLLEGE,
June 1911.

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The word 'Gospel' is not sufficiently definitive; it stands for both vehicle and content.

The challenge in the Personality presented in the Gospels. Are the terms 'Jesus' and 'Christ' mutually exclusive?

The methods of modern Criticism are twofold. Comparative Religion; the apotheosis of the human. The critical study of the Record. Prejudice against the supernatural a *petitio principii*.

A higher synthesis finds room for both 'Jesus' and 'Christ.'

There is thus a doctrine of the Person of Christ in the New Testament, and the basis of this doctrine is found in the Gospels.

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The Christology of the New Testament may be studied in three sections:—

1. The Epistle to the Hebrews. The underlying spiritual, the permanent element in world of change, revealed by Christ. The significance of His Sonship.