



# ECCE HOMO

A SURVEY OF  
THE LIFE AND WORK OF JESUS CHRIST

'Auctor nominis ejus Christus Tiberio imperitante per procuratorem  
pontium Pilatum supplicio affectus erat' TACIT. *Ann.* l. 15

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# PREFACE

TO THE

FIFTH EDITION.

OBJECTIONS have been taken to the title of this book, as not exactly describing its purpose. Probably no short title that could have been devised would have escaped the same objections. If the writer could have conveyed his intention completely in his title, he might have spared his preface.

He is surprised to find his kind and cordial critic in *Macmillan's Magazine* quietly discussing the possibility that that preface may prove to have been a fiction. He fully agrees with those who declare that any such mystification on such a subject would be immoral.

One word he wishes to say about the charge of confident dogmatism which is brought against him. Dogmatism is no doubt used by superiors to inferiors, but it is also used in conversation between people who feel themselves perfectly equal. Expressions of modest deference, confessions of fallibility and imperfect knowledge, are wearisome between equals. The writer addresses throughout free inquirers like himself, and uses the tone which he would like others to adopt towards him. His book is not a book of authority, but

of inquiry and suggestion; it is intended not to close discussion, but to open it. It asks for consideration and, where it is wrong, for refutation. There may, however, be some who complain with more reason of dogmatism. There may be readers who belong to some school or sect with which the writer has little sympathy, and whose favourite opinions and interpretations he has no doubt in many cases entirely overlooked. Such readers will naturally be offended when they find what they regard as obviously true treated as obviously false. But they ought to consider that on such a subject as Christianity no one can write for all at once; every writer must suppose that he will be read only by those who will grant him some general postulates which are by no means self-evident; the reader who cannot grant these, ought to know that the book was not intended for him. If it had been necessary to prove every point which able and famous writers have denied, assuredly those for whom *Ecce Homo* was written would never have had patience to read it, nor indeed would the author have had patience to write it.

As this book contains no criticism of documents some reviewers have supposed that the Author wrote without any criterion in his mind by which to test the veracity of the narratives from which he drew his conclusions, and that he simply assumed the truth of everything which struck his fancy or suited a preconceived theory. It may therefore be advisable to give here a short account of the method he pursued.

He was concerned with four writers who, in probable nearness to the events they record and means of acquiring