

WHO WAS JESUS CHRIST?

II.

THAT Jesus was either a wilful imposter or a misguided enthusiast has, in the previous paper, been shown unworthy of acceptance. Another answer to the question, "Who was Jesus Christ?" may be examined now.

III. *It has been asserted that Jesus Christ was merely a perfect man.*

Passing over the consideration of the Arian and Socinian controversies, we shall refer to the late Dr. Channing as a representative of the view which we have just stated. While Channing was unable to see in Jesus more than perfect humanity, he must not be classed with the writers to whom we have already referred. He had an ardent love for Jesus and a sincere admiration for His character, and has done much by his writings to exalt Jesus before the eyes of others. He says, "When I hear, as I do, men disputing about Jesus and imagining that they know him by settling some theory as to his generation in time or eternity, or as to his rank in the scale of being: I feel that their knowledge of him is about as great as I should have of some saint or hero by studying his genealogy. These controversies have built up a technical theology, but give no insight into the heart and mind of Jesus, and without this the true knowledge of him cannot be enjoyed. And here I would observe not in the spirit of reproach, but from a desire to do good, that I know not a more effectual method of hiding Jesus from us, of keeping us strangers to him, than the inculcation of the doctrine, which makes him the same being with the Father, makes him God himself. This doctrine throws over him a mistiness. For myself when I attempt to bring it home, I have not a real being before me, not a soul which I can understand and sympathise with, but a vague shifting image, which gives nothing of the stability of knowledge. A being consisting of two natures, two souls, one divine and another human, one finite and another infinite, is made up of qualities, which destroy one another and leave nothing for distinct apprehension. This compound of different minds and of contradictory