

And if this be true of the disciple of Christ, how much more is it true of Christ Himself. Christ does not expand this thought but suggests it. But the thought is pivotal. John is great indeed, but Christ is far greater. John is a wonderful reformer, but, as he says himself, he is not worthy to unloose Christ's shoe-latchet. Who is this reformer, towering thus above the greatest men of His age? Who, indeed, but the Messiah.

An incidental proof of this is the fact that John as the forerunner of Christ was the fulfilment of prophecy. "This is Elijah, who is to come."

CHRIST'S CLAIM AND INFLUENCE ARE PROOFS.

Immediately after, a sinful woman threw herself in penitence at Christ's feet, and He said, "Thy sins are forgiven." Here was an astonishing claim. No one but God could forgive sin. What did Christ mean? Why, that He was the Messiah. He afterwards repeatedly affirmed that He was. Was this claim a proof? Yes, in a sense. We should expect such a claim in One who was the Messiah. It was at least a requisite. But the claim rises to the dignity of evidence when we consider Christ's character. His testimony was unimpeachable. No one ventured to question His statements. His life, His power, His manifest contact with God, were assurances that He could not falsify and could not be deceived.

But the greatest proof of the truthfulness of the claim to forgive sin was in the outward result on the sinner. Her changed life in Christ's presence evidenced His power. Under His touch a harlot became a saint, the vilest put on the sweetest and purest life. He who can cause this surely must be what He claims to be.

But the force of the argument lies here in the way in which Christ's power over the sinner was manifested. He awakened in her, as in all who knew Him, an ardent love. It is thus with no other earthly teacher. Manu, Zoroaster, Confucius, Plato,—none of them ever ventured to claim or were able to inspire such love as Christ's followers always feel toward their Lord. This personal affection for an unseen Christ springing up afresh in every converted soul, as warm to-day after crossing the bridge of the centuries as when the apostles followed Christ in Palestine, is the marvel of the world and the marked peculiarity of the Christian religion. It means that Christ is more than man, that He is the consummate flower of manhood, that He is the One sent to give men life, and to show them how to live.

Our Young People and Church Doctrine.

Written for the Review.

It has been said, and not without cause, that too little attention is paid by our Young Peoples' Societies to the study of the doctrinal teachings of our Church. The topics used by many, while excellent in themselves, fail to meet the need of systematic theological training in the spiritual growth and development of the young men and young women. To be able to give a reason for the faith that is in them, there must be an intelligent grasp of the fundamental doctrines of our religion, and this cannot be obtained without some definite course of study and instruction. One fears that in some circles the shorter catechism is losing its hold, and that the young people in the Presbyterian Church to-day are less well acquainted with that marvellous compendium of Bible truth than were those of a generation ago. This ought not to be, and the need should be urged upon Christian Endeavor Societies and similar organizations of giving more attention to this important factor in the religious education of the young people. Give ten minutes to the shorter catechism in your meetings; why not take up a question from week to week, and get the pastor or some other competent person, to talk for a few moments upon it. The Review is doing what it can to advance this good work, as is evidenced by the Christian Endeavor department which shows how the regular topic may be illustrated and enforced by reference to the shorter catechism. It is to be hoped that all its readers will make good use of this interesting department, that some of us have found so helpful.

"Christ and Criticism."

For the Review.

A few words on this subject may not be amiss at this hour of the day. We notice the relation between Christ and critical problems variously estimated. There are some who are very jealous lest criticism rob them of Christ altogether by minimizing His authority. On this account they regard all critical processes with suspicion.

There are others who seem to tread on holy ground with undue familiarity. Nothing is too sacred, or indeed sacred at all when criticism is the question. It is evident that there is a twofold danger which must be guarded against.

I. On the one hand there is the danger arising from the temptations due to criticism as a science. No doubt it is a fascinating study, and one is apt to be carried away with its peculiar excitement. The method of criticism is essentially that of the dissecting-room. In this fascinating process there is the danger of forgetting that, in this case, the subject is a live one, and will not allow the use of the knife *ad lib.* with impunity. That this danger is real and not merely imaginary is evident from the large proportion of radical critics in the field, critics who have discarded the supernatural altogether. Now, that criticism which disregards the supernatural on *a priori* principles thereby forfeits the suffrages of all intelligent men.

Unless a proposition is manifestly absurd it is entitled to impartial examination on its own merit. Hence all claims whether made by men or books are to be treated seriously and worthy of credence until proved otherwise. No one has acquired a monopoly of truth on the ground of which his *ipse dixit* must be taken as absolutely true. Accordingly, any one who expects the ear of intelligent men must himself be ever ready to lend his own; and that just in the same spirit of honest discrimination which he solicits for himself. Now the Bible makes certain claims. If it is entitled to consideration at all it is entitled to it as a whole and on its own terms. Prejudiced criticism is unscientific. It can never arrive at an unbiassed conclusion. On this account alone radical criticism stands self-condemned. While claiming to be so intensely scientific it ought not to violate at the outstart a cordial principle of science.

II. On the otherhand there is the danger of regarding the Bible as supernatural in every detail, extending to every jot and tittle. So intensely sacred that it may be regarded in many quarters as the Ephesians regarded Diana.

The human element is disregarded just as the radicals disregard the supernatural element.

A little reflection will disclose this to be as fraught with danger as that. It leaves no room for human freedom, either in the process of revelation or in criticism. No man, however saintly, seems to be trusted with sufficient intelligence or common honesty to record a simple narration of obvious facts without the special supernatural influence of the spirit. Especially is this halo of sacredness cast around the words of the Saviour. His words are absolute in their authority, and no criticism can be tolerated. Even when His reference is incidental and indirect it must be taken as closing that particular question against debate. Sir Wm. Dawson, and Dr. Beattie, among others, write with peculiar solemnity on this point. Critics are warned by them in the most solemn language lest they rob the world of the Christ by presuming to criticise His words. To say that Christ accommodated Himself to human limitations in His day is to ask them to believe that Christ would condone and even encourage error.

This raises a simple question in our mind, namely: Can this be? Is it after all unworthy of the Christ to accommodate Himself to the modes of thought prevalent in His day? What are the facts? Do we find Christ on any occasion accommodating Himself to human ignorance, and human limitation? Does it involve any compromise on the part of any one to accommodate himself to ignorance? In answer to these queries—does not the whole economy of revelation point to the principle of accommodation on the part of the Revealer? 1. All schools admit the principle of progress in revelation. This surely is another way of saying that the Revealer