

6 *Christ the Personal Source of Religion and Theology.*

who are not a few, make free use of the play of fancy and growth of legend to explain away what they cannot accept. But the inexorable demand of historical testimony has with slow but sure foot, driven within ever narrowing lines not of centuries but of decades the alleged mythical accretions that have gathered around Christ. Historical methods and literary criticism have restored to us one after another of the positions once occupied by legend, and now even the most advanced critics acknowledge the substantial accuracy of our synoptical gospels; and what the Christian knows to be the most profane and true picture of Christ, I mean that given us by John, is being generally conceded by all shades of opponents to have no small amount of historic truth. While behind all this men like Keim and Weizacker are forced to acknowledge that there is a mysterious element in Christ they cannot fathom. Every attempt of a ruthless criticism to lay hands on Christ has been like the fruitless effort to grasp a sunbeam, or shatter its prismatic rays gleaming on the surface of a quiet stream. The sunbeam eludes the grasp, and hovering over the spot where it was mirrored again pieces together its broken reflection as the water grows still. Do what men would there remained *Christ*. How can you explain Him? Even should the gospels be untrue and be packed with the fancies of the wonder-loving second century, yet it is from them that the Christ we have is come, and what is the secret of the magnificent sway he still continues to wield over the hearts of men?

The theological student can never afford to let his metaphysical speculations lead him away from the historical figure, Christ. Christianity is built on the facts of the Life, Death, and Resurrection of Christ as they are given to us in the New Testament, and it is our safety to hold fast to these. The reason of that is obvious. If you and I are to lay hold on the living Christ, the Son of God, we must clearly understand what He is; and we can only accomplish this through those who knew what he was. A man may come and tell me that God is my father, that He will forgive my sin, that he will give me peace and eternal life. My heart responds, I hope so, I could wish it to be so: but the world as it is with its woe, I with my sin, remorse, guilt, my mind with its doubts, my failing love that grows chill when no loved one