

passages on which they rely. But I have already, in my second paper, endeavoured to show that it rests on a very insecure basis; *viz.* the assumption that God's universal purpose of salvation will be accomplished in each individual embraced by that purpose. Of this we have no proof.

The teaching of Mr. White has found an able advocate on the Continent in Dr. Petavel, Lecturer at the University of Geneva, who has written several pamphlets on the subject, especially three essays, of which an English translation has been published in America, with a preface by Mr. White. Dr. Petavel labours to prove that man is not naturally immortal, and that death is the sinner's doom. But he has not cleared away the ambiguity which gathers round the words *immortal* and *death*; and he adduces no proofs of his main thesis, namely, that the wicked will be ultimately annihilated, except those already discussed.

In my next paper I shall deal with a small but very able work by Dr. Clemance, and with a most comprehensive and useful volume by Mr. Fyfe; and shall then conclude this series of papers by a summary of the results attained.

JOSEPH AGAR BEET.

BREVIA.

“*Imago Christi.*”¹—In accordance with Gibbon's useful rule I set down, before opening this book, what I expected to derive from it; and on closing it I compared my expectations with the result. “What was the actual aspect of Jesus? What was His manner? How does His personal conduct stand in relation to the ethics of modern life? What is the connexion between the moral nature of Christ and His redemptive work?” These were the questions with which the reading began, and on each of these points much light had been shed before it was finished.

¹ *Imago Christi.* By Rev. James Stalker, M.A., D.D. (London: Hodder and Stoughton.)

Here is a book of the times, a book which could only have been produced at this stage of theological and social development; yet here is a book which possibly only Dr. Stalker could have written. There are many who have Dr. Stalker's learning—though even here it is to be feared that only a few have combined, as he has done, those apparently remote fields of study, the best Puritan literature and modern German theology—but few have the exquisite skill to make learning unobtrusive, and to render the products of much study a delight to the heart, as well as a possession for the mind. There may be many living writers and preachers who have Dr. Stalker's freshness and originality in dealing with the New Testament literature; but there are few, if any, who, conscious of this power, employ it in humble subordination to a devout and spiritual purpose, and with reverent docility to scholars and thinkers who have gone before them.

Here is a man who reads widely, and yet continues to think, who knows books well, but Christ better. And yet, if it is not impertinent to say so, this is a book full of good things, rather than a good book. It is a little overridden by its method, and suggests its own weaknesses by the way in which it avows its purpose. The avowed object is to sketch the person and the conduct of Jesus as an example for our imitation, because, according to Porphyry's derivation, *imago* is really *imitago*. In pursuit of this object the author examines with close observation and discriminating delicacy all "the wealth that is packed within the narrow circumference of the four gospels." The idea, he tells us, was suggested by four discourses in Schleiermacher's *Predigten*, on Christ, as a Teacher, as a Miracle-worker, in Social life, and Among His disciples. He has followed out in detail Bengel's pregnant hint: "Christus multum et vultu et nutu docuit." He has used the evangelic narrative in the same spirit and with the same striking results as Delitzsch used it in the incomparable monograph, *Ein Tag in Capernaum*. He has received in a marked degree what he beautifully calls the spiritual *charisma* of the historic spirit; and every chapter seems to give us a new glimpse into how Jesus actually appeared to His contemporaries, or into that inner life which was revealed by His manner and speech.

But the wish to present Christ as an example in every phase of human life has proved a snare; in parts the reader feels that the inferences are traced from insufficient facts, or that the moral

drawn is a little too fine-spun. The spirit of criticism is uncomfortably aroused, and prevents that perfect attitude of appreciation and receptiveness in which the lessons of these beautiful studies are most likely to be assimilated. Would it not be better, for instance, to admit that we have not enough information about the home life of Christ to make it an obvious and profitable example to us; and that the one incident of the childhood which is recorded for us, namely, the delay in the temple, is an instance of how ordinary children ought not to act, because ordinary children are not the Messiah, or the Sent of God? Or again, can it be fairly said that the conduct of Jesus affords us a serviceable example for our own conduct as citizens? Does He not rather evade such an implication by scrupulously keeping free from the political life of His time? And is not the explanation of His conduct to be found in this, that He Himself was Christ a King, who had come to bear witness to the truth, a mission which He would have frustrated if He had given us an example of how a good citizen should act when his country is in a condition of political servitude? If He had taken that part in the public life of His day which it is our duty, as His followers, to take in the public life of our own day, He could not have accomplished the work on which our discipleship to Him is founded.

Again, the weakness of this attempt to derive a direct example from the life of Christ for all spheres and conditions of modern activity appears in the chapter on "Christ as a Teacher." The uniqueness of Christ, "sent by the Father" to "send" others to witness for Him, makes His example almost inapplicable to ordinary Christians; and consequently Dr. Stalker is impelled to almost overshadow the example given in Christ's relations with His disciples by a most instructive account of Tholuck's influence on his students. And in an earlier chapter on Friendship, where there is a striking and characteristic defence of the place which that beautiful relation holds in Christianity, one cannot help feeling that our author is a little embarrassed by the confusion which his method has introduced, and in the end his ideas of friendship are shaped more by Aristotle's *Ethics* and Cicero's *De Amicitia* than by the example of Him who, though a Friend in a certain sense, was something so infinitely greater, that the relation of friendship is submerged rather than explained. Indeed, there is much in Dr. Stalker's book which by its tenuity suggests the

question whether St. Paul's method of not knowing Christ after the flesh at all, nor even referring to His example except as a sufferer and as a religious force, or the method of the *Imitatio*, which never contemplates the human side of Christ divorced from His unique and Divine existence, will not finally be established as the fullest and most fruitful aspect of the Truth. The department of Christian literature of which *Ecce Homo* is the most brilliant illustration seems to reach a kind of climax in such a work as Dr. Stalker's, and to pass over into something greater than itself. The life portrayed in the four gospels, full as it is of beautiful and touching human traits, is essentially a Divine life, and except so far as a supernatural power is derived by the believer from the Saviour to become a new creature, it is, strictly speaking, not imitable by us at all; while, on the other hand, when that supernatural power is received, the life of Christ in us becomes more important than the life which He lived on earth for us, develops in ways which that earthly life was never intended to enter, and becomes like an organic spiritual growth, ever adapting itself to the changes of the world's evolution.

The lasting power of the *Imitatio*, it seems to me, is derived from this fact, that it is the inward Christ with whom it is dealing all along, and the life lived in the flesh is regarded merely as a more or less fragmentary illustration of that supernatural and eternal life. The inferiority of *Imago Christi* to the *Imitatio* is due to an implicit attempt to present the expanded and spiritually developed Christ-life always under the forms of those few years, sinless and beautiful, wonderful and heart-moving, but still only preparatory, which were "passed beneath the Syrian blue."

With this remark however the ungracious task of criticism ceases, and I pass to a grateful and appreciative acknowledgment of all the good things which are here so richly provided and so delicately served.

Dr. Stalker has in his art something of the pre-Raphaelite spirit. Many of the happiest touches are due to the brooding minuteness of his presentations. It is by a discerning reflection on detail that he is able to bring out the bearing of Christ's relation with the synagogue on our own relations to the Church, and to find in Jesus an authority for the patient endurance of tedious sermons, and for the union in Church fellowship and public worship which is to an increasing number of modern minds

so distasteful. It is by the same serviceable faculty that he brings out the Christian duty of Church reform, and leads us to resist the system by which "services are multiplied, new forms are invented, and the memory of God's grace is lost in the achievements of human merit" (p. 79). Again, he finds a new sanction for the weary task of the student in mastering Hebrew and Greek, and for the long labours of the missionary for the acquisition of foreign languages, in the remark that probably Jesus Himself had to learn Hebrew, and, in the absence of any copy of the Scriptures in His own possession, was constrained to acquire His vast knowledge of the Hebrew text, as distinct from the Greek or Aramaic versions, by privileged visits to the synagogue, "perhaps through ingratiating Himself with the keeper, as an enthusiastic musician may do with the organist of a church, in order that he may be permitted to use the instrument" (p. 151). He realizes the long and laborious study of the texts which provided Jesus with an unfailing armoury of quotations, and led him to that familiarity with Moses and Elias which culminated in the revelation of their persons to Him on the mount. There is something quite luminous in Dr. Stalker's way of entering into the hidden movements of Christ's thought, of following His sensations of joy over the workmanlike accomplishment of His task (p. 177), or of shame and torture under the scorn of wicked men (p. 190). And few writers have traced more clearly and beautifully the development which must have taken place in His character by virtue of His human, albeit perfect, nature.

"Simply because he was a man, with a human history and a human development, He had to ascend a stair, so to speak, of obedience and perfection; and although every step was surmounted at its own precise time, and He emerged upon it perfect, yet every new step required a new effort, and, when surmounted, brought Him to a higher stage of perfection, and into a wider circle of obedience" (p. 196).

Following in the steps of Professor Seeley, who discerned the cause of Christ's stooping to write on the ground, when the woman taken in adultery was brought to Him, in a sense of natural shame at the revolting story which was told, Dr. Stalker makes the happy conjecture that the reason why our Lord so frequently forbade the subjects of His gracious cures to make Him known was simply the natural modesty of one who is literally pained by any publicity given to his good deeds; while

a subtle distinction made in the note (p. 312) is a good illustration of our author's balancing psychological method.

Nor is it possible to be too grateful for the insight—the imaginative insight—with which some difficult passages are explained. There is, for instance, a bold conjecture that the *ἐνεβριμῆσατο τῷ πνεύματι* of John xi. 33 describes the indignation with which the Lord of life confronted the bold usurper death; and if the explanation is derived from Dr. Hutchison, and is due to patient study of others rather than to unaided originality, that hardly diminishes our obligations to a writer who has the art of bringing out of his treasury things which others might possess, but could not transform into current coin. There is a certain charm of style, a chastened imagery, and a lucid simplicity, which must always make whatever Dr. Stalker writes readable.

“He earned the name of martyr, and Himself became the leader of the noble army of martyrs, which in a thin line deploys through the centuries.”

“There is a mission of social kindness still remaining to be opened up as one of the agencies of Christianity.”

“When the dust of business so fills your room that it threatens to choke you, sprinkle it with the water of prayer, and then you can cleanse it out with comfort and expedition.”

A man who can write like that is sure to be listened to, and to him the multitude will be indebted even for the thoughts of writers, who may be even more original, but are less felicitous.

It may be asked, To what school of theologians does Dr. Stalker belong—a man who has shaped his thoughts on such dissimilar thinkers as Owen, Goodwin, Bunyan, Baxter, Fuller, and Jeremy Taylor, on the one hand, and Rothe, Martensen, Novalis, Tholuck, and Schleiermacher, on the other—a man who does not disdain the aid even of rationalists like Hausrath? Probably he would prefer to be classed with no school at present; and meanwhile many schools will claim him. The old orthodoxy may put in a plea for him because he holds to plenary inspiration, to eternal punishment, and to the atonement: but it will be a little puzzled to find him venturing to emphasise the assertion of the parable, that the eternal punishment is to be meted out to those who fail in the practical benevolence which the Redeemer demands from men for men (p. 219); it will be alarmed to find him illustrating the method of atonement, and of Christ's becoming sin for us, by the case of a pure member in an impure family

enduring the reproach and shame of the rest (p. 195); and it will be possibly indignant to hear him recognising the "greater works which the Church should do, because the Lord went to the Father," in the triumphs of science and in the achievements of political and social reform (p. 216). But no one can read these pages without arriving at the conclusion that, if this is not orthodoxy, orthodoxy is no longer a living or a tenable position; and we may reasonably hope that a man so spiritually in earnest, a man who has entered so deeply into the mind and the life of our Redeemer, and yet retains so much freshness and independence of thought as Dr. Stalker exhibits in this volume, may be one of God's appointed agents to enlarge the old orthodoxy, and to bring about the longed for reconciliation between the faith that was once delivered to the saints and the knowledge which has more recently been delivered to the thinkers.

R. F. HORTON.

TO THE EDITOR OF "THE EXPOSITOR."

DEAR SIR,—The Dean of Peterborough (THE EXPOSITOR, October, p. 253) has inadvertently ascribed to me an interpretation of the noble passage, Genesis i. 2, which I certainly cannot be said to have "recently" adopted. Probably he inferred this from the reference to my article "Cosmogony" in the *Encyclopædia Britannica* given by Delitzsch in his *New Commentary on Genesis*. The view there proposed (more than ten years ago) I should now modify; but it is, at any rate, not that which is stated by the Dean. Nor from Delitzsch's note could any reader guess what it was. Moreover, in references to this *Encyclopædia*, ought not the date of the volume always to be given?

Yours faithfully,

T. K. CHEYNE.

OXFORD, Oct. 16th, 1890.