

nity for careful inspection of this life now, and yet there is no flaw, no stain: the harmony of His life is not in any sense marred; He is still the perfect model of the perfect human life. Not a mere object of admiration—you do not merely admire Christ. That is not your standpoint. That word "admire" is not a word that occurs in your Bible. We do not recognize it in our sermons. It is devotion; it is worship; that is the sentiment which we cherish towards the Lord Jesus. It is not mere sentiment. Christ is not simply a hero—some one to wonder at, and strike men with astonishment. His life is something different, and something greater. His life is an example—an example which all men might follow. No one in his senses would dream of living a life like Christ, so obscure and so self-sacrificing—no one would care to tread in His footsteps and stoop so low unless they looked at the whole plan, as a complete example, at the unity of aim, at the supreme objects to the attainment, by His life and death, of those distinguishing features which made the Lord Jesus Christ what He was. Men like Him and they, great and small, high and low, cultured and uncultured, in every age of the world, in the poorest and most flourishing circumstances, had seen such beauty, such Divine-human beauty, in the outline of this great example of Christ that in a spirit of humility and intense devotion they had resolved to try to live like Him, to copy with as much fidelity as they could in their life the Pattern life. You will now see what the subject of the present discourse is—*The Lord Jesus Christ as an example.*

What is a perfect example? How would you define the perfect man? There are four principal features in such a character. In the first place, a perfect example must be sinless, and we claim this for Christ; He knew no sin; in His mouth was no guile. In the second place, a perfect example must have overcome difficulties and risen superior to the conditions by which He might be hemmed socially. We claim

that for Christ; He was reviled, but He did not turn reviler. There was no deflection from the uniform consistency of His life. In the third place, a perfect example must be more than an example—he must hold out forgiveness of old sins, complete pardon for the past; and in Christ we have one who has borne in His body on the cross the sin of humanity: His death was an atonement for sin. And lastly, a perfect example to be effectual in its action upon life must be no mere tradition, not a mere record of history, not a simple idea, not a theory, not an opinion of the head, not a mere epic—an example after all must be a living man to whom we can turn in all the changeable circumstances of life, certain that he will hear us, and sympathize with us.

1. A perfect example must be sinless. Christ is not a mere fragment of a man: He is absolutely and essentially sinless. He did many things during His sojourn upon earth which no one else could do—did not do one thing which every one else could do. He knew no sin. He could not sin because He would not; He would not sin because He could not. That is not logical, but I cannot help that. He was tempted, but He repulsed temptation. He felt the bitterness of temptation, but He went through it without stain. This is a point which has exercised the minds of many of those who were not followers of Christ. Men have peered into the life of Christ, bringing microscopic criticism to bear upon its minutest details, but have failed to discover a single fault. Voltaire tried, and failed; Strauss has tried, and Renan. They have all failed, and many of them were men whose genius was sufficiently creative in its character to discover faults where there were no faults; but in the case of Christ they found no sin. And yet Christ was no recluse; He was one of the most genial of companions, one of the most social of men: He liked to talk. I know of no one who was more inclined to the pleasant conversations of society than Christ. Who wore his heart upon his sleeve more often than Jesus? Indeed,