

is one and the same; the experiences of men in history are ever teaching us how various has been the apprehension of Christ even in Christianity, even in Christendom. We point to these errors, not that we may pride ourselves on superiority, but that we may be ever learning by the light with which God "shows all things in the slow history of their ripening."

The answers of men to the question, What think ye of the Christ? have been expressed partly in their *methods of life*, partly in their *theories*, partly in the fashion of their art. It is one more proof of His divine perfection that even the best of men, in age after age, have failed to do more than estimate *some single element* of His work and character. To the *Crusaders* He was the mirror of all chivalry; to the *monks* the model of all asceticism; to the *schoolmen* the teacher of all theology: to some Christians He has seemed to be the most rapt of mystics; to others, the most practical of philanthropists. Even men of the world have seized on differing phases of His grandeur: to the French Revolutionist He was the greatest of political reformers; to an English poet—

"The best of men
That ere wore earth about Him was a sufferer,
A soft, meek, patient, humble, tranquil spirit,
The first true gentleman that ever breathed."

His life was confessedly the copy over which has been faintly traced the biography of all the truest saints amid all their wide diversities of conception and of view. In meek humility, in fiery thunders, in soft, silent pictures,—in the sweetness of all holy women, in the nobleness of all holy men,—we do but catch the single gleams of His radiance, we do but hear single accents of His voice. His life was not only a perfect type of *each* excellence, but a perfect *consummation* of them *all*.

This *partialness* of imitation has arisen mainly from the diversities of theory. Take, by way of illustration, that celebrated and exquisite book of devotion, "The Imitation of Christ." No human being, I suppose, could read that book without being the better for it. And yet even in this book the imitation recommended to us is startlingly incomplete. It hardly contemplates anything beyond the sacred selfishness of struggle for individual salvation. It leaves completely out of sight that divine summary of the Savior's earthly work which tells us that "he went about doing good."

Yet by the humble study of Scripture and of history, and by the light of that spirit of man which is the candle of the Lord, we may, if we approach the subject in humble sincerity, avoid some forms of error or one-sidedness which have existed for ages, and have clouded His brightness, and hindered the spread of His kingdom in the world.

1. And first I would say, It is of primary importance to represent Christ as a *living* Christ, not as a *dead* Christ. I think that the warn-