

THE LIFE OF ST. PAUL

Published @ 2017 Trieste Publishing Pty Ltd

ISBN 9780649635320

The Life of St. Paul by James Stalker & Wilbert W. White

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JAMES STALKER & WILBERT W. WHITE

**THE LIFE
OF ST. PAUL**

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LIFE OF ST. PAUL

BY 1848-

PROF. JAMES STALKER, D.D.

AUTHOR OF "THE LIFE OF JESUS CHRIST"

WITH FOREWORD BY

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NEW AND REVISED EDITION

New York Chicago Toronto
Fleming H. Revell Company
London and Edinburgh

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FOREWORD

BY WILBERT W. WHITE, D.D.

When asked to write a foreword to Dr. Stalker's "Life of St. Paul," I thought of two things: first the impression which I had received from a sermon that I heard Dr. Stalker preach a good many years ago in his own pulpit in Glasgow, Scotland, and secondly, the honor conferred in this privilege of writing a foreword to one of Dr. Stalker's books.

I felt sure before even glancing at the pages that I should be pleased and profited by their perusal.

The first thing that I did was to glance over the pages for the headings of chapters and the summaries of paragraphs. I found the arrangement admirable, and would advise those into whose hands this fine volume may come to follow this plan.

The only sentence apart from the headings which I read in the aforesaid preview was the last one in Chapter X, and that because the closing words, "the best of friends," especially arrested my attention.

I wondered before I read this sentence if the author was saying of Paul that he was going out of the world to the One who had been to him the best of friends. From this you may gather—what you like. Only I felt sure before reading the pages that Dr. Stalker would interpret Paul in a manner such as I could enthusiastically approve.

And now having read the volume I heartily commend it. It is the best brief life of Paul of which I know.

Before reading the book I said to myself, I shall put down what I think the writer will make the heart of the secret of Paul. It was this: The key to Paul's efficiency was his wholehearted persistent loyalty to Christ, his Saviour and Friend. He was not disobedient to the heavenly vision. He stood fast in the liberty wherewith Christ set him free. He was three things all stated in one verse, and put thus: "I am crucified with Christ—Christ liveth in me—I live in faith."

Here are some, a very few of many striking, true thoughts presented by Dr. Stalker:

"Paul was the interpreter of Christ, saying what Christ Himself would have said under the circumstances."

"Paul's entire theology was nothing but the explication of his own conversion."

"In bringing Paul West, Providence gave to Europe a blessed priority, and the fate of our continent was decided, when Paul crossed the *Ægean*."

"A secret of Paul's success was his sense of having a mission and his freedom alike from the bondage of bigotry and the bondage of liberty."

A writer recently gave me this thought about Paul: "What makes St. Paul so interesting is his conception of the dimensions of life."

Back to Christ? Yes, the whole world needs it, but the way to get back to Christ is through the Apostolic interpretation of Christ in words and life. This is the only way, and Dr. Stalker's book is a great help in this direction.

THE LIFE OF ST. PAUL

CHAPTER I

HIS PLACE IN HISTORY

Paragraphs 1-12.

- 1, 2. *The Man Needed by the Time.*
- 3, 4. *A Type of Christian Character.*
- 5-8. *The Thinker of Christianity.*
- 9-12. *The Missionary of the Gentiles.*

1. **The Man for the Time.**—There are some men whose lives it is impossible to study without receiving the impression that they were expressly sent into the world to do a work required by the juncture of history on which they fell. The story of the Reformation, for example, cannot be read by a devout mind without wonder at the providence by which such great men as Luther, Zwingli, Calvin and Knox were simultaneously raised up in different parts of Europe to break the yoke of the papacy and republish the gospel of grace. When the Evangelical Revival, after blessing England, was about to break into Scotland and end the dreary reign of Moderatism, there was raised up in Thomas Chalmers a mind of such capacity as completely to absorb the new movement into itself, and of such sympathy and influence as to diffuse it to every corner of his native land.

2. This impression is produced by no life more than by that of the Apostle Paul. He was given to Christian-

ity when it was in its most rudimentary beginnings. It was not, indeed, feeble, nor can any mortal man be spoken of as indispensable to it; for it contained within itself the vigor of a divine and immortal existence, which could not but have unfolded itself in the course of time. But, if we recognize that God makes use of means which commend themselves even to our eyes as suited to the ends He has in view, then we must say that the Christian movement at the moment when Paul appeared upon the stage was in the utmost need of a man of extraordinary endowments, who, becoming possessed with its genius, should incorporate it with the general history of the world; and in Paul it found the man it needed.

3. **A Type of Christian Character.**—Christianity obtained in Paul an incomparable type of Christian character. It already, indeed, possessed the perfect model of human character in the person of its Founder. But He was not as other men, because from the beginning He had no sinful imperfection to struggle with; and Christianity still required to show what it could make of imperfect human nature. Paul supplied the opportunity of exhibiting this. He was naturally of immense mental stature and force. He would have been a remarkable man even if he had never become a Christian. The other apostles would have lived and died in the obscurity of Galilee if they had not been lifted into prominence by the Christian movement; but the name of Saul of Tarsus would have been remembered still in some character or other even if Christianity had never existed. Christianity got the opportunity in him of showing to the world the whole force it contained. Paul was aware of this himself, though he expressed it with perfect modesty, when he said, "For this cause I obtained mercy, that in me as chief

might Jesus Christ show forth all His long-suffering for an ensample of them who should hereafter believe on Him to everlasting life."

4. His conversion proved the power of Christianity to overcome the strongest prejudices and to stamp its own type on a large nature by a revolution both instantaneous and permanent. Paul's was a personality so strong and original that no other man could have been less expected to sink himself in another; but, from the moment when he came into contact with Christ, he was so overmastered with His influence that he never afterward had any other desire than to be the mere echo and reflection of Him to the world.

But, if Christianity showed its strength in making so complete a conquest of Paul, it showed its worth no less in the kind of man it made of him when he had given himself up to its influence. It satisfied the needs of a peculiarly hungry nature, and never to the close of his life did he betray the slightest sense that this satisfaction was abating. His constitution was originally compounded of fine materials, but the spirit of Christ, passing into these, raised them to a pitch of excellence altogether unique.

Nor was it ever doubtful either to himself or to others that it was the influence of Christ which made him what he was. The truest motto for his life would be his own saying, "I live, yet not I, but Christ liveth in me." Indeed, so perfectly was Christ formed in him that we can now study Christ's character in his, and beginners may perhaps learn even more of Christ from studying Paul's life than from studying Christ's own. In Christ Himself there was a blending and softening of all the excellences which makes His greatness elude the glance of the begin-