

THE  
GOSPEL OF THE SECULAR LIFE.

**Sermons Preached at Oxford.**

WITH A

*PREFATORY ESSAY.*

BY

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### III.

## **The Supremacy of Christ over the Secular Life.**

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## The Supremacy of Christ over the Secular Life.

*(Preached before the University of Oxford, April 27, 1879.)*

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“Thou sayest that I am a King.”—JOHN xviii. 36.

“All power is given unto me in heaven and in earth.”—

MATTHEW xxviii. 18.

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IT has been sometimes said of late years that Christianity has resigned the leadership of the world, and that the friends of humanity must now step in to act as a natural Providence and conduct the affairs of the race. There is some truth in the complaint, whatever we may think of the proposed remedy. For there has been at all times a tendency among Christians to abandon the claim of universal sovereignty which was at first made in the name of their Lord. The claim may be made in words, but left in a purely ideal state; and when no attempt is made to give it a practical application, it is in effect abandoned. A Christianity which embraces but a part of human life, while it adjourns its fuller claim to the world beyond the grave, is certainly not the religion of One who says, “All power is given unto me in heaven and in earth.”

Jesus Christ is all in all. His followers cannot

be content to claim for Him anything less than sovereignty. We may dispute about the precise mode in which that sovereignty is to be expressed, and may not be content with the theological terms in which past ages have defined it. We may admit that those who have sought to enforce this sovereignty as a practical thing at various times have failed. But the failure has been due to the mistakes of later times, not to the falsehood of the original claim. Such failures cannot destroy the truth of the claim, or its practical character. Christ is still the Son of God, and the true King of mankind, and of the universe. For us, as for St. Paul, "though there be gods many, and lords many, there is but one Lord Jesus Christ, by whom are all things, and we by Him."

The end towards which we look is not that all men should be bound to certain rules of life, nor that they should all be alike in the public worship of God, nor that the anticipation of the world to come should overpower the duties and interests of the present ; but that all human life should be lived out under the dominion of Christ. This, which has sometimes been confessed in words, has rarely been steadily contemplated in fact. The dominion of Christ has been looked upon as if it were like the rule of an earthly king, who guides the outer life, but cannot reach the inner ; or, again, by a revulsion to the opposite extreme, as if it were merely a spirit or sentiment which hardly cares for the body or the general life. And as to the means by which it is to be enforced,

men have varied from the advocacy of stern compulsion to that of simple persuasion. But, in truth, the design of Christianity is this, that human life should be lived out with perfect freedom, but under the empire of the master motive of love, in the fear of God, in the belief of His fatherly redeeming mercy. And the means by which this is to be attained embrace all the methods by which human life is conducted. The spirit of the Gospel sets free all the faculties, it inspires them with the energy of love; and it accepts all the means which the free life of mankind invents for reaching that development. So far as man is an individual, so far Christianity is an individual influence. So far as man is a social being, Christianity is social. If man requires laws, the Christian spirit can enter with those laws. If there are parts of human life which must always lie beyond the reach of law, Christianity vindicates that exemption from law, and furnishes men with a stimulus and safeguard from a higher source than that of law. If it be true that man is utilitarian, what is this but that the Father of Jesus Christ wishes all his children to aim at each other's happiness? If idealism has a place, as it must have, even in the most utilitarian system, does not a follower of Christ hear the voice of his Lord saying to him constantly, "I came to bear witness to truth; he that is of truth heareth my voice;" or, again, "Be perfect as your Father in heaven is perfect;" or, again, "My kingdom is not of this world."

It has been maintained at times that Christianity is concerned with conduct, and conduct only, and its vindication has been rested by a writer of striking originality on the ground that conduct is three-fourths or perhaps seven-eighths of human life. But do we pass out from the Divine influence of our Lord, when we come to the other fourth or eighth part, when we go beyond the limits of the serious and moral view of life? In the realms of art or of music, which are so restful to the human spirit, has Christ nothing to say to us? In purely literary pursuits, or those of abstract science, does the human spirit range apart from His? In recreation and in mirth are we no longer His disciples? Is the only question to be asked as to any course of action, how does this bear on the regulation of conduct? Or if we get beyond that question, are we wandering without a guide? If that were so, I cannot see how religion should be the supreme power of life, or Christ its King. There would be a double spirit, or indeed many spirits, at work within us. We should have to make a distinction between Christ and the Father, as Goethe did when he made Werther say, "Perhaps I am not one of those whom the Father has given to Christ, but one of those whom the Father has kept for Himself;" or we should have to divide ourselves between God and no God, to consecrate parts of our time and our faculties as Theistic, and acknowledge the rest as Atheistic. Can human life be thus bisected?

We want a larger definition of faith, and a larger

conception of the spirit of Christ. If faith be the acceptance of statements about God and Christ and the future life, it is true that it cannot be universal. But if it be, as I have maintained on former occasions, a trust in the Father of whom Christ is the image, a sympathy with goodness, an aspiration towards the blessed life, such a faith as this can enter into every part of the soul, like the air which pervades the whole surface of the globe, and gives life to all that breathes and grows upon it.

I desire to show that Christ's spirit is the true guiding power in all spheres of human activity ; that it is not only an inspiring motive, but also suggests the right end to aim at. It must be so if we believe in a redemption for humanity ; for that redemption points to and ensures a blessed state, a holy city, a divine society, in which God shall dwell with men. In that state can we suppose that anything which is good can be left out ? Has the New Jerusalem neither statues, nor pictures, nor stately architecture, nor dramas, nor games ? Is it to be, as M. Renan says of the New Jerusalem of the Revelation, a gaudy and tasteless toy ? Or, as might appear from some religious ideals, are its boys and girls to laugh no more, or its citizens to exercise their minds in no problems but those of morals and sociology ? If such suppositions are impossible, then all who look for a complete redemption must seek to realise the Divine influence in all parts of life, whether grave or gay, whether so-called secular or sacred. They must

begin here, and now, to build up the fabric of a blessed life, which comprehends the whole organisation of a perfect society, ruled by Christ's justice, and inspired by His love.

It will be best, for the purposes of this sermon, to show how this is to be worked out in detail in those spheres of life which are supposed to have least connection with religion. I will take several of these and point out, not merely how the Spirit of Christ may connect itself with them, but how it suggests the object to be aimed at, and presides over the method of reaching it.

1. Here in Oxford let me begin with education. And this is especially appropriate, because the divorce of religion and education is loudly proclaimed in certain quarters, after a long and not inharmonious marriage. "The school for the state, and the Church for God," is the specious but misleading formula in which this divorce has been expressed. What is really meant by this is that the ministers of public worship are no longer to control education. But is there anything in the Christian religion which makes it necessary that the ministers of public worship should control either teaching or research? Is it not much truer to say that public worship is one function or ministry, and the training of youth is another? Is it not a wider and juster view of the Church, which embraces the several ministries as several, than that which would subject all its divers functions to a single order? Let education, if so it be found con-



venient, be conducted without clerical supervision ; absolutely so if necessary. In what way does that expel Christ and His Spirit from it ? May there not be real conscientious religion in a lay teacher ? Even if the teaching of Scripture and the use of prayers were made impossible by our unfortunate differences, that would not make the education unchristian. The care of teachers for pupils, the reverence of pupils for teachers, the common sense of duty, and the sympathy which is engendered by a common work—this is the religion of education. I know not what Christianity demands more than this. Even where, as in America, the almost total exclusion of direct religious teaching from the schools has been attempted, it is found that the spirit of a Christian teacher communicates itself irresistibly to the pupils, and that, even as to religious observances which go on outside the schools, the pupils very commonly follow their teacher. But in our country there is no reason why direct Christian teaching should be excluded. If the spirit of Christian liberality prevails to abate our differences, all that is essential in the way of Christian knowledge can be communicated to the mass of the pupils. Nor is there any reason why the ministers of public worship should not bear in this a conspicuous and fruitful part. But this the spirit of Christ demands, that truth, unfettered by prejudices, whether of the clergy or of any other class, preside over the whole process.

Does the freedom of truth and of love, then, mean that there is to be no system, no guidance ? Is

education and research to go on by desultory, spasmodic, arbitrary impulses? By no means. Christianity is a cosmic as well as a spiritual faith. It has to do with the universe as well as the human spirit. The power of its Lord is over all in heaven and earth. The sense of harmony which love produces extends itself over the whole creation. The Christian Scriptures throughout place man as the spiritual centre of a world in which all things find their place in subordination to him. Christ is the centre of mankind, and mankind is the centre of the world. If that be so, we have a central point round which all knowledge groups itself. The physical and the moral sciences have each their part in the building up of the great human temple in which God dwells; and the highest education is that which gives men a complete conception of the world thus viewed, as centred in humanity and in Christ, its head. Or if this be taken on the practical side, the true education is that which fits a man to bear his part aright among his fellow-men, in the society of which the central principle is love, and which acknowledges Christ as the supreme expression of that love. Thus the spirit of Christ asserts itself as the master power in the sphere of education.

2. Let us pass to a sphere which is commonly dealt with as being far removed from directly Christian influences, and which is hardly touched by ordinary Christian teaching. I mean the sphere of trade. It is said by those who speculate upon the

future, that commerce, which already is so absorbing a pursuit, is destined to grow to far larger dimensions. And this can hardly fail to be the case in England, whether England or America bear the palm of the trade of the future. It is commonly and thoughtlessly assumed that men sell to make their fortunes, and buy to feed and clothe themselves. Is that a true and sufficient account of dealings which occupy a large part of every life? Even so, the question is whether this is done honestly. And it is pretty certain that if there be no motive at work but the pursuit of our own convenience on one side, and of gain on the other, convenience and gain will be degraded into greed and dishonesty. You want a constant motive to raise trade from mere chaffering into dignity, and this motive Christianity supplies. It is evident that trade cannot exist without fair dealing. But where there is fair dealing there is room for love; and if so there ought to be love. Here then is an entrance for the Christian spirit into the whole system of commercial exchanges; and where the Christian spirit enters it at once asserts its supremacy. The higher motive drives out the lower; what you are doing for love you can do no longer merely for gain.

The ideal to which this motive points is this: that the trader should have for his first object to supply the wants of those about him, and should follow this out, not merely so far as it will bring him gain, but to the full extent of his ability. Does this sound Utopian? Is it certain that a man who should do

this would be ruined? On the contrary, everything tends to show that one who should set to work in this way would conciliate the confidence and support of all men; for if it were once known that this was his object, who would not rather deal with him than with any other? Nor is this mere speculation. The new system of co-operative trading, which is known to be in the interest of those who buy, not merely in that of those who sell, even when carried out to the very limited extent of plain honesty guaranteed by immediate payment, is threatening all trade which is carried on on other systems, and where it goes further, and gives an interest to the buyer in all that he purchases, it must of necessity carry all before it. The greatest retail establishment which the world has ever seen—the great store in New York, the proprietor of which died some two years ago—was founded on this principle, to give to the public none but the best articles, and to give them at the lowest rate which would ensure the carrying on of the business. He who wrought upon this principle, so far from being ruined, made the largest fortune ever realised by a retail trader. So literally true is the saying of Christ, "With what measure ye mete withal, it shall be measured to you again."

And if we follow out this thought, it leads us beyond what is possible now to that which may become possible if the Christian spirit can fully assert itself. The brotherly spirit of the Gospel must favour the extension of co-operation, whether

in the production or the distribution of goods. And beyond this, perhaps, there will dimly dawn upon our view a state of things in which the Christian community itself should minister to all the wants of all its members, in which love and energy, with a moderate assured remuneration, might supply the motive power which is now supplied by eager competition and the prospect of excessive gain. It is a dream, no doubt, but only such a dream as it might have been to past generations, that the community might one day carry its own letters, or transmit its own messages, or lay up the savings or conduct the insurances of its poorer members, or that there might be a scheme, regarded by many with favour, by which all the great iron roads might be possessed by the community for the advantage of the citizens. To act upon such a dream or anything like it as if the Christian spirit were strong enough now to realise it would be madness. To attempt to enforce it, as Socialists have attempted to enforce their schemes, would be not folly only, but tyranny. But to work towards it by infusing into all trade the spirit of beneficence and mutual confidence, of trustfulness and of unselfish generosity, is to prepare the way of Christ in one vast and growing province of His dominion.

3. I come now to another field, that of literature. With this too it is often thought that Christ has no connection. There may be literature which is about Christ, it is thought, but the literature itself, the form,

the art of it, has nothing to do with Christ. And the genuine literary man lives in the form itself: his pabulum is not the substance but the form in which it is clothed.

But is it possible to make this absolute severance between matter and form? May it not rather be said that, apart from the matter, the form cannot maintain its worth? It was a great truth which was touched by Schleiermacher when he spoke of the language-forming power of Christianity. The Gospels (to take the first and most central instance), have a great literary charm in their simplicity, in their freshness and *naïveté*. But who can say that their form is independent of their subject matter? Much more truly we may say that it is the fact that the writers were dealing with a subject so divine and yet so simple that gives the divine simplicity to their form. The spirit of Christ is in the form as well as the matter, in the grace, in the chasteness, in the reticence, in the short uninvolved sentences like those of a child, in the naturalness and directness of the style. This is confessed by writers like M. Renan—no mean judge, assuredly, of literary style, who turns with delight to the synoptic gospels as breathing the fresh air of the Galilean hills, and who similarly compares the impression which we receive in reading the Acts of the Apostles to that which we gain in reading the Odyssey.

It is not so always, no doubt; there may be a grace which has lost all hold of reality. It is like the

resemblance we sometimes trace in the outward form and manners of the degenerate child to those of his nobler parents, or like gracious words and outward courtesy covering a bad heart. This does not disprove the truth that qualities are transmitted by race, or that it is a loving heart that is the true parent of courtesy. And, similarly, it is the love which is the nature of God and of Christ which in one or other of its forms is the true inspirer of literature. No genuine or original style has ever been formed where there was no deep human sympathy, but only a playing with words.

Moreover, literature, what is it? It is a form of expression. Not only is expression dependent on the thing to be expressed, but the wish to express is the correlative of the wish to impress. We want to express our thoughts in writing as in speech, in order that they may reach home to other minds, that they may evoke sympathy, and inspire noble thoughts, and incite to generous action. This has been the kindling spark of all the highest literary genius.

We may raise the matter to a higher point. If all human nature is redeemed by Christ, then every human excellence is part of the process. The very fact that literature is part of this excellence in itself makes it Christian. Aim at excellence, and you are aiming at what Christ designed. If this is true anywhere, it must be doubly true where we are dealing with human speech, the organ of the human spirit, through which the divine breath breathes out upon

mankind. Get rid of the idea that secular literature is to be enslaved to ecclesiasticism, and you have no difficulty in accepting for it the sovereignty of Christ. The word of man cannot but be under the control and subject to the inspiring, redeeming influence of Him who, because his human life expressed the divine, is called the Word of God.

4. We may extend this thought to the whole province of art. Who can maintain that art is not a necessary part of human excellence? Would any one be so mad as to wish to banish it, as Plato banished the poets from his republic? If art is imitative, it is because man is an imitative being, and redemption must redeem this quality of imitativeness, not destroy it. It may be the shadow of a shadow of the true idea. But, nevertheless, the true idea stands out much more clearly to the apprehension of men through the medium of this shadow than it would if we saw the reality in its nakedness. Truth barely stated is apt to become truism. The bare light dazzles and kills; its refraction and disintegration show it in its true and enlightening glory. Even the most direct teaching needs some medium of metaphor. Our Lord Himself used parables. And so it is with all the arts, with architecture, and sculpture, and painting, with music or the drama. They partake of the nature of sacraments; the inward spiritual grace which they express is hidden and yet revealed by them. The circuit of the electric chain is long, but the spark is none the less vivid, none the less quickening.



Art needs reality at every turn. Divorce it from real life and it becomes but the bloom of decay. It is quite possible, no doubt, that there may be ages that are very real, and yet are without art ; for art is an excellence, a virtue, which seems to need special conditions, and these conditions are not always at hand. But if in some of the noblest art periods you have the germs of decay, which are developed in the succeeding age, what does that prove but that the reality which inspired the one was wanting to the other, and that as with an effete civilisation which needs re-invigorating through a process of revolution, a new departure must be taken by a new recourse to reality ?

Art gives rest to the soul. Does that make it less Christian ? Because we seem to be drawn away, among nymphs or landscapes, or the spectacle of men of other climes and ages, from the crushing sense of our responsibility, are we therefore outside the sphere of His influence who said "Come unto me and I will give you rest?" could it be said that recreation was no part of even the most saintly life ? And if saintliness needs refreshment, humanity in all its parts needs art. It is quite impossible that this element of life can be out of the range of the Redeemer of mankind. And if the times in which art has been most highly developed have not been those in which Christianity has seemed most flourishing, the cause of this is to be found in the swaying to and fro which marks the progress of humanity. Take

for instance the period of the Renaissance. What is it but a revolt against the exclusiveness of ecclesiasticism? We cannot look with much satisfaction on an age of moral unsettlement such as the Renaissance undoubtedly was. But Christian thought ranges over long periods, and awaits a full development in which the various elements of the complete excellence may be combined; and it is therefore prepared to see without complaint periods like the Renaissance or the eighteenth century which bring an infusion of a wholesome naturalism into the life which has been surcharged with elements like scholasticism, or the excess of ecclesiastical ritual and dogma.

And Christianity, even in its stricter and more limited aspect, constantly shows itself as the redeemer of art. By suggesting high aims, by presenting worthy characters and moving incidents, it draws out the nobler side of art, and prevents it from being degraded by sensualism and frivolity. Art, like every other sphere of human life, must recognise the great moral factors which in all departments are paramount.

And it would do so much more readily were it not for a certain antagonism which has been fostered by the narrower clerical influences, sometimes on the Catholic, sometimes on the Puritan side. How could sculpture thrive in a church like the Eastern, which counts it idolatrous? or how could any art but the austere form of poetry flourish under the Puritan influence? Or how could the drama own the authority

of Christ under a system which denied Christian burial to Molière? In these later days it is found that the feeling for the drama has increased among Christian people; and it may well be hoped that to all the arts a similar liberal policy may extend; that so, while remaining free, as they must ever be, they may in their freedom own the beneficent influence of the redeeming spirit of our Lord.

5. Is, then, the domain of the natural sciences outside the pale and influence of Christianity? Is this great realm, which to some minds seems to embrace the whole circle of human interests, or at least to dwarf all others, outside the dominion of Christ? Is its growth destined to obliterate those spheres in which Christian morality is seen to be rightfully supreme? I maintain, on the contrary, that those spheres which we most readily associate with Christianity are paramount, while the natural sciences are subservient to them; and, also, that the sustaining interest of the natural sciences is derived from those spheres of human life which we more readily recognise as subject to our Lord.

The various realms of knowledge and of interest cannot for ever stand apart. There must be a co-ordination of the sciences; and if to some few minds the natural sciences are everything, this we must regard as a revolt from their former depression, and as constituting only a temporary phase of thought. The humanities, as they are rightly called, will in due time assert their supremacy. Every serious co-ordi-

nation of the sciences must be, with whatever minor adjustments, a reflexion of that which is assumed in the Scriptures; it must place man himself as the centre, and the rest as dependent upon him. It will always be much more important for us to know how we may live justly and love one another, than how material bodies are mutually attracted, or how the various parts of the universe came to be what they now are. We must, indeed, maintain that to neglect the natural sciences is to stunt human life, and we may thankfully recognise that the discoveries made in those sciences have greatly conduced to moral and religious good by giving us a truer understanding of the world in which we live. The true moralist will neglect no light which can be thrown upon human nature from the physical side. But the physicist must come to feel that his main interest centres in man. Before embarking in any enquiry, the mind almost irresistibly asks the question, to what good does this tend? Will it conduce to human well-being? Mere curiosity and mere abstract aimless impulses will not sustain a man in the tedious pursuit of knowledge. He looks for his reward in the enlightenment, the advantage, the beauty which he may shed by his discoveries upon the path of his fellow-men. Would astronomy be worth pursuing were it not that it reveals to us some of the primary conditions of our existence in this planet? Would chemistry be the absorbing pursuit which it is to its votaries without the assurance that organic chemistry is a step

towards life and morals? What makes us await each new discovery in physiology but that it implicates human nature? Are not all these sciences so entrancing because they, from various sides, approach the problem of problems, the nature and origin of life? And does not the delight which the mind receives from the growing probability of the doctrine of evolution, lie in the promise which it seems to give of binding all, human and non-human, into one great Cosmos? If that be so, then human life is that to which all has been working upwards from the beginning; the Word and the Spirit, to use religious language, presided over the construction of the world; or, to use the language of one of the greatest of our men of science, the promise and potency of human life lay in the primeval elements waiting for its development. Christ is the head of humanity; and, if all knowledge centres in humanity, it centres in Christ. What is this but to say that Christ is its king?

6. Lastly, it might seem easy to vindicate for our Lord a sovereignty over all the relations of human beings, who are bound together by justice and by love. But there is a strange tendency to limit his empire even here; and, stranger still, this limitation often comes from his professed followers and ministers. God and Cæsar are set in antagonism. It is believed by many that the sphere of politics can be dis severed from that of religion, and this has been made the ground of theories which, whether they come from

the clerical or the secular side, are equally godless. It cannot be that the public life, the natural home of justice, should be separate from the God whose very nature is righteousness. If we can but bring ourselves to acknowledge that justice itself is pleasing to God, and that what is most important is not the naming of Christ's name, but the doing of the things which embody his mind, we shall not fail to perceive that the political life of mankind is even now under Christ's supreme direction.

Take the three most remarkable political phenomena of our own generation, and this will be made clear.

The first of these is the triumph of constitutional government throughout Europe. We who are but middle-aged men can remember the time when every European nation but our own was under personal rule. Italy, Hungary, France, Spain, Austria, Prussia, had all the same tale to tell. Now they all tell another tale; they are all self-governed. But what is constitutional government? It is only the expression in public affairs of the Christian sentiments of justice and love. Is it not equitable that nations as soon as they have outgrown the state of childhood should rule themselves? Can any one, starting from the Christian principle of equity, fail to recognise that it is not the will of a single man which ought to impose itself on the whole society, but that the society itself should rule? Is it not, again, exactly in accordance with Christian principle that the ruler should not be one

who forces his own authority upon the rest, but one who suggests, advises, persuades, and finally leads with the consent of the rest? Is not this the very spirit of the words, "neither as lords over God's heritage, but as ensamples to the flock?" And what is the impulse which has procured the gradual extension of the suffrage but the Christian wish to take into consultation all who are affected by the policy of the state, so that not even the interests of one of the little ones of the flock shall be neglected? It is often taken for granted that the organisation for public worship where this is not done is under Christ's direction, but that secular politics in which it is done are not. The contrary is the case. Christ is, and he reigns, where justice and love bear rule.

The second notable progress accomplished during this generation is the recognition of the principle that no nation should domineer over another. Greece and Italy, Hungary and Germany, are all cases in which this has been acknowledged; and now the other nations comprised in European Turkey are being added to the list one by one. And even England, in the plenitude of its imperialism, is fain to acknowledge that in India its power must be vindicated, not as a conquest but a tutelage. Here again we have Christian justice asserting itself.

A third progress, which is a progress rather in hope than in fulfilment, is some bond of agreement and co-operation among the great Christian nations of the west, which may tend to diminish wars, and

to raise the weaker members of the commonwealth of nations. That there have been great wars in our time is true ; but the difference between these wars and those of the last century is this, that in the last century men fought for territory and power, and, whether they gained these or lost them, the wars were simply evil ; whereas in our day, every war has been for some great cause, and has resulted in good. The Crimean war resulted in the destruction of a tyrannical influence which weighed on all Europe, the Italian war in the unity of Italy, the American war in the abolition of slavery, the war of 1866 in the expulsion of Austria from Italy and Germany, the war of 1870 in the termination of the Napoleonic régime in France and in Europe and the unification of Germany, the war of 1877 in the liberation of the nationalities oppressed by the Turks. But it is beginning to be felt that war is a terrible evil of which Christendom should be ashamed. We cannot contentedly regard it, as was done in a famous sermon from this pulpit, or as in the inscription on a gun of Louis XIV., as *ultima ratio regum*, the final argument of kings. We want some method which will dispense with bloodshed as the ultimate appeal of Christian rulers. We have ourselves, in the Alabama Arbitration, made one successful essay in the better path, by which war has been avoided and jealousy almost eradicated between two Christian nations. And in the Congress of Berlin we have again substituted the arbitrament of argument for that of the sword.



What do these things mean, but that Christian equity and kindness are gradually coming to be acknowledged, or in other words that Christ is asserting His empire over the whole domain of political life?

I have three remarks to make in conclusion.

I. What I have endeavoured to assert, the claim of Christ to rule, nay, the actual progress of his dominion, will seem to many overstrained. The reason why this seems to be so is that you have identified Christ with clericalism or ecclesiasticism. It is not, I repeat, the rule of the clergy, nor the supremacy of public worship, nor of the thought of another life, nor of theology, nor of the opinions which have been commonly taken as Christian, that we have advocated, but the supremacy of Christ, of His spirit, of His righteousness and His love.

A book was published some fourteen years ago which professed to be the history of rationalism in Europe. It showed how one by one various spheres such as those on which I have dwelt to-day had liberated themselves from certain unjust or unreasonable ideas, which had for a long time dominated in the name of Christianity. The equivocal title of the work made it seem as though the process which was described was the taking away of each sphere in succession from under the dominion of Christ, in the interest of the dominion of human reason. But there is no conflict between Christ and human reason. What has been called the sweet reasonableness of Christ is as applicable to all

these spheres as it was to that of Judaic morals. The process which was described was really the winning back of each sphere in succession from childishness, or ignorance, or injustice, or prejudice, or from a mere belated conservatism which had clothed itself with the Christian name, to Christ himself, who is human reason in its noblest form. If Christianity is to be identified with what in a vague manner is called clericalism, it must perish ; or, since it is imperishable, it must clothe itself in a new form more like itself. But if clericalism means all that was combated in the history of rationalism, it is really un-Christian in the highest degree. It is the voice of Christ, not that of a secular politician, which is saying to Europe "Clericalism—that is the enemy." Over the prostrate body of such clericalism as that Christ is advancing to the empire of the world.

2. The dominion which we claim for our Lord is not a restraint, but a stimulus. We who are the children of Christian Constitutionalism have learnt, a little earlier than the other nations, that government is not restraint but the free expression of the life of the society. We are expecting in our rulers, and finding in some few of them, a leadership in works of utility which free our commerce, and facilitate the expansion of industry, and promote temperance and thrift and knowledge. That which we expect in our rulers we find in Christ. "I am a King," He said, "because I bear witness to truth, and all truthful souls follow me." When we say that Christ is King

in each of the spheres on which we have touched, we do not mean that these spheres are to be subjected to some external power, but that each of them, by the free development of its proper principle of life, is to become more and more a field for the exercise of truth and love. St. Paul said, "Whatever gift we have, let us *wait upon it*," that is, let us exercise it it according to its proper development—"whether ministering, let us wait on our ministering: or he that teacheth, on teaching; he that ruleth, let him do it with diligence," and so with the other functions of the Christian life. So we may say, whatever sphere of life you move in, fill that sphere according to its own need and strive after its proper virtue and excellence, and you will make it Christ's.

And thus we do not want merely to negotiate a strained concordat between Christianity and other spheres of life, but to bring to bear upon every sphere an elevating and redeeming influence. Our Christianity must not be content to be found barely compatible with human progress. It must take the lead. It must bear the flag at the head of the advancing column. It must have an appropriate message for every class of men. It must appreciate art as art, knowledge as knowledge, literature as literature, politics as politics. It must urge them to excellence. It must set the highest standard before them. It must welcome every new fact that is laid bare, every new invention, every production of art, every extension of commerce, every great

literary work, every development of political freedom. It must do more; it must call for these incessantly, and stimulate men in the search for them. It must shew its Christ-like love for men by leading them on to triumph.

3. This reign of Christ of which we have spoken, the reign about which His last injunctions were given in the forty days between Easter and Pentecost, must be enforced in Christian teaching. We have been too long at the threshold, thinking how salvation may be won and sin forgiven, too little in the Palace itself where Christ reigns. The difficulty which meets us everywhere when we seek to bring the world under Christ's authority is to infuse the higher motive where so much is inert, and there is such a tendency to sluggishness and even to revert to some former and lower type. But it is to this that Christian teaching must apply itself. It must treat mankind as having become the subjects of Christ's redemption, it must assert His reign in detail over each sphere in which He is King. A former age produced the Religion Medici. We must have in this age the religion of art, the religion of science, the religion of the drama, the religion of trade. The problem for the ministers of Christianity lies here, to make it effective in all the walks of life in which a man moves. If dogmas trouble you, let dogmas alone for the time. But your life must be lived here and to-day; and if it is to be in the right it must be inspired by Christ's spirit. Learn to say to your-

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self, "All that I do, I do for God in gratitude for His fatherly love." When your eyes open to duty in the morning, bring your duty before Him in prayer, and resolve with His help to do your duty well. In your more speculative moments, when your thoughts take a larger range, bring your conscience still to Him, and consider this question chiefly, "What is God showing me to be true and right?" This will be to you a sustaining power to bear you above despondency and keep your aim true and your energies vigorous. And by so doing you will serve that service which is perfect freedom, and further that reign under which is no bondage, the reign of human and Christian excellence, which is the reflexion of the Divine perfection, to bring about which Christ died, to ensure which he reigns for ever.