

In closing the subject for the present, let us reflect for a moment upon the magnitude of the work which Christ accomplished, and the nature of which we have been investigating. We may consider it in two very different aspects. It was, in the first place, a work of speculation, which we may compare with the endeavours of several ancient philosophers to picture to themselves a commonwealth founded on juster and clearer principles than the states they saw around them. Plato made such an attempt, and a later philosopher was on the point of realising his conception in an actual, palpable, Platopolis. The Kingdom of God, the New Jerusalem, which Christ founded, was similar to this speculative state. He seized upon the substantial principles which lie at the foundation of every civil society, and without waiting for favourable circumstances or for permission of kings, and not only dispensing with but utterly repudiating a local habitation, he conceived a commonwealth developed, as it were, from within. It was one of those daring imaginations, in which, as a general rule, we allow philosophers to indulge in their studies, not because we imagine for a moment that they can ever be realised, but because they are useful educational exercises for youth, and because in filling up the paper design suggestions may be thrown out which a practical man may be able gradually to work into the constitution of some existing state. To make any more practical use of such schemes almost all the practical statesmen that ever lived would at once pronounce impossible. They know better, of course, than all other men with how little wisdom the world is governed. They regard the whole framework of all institutions as determined by the plain, universal, animal, propensities of men and the irresistible constraint of external conditions. They believe that for the most part nothing can be done by the wisdom of individuals but to watch the operation of these causes, to take advantage of each passion as it rises, and sometimes to procure the adoption of a measure which is solidly good, when it happens to be momentarily popular. But any comprehensive scheme, appealing to first principles and at the same time demanding sacrifices