

the Church," and that the other *two* pertain to questions regarding the "Headship of Christ over the Nations." Liberty of conscience, without anarchy or licentiousness, is explicitly declared—that the civil magistrate is not a minister of, or in the Church, but that in the administration of his government he is bound to acknowledge the supreme authority of Christ. We stated in our last number that it is upon this latter point that the moment we come to nice definitions or to practical illustrations, we differ somewhat from one another. We said that some of us would prefer to take high ground, and say that the civil magistrate should act under *immediate* allegiance to Christ and His Laws, and that all crimes should be considered and punished only because they are violations of the Divine Law, and hence that Sabbath breaking and stealing should be placed in the same category. A correspondent admonishes us that this is too strong and high a statement of the extreme on one side of the question. He regards this as not a just representation of the sentiments held by himself and others in opposition to those who hold that in the punishment of crimes the magistrate should not take cognizance of them as sins against God. He says; "I know of no one who would require that civil rules should deal with crimes only as sins against God. But what we object to in the proposed basis is, that the consideration of the sin against God seems, by the language employed by the committee, to be admitted to be beyond the duty of civil legislators. I and others are opposed to the *exclusion* of this as a ground of magisterial procedure but we neither exclude other grounds, nor demand, as on all occasions necessary, the profession of the highest ground."

For ourselves, we have to say that our object was to state an extreme view of the question, and to regard it in its most abstract aspect as a view that might be entertained by some, and one, too, which we have heard frequently urged in the discussion of the voluntary question. It was not our intention to describe or define an opinion held or avowed by any individual in our Synod, but only one that may, or might be held, without giving rise to disputations or divisions—that, in all its modifications, it was of so fine a texture as not to constitute a justifiable bar to union.

The view of the question presented by our correspondent is, we are persuaded the view contained in the articles to which both parties are willing to give their assent. The *second* article, for example, says, concerning blasphemy and the disturbance of public worship, that "the magistrate ought to repress these, both for the glory of God and the public weal." Here is a statement and recognition of the higher motive. Again, in the *third* article, it is said that "he ought to see that, in aiming to promote the social well-being, in subordination to the divine glory, the laws of the land, in their enactment and administration, are avowedly in accordance with the principles of justice and morality inculcated in the Scriptures." This again contains an explicit statement of the *higher motive*

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III.—OF THE DUTIES OF THE CIVIL MAGISTRATE.—"We maintain that while the Civil Magistrate, as such, is not an officer of the Church of Christ, and may not therefore assume any ecclesiastical functions, or claim the power to act as an interpreter of the Word of God, or as an administrator in matters spiritual and ecclesiastical, he has yet an important part to act in his official capacity in relation to the Kingdom of Christ; that it is his duty, in his public as well as in his private capacity, to acknowledge the authority of Christ as the Supreme Governor among the nations; and that in this view, without taking cognizance of offences against morality considered as sins against God, he ought to see that, in aiming to promote the social well-being in subordination to the divine glory, the laws of the land in their enactment and ministration are avowedly in accordance with the principles of justice and morality inculcated in the Scriptures. At the present time we think it necessary especially to declare that he is bound to acknowledge the divine authority of the Christian Sabbath, and to secure to all his subjects their right to enjoy the sacred rest of that day."