

and to say that he is bound by the word of God is to say, that that word has been adopted as the statute law of the country; which of course throws us again back upon the *Legislative action of that community*. If the magistrate be a christian man and be called upon to administer unchristian, that is, *in his estimation*, unjust, God-defying, and God-dishonouring laws, he will cease to be a magistrate, and seek by every means in his power to get such laws changed; but if he continue to act as a magistrate *he is bound* to act not upon his understanding of the word of God, but upon *the plain, manifest and unquestioned meaning of the law*. To assert any other principle would be to argue for tyranny in its purest, simplest, most unworkable, and most offensive aspect. It would be to make every village J. P. "a law unto himself" Well then, when we get to the *civil magistrate quâ* the Legislature, a very knotty question meets us on the threshold. What is the Legislature? Are we to speak of all electors as such? They are surely *in some way* connected with the Legislative action of the state. *If not*, if the representatives of the electors are properly the Legislature, then another nice question requires settlement—"What is the relation which representatives bear to their constituents?" Are they delegates simply, appointed, for mere convenience sake, to put the wishes of those who sent them into a certain shape? or what? I do not enter upon the question, but he would be a very innocent person, who could see no difficulty in the matter or how it bears on the point at issue. If representatives are merely delegates then the will of a majority of their constituents is to them, *law*, and as honest men, they have no alternative but to follow it or resign. If, on the other hand, while agreeing in general with the majority of those whom professedly they represent, they are to act independently and conscientiously, we are brought to look the question fairly in the face. How are they to act with reference to the word of God? It is very easy to say, "Here is the word of the living God, from which there can be no appeal, let them take that." But does that get us over our difficulties? "The law of the Lord is perfect" so far as the ends for which it was given are concerned. To add to, or take from it, would be at once impyety and presumption. But what do those mean who in simple phrase say, "Let legislators take the Bible"? Do they mean that they should simply declare that the Bible is the statute book of this country, and all other countries, with all its commands and prohibitions, and that after this one great act, not of legislation, but of recognition, they should leave all subsequent action to the judges and other officers of the executive. Very few surely mean that, seeing the word of God was given for a great number of other purposes, besides to point out the course of political action in a community. But if this is not meant, then only so far as these legislators incorporate it with the enactments of that country does it become *law*. It may be wrong in them not to have had more of it in their statutes, but right or wrong, till it *be* in these statutes *it is not law*.