

upon an addition to, or change of, the text. If the Note be not a fair explanation of the text, then no possible amount of saving clauses would justify an honest believer in the Note to receive the article either with or without explanations. But if it is, then I cannot see how any one who could conscientiously receive the article *with* the Note should feel the slightest hesitation in adopting it *without*. Is it not a principle generally recognized, that no one is responsible for the inferences which *others* may draw from his statements if he repudiate their inferences? And surely it is time enough to repudiate them when they are actually stated. In this case the inference is no more a part of the Basis than is the repudiation, and to protest against what as yet has no existence, would be to acknowledge that the inference guarded against, was both natural and legitimate.

To say that the 4th article *primâ facie*, favours compulsory principles, is of course a mere assertion of opinion; and necessarily, every Voluntary who says this, and who has at the same time adopted it, must believe that it does so *only in appearance*. What does this seem to prove? In my opinion, that there is in that article stated, you may say somewhat indefinitely, the grand underlying principle received by members of both Synods, and that the differences of opinion when examined into fairly, would be found to be differences in a tail, and not of principle at all; while at the same time the differences of opinion in reference to details, might be found to be so great among the individual members of both Synods, that to come to particulars would require not merely a volume for each Synod, but almost a volume for each member.

Some very respectable, but evidently not very far seeing, or very comprehensively thinking individuals, would greatly wish to know how the 4th article would be applied by some of the voluntaries, or let us say by some of the United Presbyterians; and have referred especially to the law of the Sabbath and blasphemy. To me, this has always appeared a mere trifling with a most important matter, a mere nibbling at a question of the highest consequence, arising either from a conscious or unconscious inability to grapple with the great general principles of action from which details of application could be judged of, and determined, though these details as I have said might involve an almost endless diversity of sentiment, even on the part of those who could adopt the principles. If we *are* to have details, we should require to have them on fifty other subjects besides the Sabbath, and would virtually transform ourselves into a Legislative Assembly for determining the political action of the country.

That the question comes to be one chiefly, if not exclusively, of legislation, may I think be easily shown.

To speak of the civil magistrate *quâ* the Executive, as bound by the word of God *in his official proceedings*, is, IN A FREE COUNTRY, to use very unsatisfactory language. The Executive, unless, with Louis XIV, he can say, *L'état c'est moi*, is bound by the law of the land,