

When we pass from the realm of matter to that of mind,—from the domain of natural, to that of moral, law—we find a different state of things. Law and government there still is, but it differs widely in its nature; and in the methods by which it is enforced, from that which we have been considering. Here, God governs not by mere *force* but by *motives*. He usually gives expression to His will in the form of general principles; the application of those principles he leaves, within certain limits, to men themselves. And thus while He maintains His own Sovereignty, He acknowledges the great fact of man's moral freedom.

The law which God has given for man's government is, like its Divine Author, a *Unity*, being all comprehended in the one grand requirement of love to God. This general law, however, comprises a multitude of relative duties, and hence we find it branching out, in the first instance, into two great divisions, the first comprehending all the duties we owe to God, the second all the duties we owe to our fellow men. Each of these again branches off into a number of general principles and particular precepts, applicable to all the circumstances and duties of life. Your attention is invited, this morning, to one particular class of duties; not those, in particular, which spring from our *religious* position, as members of the Christian Church, nor those which spring from our *social* relations, as members of families: but those which arise from our *civil* relations, as members of the body-politic. In short, the verses I have read define with great clearness the relative positions of rulers and their subjects, and show the duty of every man, especially every Christian man, to the civil government under which he lives. In order to a right understanding of the subject it will be necessary to consider,

I.—THE ORIGIN, NATURE AND DESIGN OF CIVIL GOVERNMENT.

1. *Its Origin*.—This is indicated with great clearness in the first verse of the text: "There is no power but of God: the