

work. Without it, society would be dissolved and every man would become an Ishmael—his hand against every man, and every man's hand against him. Another design is the protection of life and property. If men were, in all respects, perfect beings, it might be safe to allow each to do what seemed right in his own eyes; but as human nature is, it would be ruinous to admit such a principle: consequently it has been found necessary, in order that life and property be protected, that Civil Rule be established and upheld. Once more: Government is designed for the administration of justice between man and man, for the settlement of disputes, and for the protection of the weak against the encroachments of the strong; thus forming a power to which all may appeal against injustice and oppression. We will now consider,

II.—THE DIGNITY, AUTHORITY AND DUTIES OF THOSE WHO ADMINISTER CIVIL GOVERNMENT, including all who are in authority, from the humblest officer of justice to the Supreme Ruler in the State.

1. *Their Dignity.*—The true dignity of the Ruler consists neither in the accidents of birth or worldly rank, nor in the pomp and grandeur with which men may have invested him, nor yet in the high-sounding titles by which they may address him, but in the simple yet sublime truth that he is *God's Minister*, that the power he wields—albeit he may *seem* to have derived it in some sort from the suffrages of men—is in reality a power delegated to him from God. Thus, for instance, when a Republic has appointed its Chief Magistrate, it is customary to say, "The people elected him;" but I prefer to fall back upon the inspired declaration, "Promotion cometh neither from the east, nor from the west, nor from the south. But God is the judge: he putteth down one, and setteth up another."—Psalm lxxv., 6-7. Regarding the Ruler, then, not merely as man's servant, but as God's Minister, his person and office both become invested with a new dignity; and it is this view which gives point and force to the declaration, "whosoever therefore resisteth the power resisteth the ordinance of God."