

tion of such powers. His authority is at the same time his restraint. The Christian Governor has no right to prescribe against the known law of God, contained in his written word. And that very law, which has proclaimed, that "Kings shall be the nursing-fathers and Queens the nursing mothers" of his Church; that they are to protect and cherish it with the supreme powers with which they are invested; has pronounced, that it is *His Church*, to which they are to afford their fostering aid; that it as Supreme temporal Rulers, they are to minister support; and that it is to the Religion, which God prescribes, that support is to be supplied.

The Sovereign, then is, in the first instance, withheld from the exercise of functions purely spiritual; because these are, by the divine authority, conferred upon an order of men, set apart, by a special commission from our Lord himself, to preach his religion, and to administer his sacraments; a commission, which not only conferred those powers on his first chosen followers, but secured their transmission to an authorised ministry, by a legitimate succession, throughout all the ages of his Church. From the exercise of these functions, then, or the bestowing the capacity to exercise them, the Sovereign is restrained. This is a matter of Divine institution. The Civil Magistrate can neither confer, nor exercise the sacred function. To him belongs not the power of order. He can neither execute, nor qualify any to execute the ministration of the word and the sacraments. He cannot change any thing, which God's law has clearly determined and prescribed. All those spiritual functions, in a word, which were possessed by the Apostles, and by those whom they commissioned, are withheld by the Divine appointment from the jurisdiction of the Sovereign, and confined to that class of men whom God ordained to succeed them in his Church. These are from a commission higher than human, and therefore no human power can be permitted to usurp them.

Again, the Sovereign cannot prescribe in favour of a religion that denies the right of private judgment, and that exercises a dominion over conscience. Being bound to employ a free judgment upon the written word of God, in order to ascertain that what he proposes for the instruction of his people is not inconsistent with that word, he cannot deny to them the same freedom of inquiry. The law of God is itself the law of liberty. He will there find nothing to coerce conscience. An early Father has said, "it belongs not to religion to force religion." The language of the Gospel more powerfully proclaims the same. The Sovereign, who obeys the Christian law, cannot establish a religion which maintains the contrary. Such a religion he must know not to be the religion of the Gospel. And therefore every form of religious belief, that contains within it principles subversive of the right of private judgment, he must disclaim as an auxiliary of the State. On the ground of religious liberty, he must indeed grant even to