

departures from the principle of right, which go under the name of "reasons of state;" and which tend, by their pernicious example, to demoralize man, and to disorganize society.

No state ought to exist, that sets Providence aside, and openly disregards divine things, or acts so as to subvert divine truths. Man cannot war against God, and God must rule over the kingdoms of men. Those that will not be the subjects of his sway, must be the objects of his vengeance. And such nations as *pr*ove themselves not the fit instruments for promoting his moral Government of the world, must expect to be broken up, so soon as they have effected those temporal objects, for which Providence may have suffered them for a time to continue: which amongst others, may possibly have been, the infliction of punishment on other guilty nations, which may demand for them a momentary display of power; or against the open manifestation of their own profligacy, to the clearer justification of the ways of God in his dealings with men.

I should not have dwelt so long upon so plain a proposition, as that, which affirms it to be the duty of the Sovereign to provide a *true* religion for his people, but that, strange as it may appear, it is a maxim, which hangs but loosely upon the minds of many at the present day: nay, even the contrary position is openly maintained by some, not only those who are avowed enemies to a religious establishment altogether, but by some who maintain its lawfulness and its necessity, upon grounds both of public duty and of religious obligations.

But with respect to the latter class, those who admit the lawfulness and necessity of an Establishment, the matter becomes a subject of weighty consideration indeed. Error among these, on so essential a point, as that with which we are concerned, is an enemy within the camp. This is, in the Psalmist's language, my own familiar friend, whose precious balms must not be allowed to break my head.

It is urged, that if religion be the proper concern of the Civil Ruler, there is nothing to prevent it in that case from devolving upon him entirely, so that the care of souls should come within his immediate province. And, in the next place, it is contended, that there can be nothing to prevent him from feeling himself authorised to impose upon his people whatever religion he might think proper to prescribe. And thus, it is said, the Civil Ruler may consider himself empowered, not to assume the spiritual functions, but, for the propagation of that religion which he deems to be true, to exercise a spiritual dominion over the consciences of his subjects.

But, the very religion, which the Ruler is bound to support,—I speak here of the Christian Ruler of course, with no other have we any concern—that very religion debars him from the assump-