

be head over all things to the church." He is not only over all things in his essential dominion as a Divine person, but he is invested with absolute control over all things as Mediator. His dominion as Mediator is co-extensive as to its objects with his dominion as God. And the Apostle affirms, that he, who is thus exalted far above all created intelligences,—above all potentates and earthly powers, is by a gracious Divine appointment, constituted head of the church. Not head over all things in the same sense in which he is head of the church; but in the sense of possessing dominion and power over all things, for the welfare and security of the church. He was given to be her head. Let us then reverently acknowledge his high authority, let us render cheerful submission to his holy will, let us love his person, and glory in his benignant reign.

III. Let us now finally review the subject in some of its practical bearings. In connection with Christ's headship over his Church, several questions arise respecting the relation in which civil government stands to it.

1. In the first place, there is the question of the Magistrate's power in the church. Now, if the view we have taken of Christ's headship, is well founded, the magistrate, as such, can have no power in the church beyond what the influence of his high station gives him for good, in common with all her members. The office of the civil magistrate is conversant, not with spiritual, but solely with temporal things,—the conscience with its concerns comes not within his jurisdiction. Man as a moral agent is accountable to God only for his opinions; and for the magistrate, with coercive power—the only power with which he is armed—to exercise a control over a man's judgment, or conscience, would not only do violence to it, but would incur the guilt of a grievous usurpation,—a daring encroachment on the prerogatives of Him who is Lord of the conscience; besides involving all the evils of persecution, already mentioned. Even enactments granting *toleration*, are not an honor to any nation, but a reproach. It is man's natural and unalienable right to worship God according to his conscience; and for any government or legislature to assume the right of granting toleration in religion, is a presumptuous interference with the rights of Him, who is Lord of Lords and King of Kings; and a pretence to confer on man a right which no earthly authority can lawfully either confer or withhold.

At the same time, civil rulers have it in their power to do much for religion, and are bound with all others to employ their position and advantages for promoting the practice of piety, that their example may be felt and followed. Their station in society, and the high authority with which they are invested in secular matters,—if it is not to be employed to enforce religion, or to maintain any particular form of christianity in preference to others,—give them influence, and impart to their example, to their counsels or solicitations, a force which they would not otherwise possess: this influence and these advantages they can and ought to employ in favor of religion. They can practice religion themselves, and recommend it by their example to others. They can do much to favor the great work of christian liberality. They can lend their countenance and support, much further than is ever done, to associations formed for religious purposes. They can give their active support to every