cate upon the whole human race, that mutual love which naturally ſprings from the knowledge that all men are bre­thren. Its ultimate end being to train its votaries for hea­ven, it concerns itſelf no farther with the affairs of earth than to enforce by eternal sanctions the laws of morality ; and the kingdom of its Founder not being of this world, it leaves every nation at liberty to fabricate its own municipal laws, ſo as beſt to ſerve its own intereſt in the various cir­cumſtances in which it may be placed ; and denounces a curſe upon all who pay not to thoſe laws the fullest obedi­ence, when they were not obviouſly inconſiſtent with the laws of piety and virtue, which are of prior obligation. The Chriſtian church therefore muſt always remain a diſtinct ſociety from the ſtate; and tho', till the preſent age of hazardous innovations, it has been deemed expedient in every country, where the truth of the goſpel is admitted, to give to the re­ligion of Chriſt a legal eſtabliſhment, and to confer immu­nities on its miniſters, this meaſure has been adopted, not to ſecure the purity of the faith which appeals to the private judgment of each individual, but merely to preſerve the peace of ſociety, and to put a reſtraint upon thoſe actions of which human laws cannot take cognizance. With religion, Chriſtian governments have no farther concern than as it tends to promote the practice of virtue. The early Chri­ſtians, however, not underſtanding the principle upon which penal laws were employed to preſerve the purity of the Jewiſh religion ; and, as our bleſſed Lord obſerved to two of his apoſtles, not knowing what ſpirit they were of—haſtily concluded that they had a right to enforce the doctrines and worſhip of the New Teſtament, by the ſame means which had been uſed to preſerve the Iſraelites ſteady to the doctrines and worſhip of the Old. Hence, though they had ſuffered the cruelleſt perſecutions themſelves (ſee Per­secution), they no sooner got the power of the ſtate in their hands, than they perſecuted the Pagans for their idolatry ; and afterwards, when hereſies aroſe in the church, perſecuted one another for expreſſing in different phraſes metaphyſical propoſitions, of ſuch a nature as no human mind can fully comprehend. The apoſtle had forewarned them that there muſt be hereſies in the church, that they who are approved may be made manifeſt ; but it did not occur to them that persecution for opinion is the worſt of all hereſies, as it violates at once truth and charity.

Hitherto theſe unhallowed means of bringing Chriſtians to uniformity of faith and practice, had been only occaſionally employed from their not accurately diſtinguiſhing be­tween the ſpirit of the goſpel and that of the law ; but as ſoon as the biſhops of Rome had brought the inhabitants of Europe to recognize their infallibility in explaining articles of faith, and deciding points of controversy, perſecution be­came a regular and permanent inſtrument of eccleſiaſtical diſcipline. To doubt or to deny any doctrine to which theſe unerring inſtructors had given the fonction of their approbation, was held to be not only a reſiſting of the truth, but an act of rebellion againſt their ſacred authority; and the ſecular power, of which, by various arts, they had acquired the abſolute direction, was inſtantly employed to avenge both.

“ Thus Europe had been accuſtomed, during many cen­turies, to ſee ſpeculative opinions propagated or defended by force, the charity and mutual forbearance which Chriſtianity recommends with ſo much warmth, were forgotten, the ſacred rights of conſcience and of private judgment were unheard of@@; and not only the idea of toleration, but even the word itſelf, in the ſenſe now affixed to it, was unknown. A right to extirpate error by force, was universally allowed to be the prerogative of those who poſſeſſed the knowledge of truth ;” and though the firſt reformers did not arro­gate to themſelves in direct terms that infallibility which they had refuſed to the church of Rome, they were not leſs confident of the truth of their own doctrines, and required with equal ardour the princes of their party to check ſuch as presumed to impugn or to oppoſe them. To this requeſt too many of theſe princes lent a willing ear. It flattered at once their piety and their pride to be conſidered as poſſeſſing all the rights of Jewiſh princes ; and Henry the VIII. of England, after labouring to make his divines declare that all authority eccleſiaſtical as well as civil flows from the crown, perſecuted alternately the Papiſts and Proteſtants. Many of his ſucceſſors, whoſe characters were much better than his, thought themſelves duly authorized, in virtue of their acknowledged ſupremacy over all ſtates and conditions of men, to enforce by means of penal laws a uniformity of faith and worſhip among their ſubjects ; and it was not till the revolution that any ſect in England ſeems to have fully underſtood, that all men have an unalienable right to worſhip God in the manner which to them may ſeem moſt ſuitable to his nature, and the relation in which they ſtand to him ; or that it is impoſſible to produce uni­formity of opinion by any other means than candid diſquiſition and sound reaſoning. That the civil magiſtrate has a right to check the propagation of opinions which tend on­ly to sap the foundations of virtue, and to diſturb the peace of ſociety, cannot, we think, be queſtioned ; but that he has no right to reſtrain mankind from publicly profeſſing any ſyſtem of faith, which comprehends the being and provi­dence of God, the great laws of morality, and a future ſtate of rewards and puniſhments, is as evident as that it is the object of religion to fit mankind for heaven, and the whole duty of the magiſtrates to maintain peace, liberty, and pro­perty, upon earth. We have elſewhere obſerved (ſee Test), that among a number of different ſects of Chriſtians, it is not the ſuperior purity of the ſyſtem of faith professed by one of them, that gives it a right to the immunities of an eſtabliſhment in preference to all its rivals; but tho’ the legiſlature is authorized, in certain circumſtances, to make a leſs pure ſyſtem the religion of the ſtate, it would be the height of absurdity to ſuppoſe that any man, or body of men, can have authority to prevent a purer ſyſtem from being ac­knowledged as the religion of individuals. For propaga­ting opinions and pursuing practices which neceſſarily create civil diſturbance, every man is anſwerable to the laws of his country ; but for the soundness of his faith, and the purity of his worſhip, he is anſwerable to no tribunal but that which can ſearch the heart.

When churches are eſtabliſhed, and creeds drawn up as guides to the preaching of the national clergy, it is obvious that every clergyman who teaches any thing directly con­trary to the doctrine of ſuch creeds, violates the condition on which he holds his living, and may be juſtly deprived of that living, whether his obnoxious opinion be in itſelf true or falſe, important or unimportant ; but his puniſhment ſhould be extended no farther. To expel a Chriſtian from private communion for teaching any doctrine which is nei­ther injurious to the ſtate nor contrary to the few simple ar­ticles which compriſe the ſum of the Chriſtian faith, is the groſſeſt tyranny ; and the governors of that church which is guilty of it, usurp the prerogative of their bleſſed Lord, who commanded the apoſtles themſelves not to be called ma­sters in this ſenſe ; for one (ſays he) is your maſter (υμων : ϰαθηlης), even Chriſt. It is indeed a hardſhip to deprive a man of his living for conſcientiouſly illuſtrating what he be­lieves to be a truth of the goſpel, only becauſe his illuſtration may be different from that which had formerly been gi­ven by men fallible like himſelf ; but if the eſtabliſhment of human compilations of faith be neceſſary, this hardſhip

@@@[mu] Robertson's History of Charles V.