

lish what kind of it they please : or if they do not take it directly into their hands, they can in various ways have great influence upon it. Indeed, it is a serious truth, that in every age, and in every branch of the christian church, not only the modes and forms, but the kinds of religion, have always taken the complexion of the civil powers, for the time being. We know that this has been the case in Europe, and especially in England, where the popish and protestant religion has alternately been the religion of the nation, as either a popish or protestant prince held the reins of government. And it has lately been demonstrated, that infidel rulers will substitute infidelity in the room of christianity. But it is equally true, that religious rulers will form the religious character of the people. This for nearly two centuries has been demonstrated in New-England. Good rulers, therefore, can have a powerful and happy influence upon the great interests of religion, which renders the choice of such rulers of high consequence to the public welfare.

The good of the people requires, that useful knowledge should be generally diffused among them. Their dignity, happiness, and security, greatly depend upon their being well informed. Rulers can easily promote, or obstruct the general information of their subjects. In some nations, rulers take pains to keep the people in profound ignorance ; which instead of being the mother of devotion, is the hand-maid to despotism. But good rulers will seek to promote every kind of useful knowledge among all classes of citizens. They can oblige them by laws, as well as by public patronage, to cultivate not only the arts, but the sciences, which tend to enlarge their minds, refine their intellectual powers, and form them for useful and happy members of civil society.