

mong the unreflecting for liberal legislation and liberal opinions, may be traced to no other source than blank infidelity or universal scepticism—a system that undeniably overturns the only secure basis on which the foundations of social order can rest. The first French revolution was produced and urged forward by political doctrines of this description, emanating directly from the schools of Voltaire and Rousseau; and this mighty event caused their rapid and extensive circulation over all the countries of Europe. But surely, if the fallacy of any theory ever was demonstrated by experiment, this was the case with the doctrines of the philosophers and politicians of France; which seemed to beam with benevolence and patriotism when they were hailed by their unthinking admirers, as lights destined to introduce a happier order of things than the world had ever witnessed. A state of civil disorganization ensued, such as human society had never before exhibited, changing at once one of the most civilized nations in the world, whose government had been settled for ages, into an arena of confusion, violence, and massacre, which exceeded that of the most barbarous countries; and which was at last repressed, not by the dangerous enthusiasts, who were utterly unable to guide or allay the storm they had raised, but by the strong hand of the most perfect military despotism which has existed in modern times. It is difficult to say, whether the separation of politics from religion, as displayed in this great national experiment, appears most opposed to the authority of God, or to the welfare of man. Political relations being those in which the most extensive evil may be perpetrated, and in which the temptations to neglect the rights of others are strongest; are just those in which, most of all, man ought to be called to feel his responsibility to the everlasting King; being that salutary restraint, which universal experience has shewn to be alone able to shield society from the desolating effects of human passions, urged onwards by untrained selfishness. Even the deluded Voltaire, amidst all the mist which infidelity had cast over his mind, seems to have discovered, at one time, the utter ruin which the disjunction of religion from politics must sooner or later bring upon society. For when writing on this very matter, he declares, that as a subject, he would dread his rulers casting off all the restraints of religion, as in such a case nothing could effectually prevent them from contriving to overthrow the rights and liberties of the people; and, on the other hand, he declares, that as a ruler, he would dread his subjects casting off the restraints of religion, as what would render his life insecure, when deemed by them opposed to their own imaginary interests.

philosophers uniformly held the same sentiment. Plato calls religion the 'bulwarks of government, the first of all society, the firmest support of legislation,' and in his book *De Rep.*, asserts, 'that religion ought to be the principal object of care in every republic;' Aristotle, in his book *De Polit.* assigns the first place, among political duties, to 'the concern about divine things;' the first law in the twelve tables of the ancient Roman institute, inculcated reverence for religion; Archytas declared, that the first law of the constitution, ought to be for the support of what belongs to the Gods; Cicero, in his books *de Nat. Deor.* and *de Legib.* pronounces 'religion the foundation of human society,' and shews how important it is for rulers, who would benefit their country, to do all in their power to uphold its authority; and Plutarch says, 'religion is the first thing which claims attention in the framing of laws, for you may as easily build a city without ground as preserve order among the citizens without a belief of the deity,' and this he illustrates by referring to the original legislators of Rome, Sparta, Athens, and Greece in general. To teach men, in their political duty, to disregard the authority of God, was a doctrine considered perfectly impious among heathen politicians. No doubt, the indispensable necessity of religion to the maintenance of social order, has led many unreflecting men to look upon it generally, as the invention of legislators, in order to impose a restraint on human passions. But if the matter be carefully considered, the admission that, unrestrained by this principle, society will be continually in danger of being rent asunder, and communities of men assimilated to the wild herds of the forest, is of itself, a strong collateral argument for the divine origin of religion. No subject requires a stronger hold over the passions of men than politics; and, if uncontrolled by the fear of God, they exert over the mind the same influence as habits of gaming; rendering their victim insensible to the personal, domestic, and social misery, which thicken around him, as he incessantly presses on, with his mind almost wholly absorbed in pursuit of the object of his ambition; while his feelings are harrowed up by numberless anxieties, from the frequent uncertainty to which he is exposed as to the issue of the projects, on which his eyes are fixed with an intenceness, such as makes him more and more indifferent to all besides. Let politics be separated entirely from religion, and not only is legislation like an edifice built on the shifting sand, but if political agitation come to spread widely over a country so circumstanced, the disorganization will spread to the minutest sections of the social body. Hence it happens, that the village politician is often as remarkable for his disregard of the duties of his own station, as he is for his quick-sightedness in discerning the tendency of measures introduced into the national legislature; quite forgetting that no external form of government can produce a happy or prosperous country, if the citizens be individually corrupt, and indifferent to their domestic and relative duties as members

The great men of antiquity, who laid the foundations of the mightiest empires which flourished in the world, were quite aware, amidst all their ignorance of the true God, of the utter impossibility of establishing any permanent system of civil government, without the sanctions of religion. Their historians and