

or the discharge of the duties of any office—if promises are to be believed and performed, then is religion necessary, for without religion they have no basis. Had not Christianity been revealed, then every person would have been left to his own wicked imagination; but as the Supreme Being has set limits to our liberty by this revelation, which confines us to this religion and to it only, I cannot think it any infringement of the general liberty to imitate this example, by affording the means of acquiring a true knowledge of what has been revealed. It has been farther stated, that no Government, pretending to be free, has the power of establishing a public form of worship. This objection has been in a great measure anticipated; but it may be farther observed, that no form of government is capable of promoting the general benefit, unless it have the power to restrain evil and to promote good. This may be done in two ways—by measures of force, which command obedience, or by encouragement and persuasion. As to measures of force, they consist of the laws of the land, which can only go a very little way; there must, therefore, be another law, which shall take cognizance of the internal man—a law not to be obtained in books, not to be engraven on tablets of brass, a law which always subsists, which is every moment observed, and which condemns every species of wrong. Now as this internal law is of infinitely more consequence than the general ordinances of any country, it surely behoves Government to lend it their countenance and protection, as far as they can. If they are able, by encouragement and persuasion, to give it force and energy, to prevent its corruption and ensure its proper direction, they are certainly acting favourably to the freedom and happiness of the people; for every thing that promotes virtue and religion, promotes happiness and freedom. Now, it appears to me, that this may be materially effected by a liberal religious establishment. Ah! say many, this would be to assume authority over the minds of the people, and Government has business only with actions. Yet, this authority must be assumed in almost all cases by Government, to render it useful; the objection, therefore, if it mean any thing, goes too far, it would preclude all interference in education, by which the mind is formed. Indeed, the very ideas of the people gradually take a bias from the public laws and institutions: so that, if we wish to deprive Government of all power, directly or indirectly, over the minds