

MARYLAND GAZETTE.

T H U R S D A Y, SEPTEMBER 30, 1784.

to the next general road, as first in Frederick county, Blue Ridge, and by Swearingen's ferry, being the best and to the inland navigation, the western navigation to Baltimore.

August 20, 1784. have encroached on have taken possession laid out for a ship- are now selling and And whereas the per- may be unacquainted the public to the said that the corporati a, the said ship-yard and re determined to pro- fore give this public persons purchasing the

er, UYNN, jun, clk.

August 23, 1784. am A (with, as at- tain William Hicks, ain, did, in the year certify the following out: St. Mary's Free- field, 200; Squire's ter's, 100; the old e of lease land of 378 William Ainsworth did part by other names (run) to the sub- great part of the pur- sufficient deeds and whereas the said lands am Hicks to a cer- derton, in trust, for deed, which is re- Mary's county, but England, no power to acknowledge t e mes Aderton is sine Hebb has conveyed r, but the said deed, gment, being defect- I intend to apply to ing that an act may to the deed made by n and Vernon Hebb, vledged agreeable to HN MACKALL.

at I intend making general assembly, to e f a piece of land, rtha his wife, to my or which a bond was but no deed has hi- being dead, the right ho is a minor. A HAMMOND.

D, of LAND, being tract called White- river in Anne-A- of navigable water om Annapolis. The ro, corn, and small t sufficiency of wood are, several negro es, corn house, and will be allowed to fall. For terms ap-

IN PLUMMER.

CLARK,

ark, Annapolis, ment of the under- will sell, wholesale e, viz. A large col- med authors, in his- and novels, with s, common praye- and primers. Best hick and thin folio tto pot; cartridge er packing paper- account books; re- adies twee cases; t books; silver and ; paste and plated s; razors, knives ; plated and mo- aper snuff boxes; ng pieces and pis- prints, maps and wafers, pens and

Charles-Street.

The following letter is published at the request of several of our customers.

A LETTER to the ROMAN CATHOLICS of the City of Worcester, from the late Chaplain of that Society, stating the motives which induced him to relinquish their communion, and become a member of the protestant church.

"Give me understanding, O Lord, and I shall keep thy law: yea, I shall observe it with my whole heart." Ps. cxviii. 34.

"Make me to go in the path of thy commandments, for therein do I delight." ver. 35.

"Any private man, who truly believes the scriptures, and seriously endeavours to know the will of God, and to do it, is as secure as the visible church; more secure than your (the Roman) church, from the danger of erring in fundamentals, for it is impossible that any man so qualified should fall into any error, which to him will prove damnable. Abiding in your church's communion is so far from securing me or any man from damnable error, that if I should abide in it, I am certain I could not be saved; for I tire doctrine true; profess this I cannot, but I must tire perpetually and exultate my conscience. And though your errors were not in themselves damnable, yet to rest in the known truth and to continue in the profession of known errors and falsehood, is certainly a capital sin, and of great affinity with the sin, which shall never be forgiven." Chillingworth, page 204, Religion of Protestants a safe way, &c.

A period of life, when discernment should be ripe, when passions should be calm, and principles settled, if a man relinquish the opinions of his youth; if he break through the impressions of early education, and the habits of thinking with which he has been long familiar; if he abandon connections, which he has cherished from his infancy, to throw himself among strangers and begin the world anew; surely a consciousness of duty, or some unworthy principle must be the spring of such extraordinary conduct. In this case, a decent respect to his own character; to the connections, which he quits; and those, which he embraces, seems to call aloud for the motives of so important a change.

I am well aware that the public in general is but little concerned at the fate of individuals. Their success, their uneasiness, their struggles, their distress are felt only by a few, who formed in a softer mould, take delight in being interested in the welfare of humanity. To such of those exalted few of your society, or of any other description of men, who may chance to know me, I beg leave to address myself.

It is not my design to enter upon the wide field of controversy, nor to combat the tenets which I have rejected, by the shafts of ridicule or the full power of argument. Truth does not require, nor does generosity allow us to blacken a system because we abandon it. What appears conviction to the may seem folly to you. It would therefore be equally absurd and unjust to censure you for opinions, which you think it your duty to admit, as for you to blame me for rejecting such, as I deem unsupported and false. Wherefore my sole intention is to send you an apology for my own conduct, not to throw the most distant reflection upon yours. I mean to countenance, as far as I am able, the candour of those, who may still wish to esteem me, or silence in some degree, the voice of prejudice, and zeal without knowledge.

It nevertheless in the course of this letter, any arguments should occur, that may tend to unhinge the security of your minds, you will be candid enough to refer it to the nature of the subject, not to any intention to disturb and perplex you.

Were your belief, indeed, grounded solely on the authority, and credit of your teachers, on the prejudices of education, on the dictates of fear, the allurements of interest, or the horrors of a conscience perpetually harassed with the idea of disobedience and hereby, you probably might be staggered to see one of your ministers, who, you had some reason to imagine, made religion his study, departing from a system, which you are taught to venerate as infallible. But if your faith proceed from conviction, and knowledge of the cause, if it be the result of mature deliberation, and rational enquiry, you can have nothing to fear even from a deliberate attempt to raise doubts in your minds. God requires no more of any man, than his true and hearty endeavours to be saved; and their endeavours can never be ineffectual, whose reason and conscience tell them, they are in the way to salvation. If these faithful guides speak such a language to your hearts, continue to listen to their saving lessons; continue to be happy. But let no security whatever, no conviction of your exclusive happiness, warp your understandings, or exultate your hearts, as to make you pronounce condemnation upon those who after consuming years in unbiassed enquiries, can discover no unerring authority delegated to man, nor admit many doctrines, which that authority propoles. For your sakes, I deprecate such unchristian usage, as well as for my own. Yet I fear alas! that happy period is still at a distance, when the charity, that behaveth not uncharitably, that thinketh no evil, shall compose the jarrings of religious antipathy. The pride of opinion is too firmly riveted upon the human mind to admit of any apology from those, who oppose it. A desertion from a favourite system bears too hard upon the aban-

doned cause to be easily forgiven: and the man, who is bold enough to adopt such a measure, will soon find himself a profane object of abhorrence to the persons, whom he most esteemed, or by whom he had been most tenderly beloved.

For it is a lamentable truth, that on every occasion similar to the present, unjust suspicions and illiberal censure are indulged without remorse. They find their way into minds, which, in other respects, are accustomed to startle at the very shadow of evil. The most advanced in the habits of christian meekness and forbearance, too often mistake the workings of animosity for sentiments of pity towards an unfortunate brother. Men of sense and education too often make a merit of sacrificing their temper and understanding to the blind ardor of their zeal. The most eloquent and powerful champion of the English Roman catholics; the professed advocate for unlimited toleration could not so far abandon his original prejudices, as to think favourably of any one, who leaves the communion he belongs to (a). What grounds have I therefore to expect any partial indulgence, any unusual exertions of charity and candour.

No, my fellow-christians, I am not bold enough to flatter myself, that such will be my lot. If, however, contrary to my expectations, any among you should be found generous enough to answer the voice of obloquy, and assert my sincerity, to such I shall ever be happy to make my gratitude known. Under many distressful feelings, it will be a comfort to reflect, that my slender endeavours have operated in the minds of some among you a revolution so congenial to the mild spirit of the gospel.

Perhaps, were you acquainted with the painful struggles, which this public declaration of my sentiments has caused me, your pity, on this occasion, would be un- mixed with resentment. You would see the cruel impropriety of being angry with a man, who has endeavoured to discover the truth of your doctrines, and striven with all the powers of his soul to believe them. Who calls heaven to witness, that he has weighed every argument for and against your mode of religion, with the same impartiality, as if the world contained no Being but God and himself.

I pretend not to any uncommon powers of reasoning, or quickness of apprehension—I feel myself subject to prejudice and mistake—I am too well acquainted with the instability of my own heart to boast of any exemption from the usual frailties of man. But among the weaknesses to which I plead guilty, none, I trust, ever argued indifference to religion, contempt for morality, forgetfulness of honour, or any propension to that lowest stage of depravity, which makes men act habitually the parts of hypocrites.

There was a time, when, like you, I gloried in my religion; I daily thanked God that I was not, like other men, heretics, schismatics, and infidels; I subscribed with unfeigned sincerity to that article of your belief, "That the Roman church is the mother and mistress of all churches, and that out of her communion no salvation can be obtained (b). I was persuaded, that the arguments of her adversaries were lighter than chaff; though, at the same time, I should have deemed it an impiety to weigh them in the scales of impartiality and candour. Common sense informed me, that enquiry implied a doubt, whilst the voice of the church was loud in proclaiming, that to doubt of any doctrinal point was to be no longer a Roman catholic. Under such a dilemma, the inquisitive faculties of the mind must remain in a state of torpid acquiescence, or be exerted only after a previous and definitive judgment has been passed upon the truth, or falsity of the doctrines in debate. I was, therefore, soon convinced, that no consistent Roman catholic can be a candid enquirer in matters of religion. He cannot set out with that indifference to the truth or falsity of a tenet, which forms the leading feature of rational investigation; and yet, at the same time, it was painful to conclude, that an honest search into the truth and nature of religion could be any ways offensive to its merciful author. "I could never perceive why in religious enquiries our reason should be particularly restrained; as the subject is of singular importance, it seemed that even greater latitude should be allowed us (c)." "To prove all things, and hold fast that which is good," was the important advice of an inspired apostle (d). I regarded it as an essential duty of a minister of religion, "to be ready always to give an answer to every man that asketh you a reason of the hope that is in you, with meekness and fear (e)." In a word—the positive injunction of the beloved disciple of Jesus, "not to believe every spirit, but try the spirits, whether they be of God (f)," was a sufficient voucher for the lawfulness and expediency of enquiry (g).

(a) State and behaviour of the English catholics, by the rev. Mr. Berrington, pag. 132. In the second edition of this spirited work the author softens his censure upon those, who may abandon his communion; but the original sentiment remains nearly the same.

(b) See the famous creed of pope Pius IV. the present standard of orthodoxy in the Roman church.

(c) State and behaviour of the Roman catholics, p. 159.

(d) 1 Thess. v.

(e) 1 Pet. iii. 15.

(f) 1 John iv. 1.

(g) Not to mention many other ancient fathers, who advise us to have recourse to the scriptures in all our doubts about religion, I will only lay before the reader two remarkable passages of St. Chrysostom. This eloquent doctor shall speak for all the rest. "When you shall see an impious

My connections, moreover, with many valuable protestants, with whom I lived in habits of intimacy and friendship, served not a little to enlarge my ideas, and wean my mind from the narrowness of a system. In proportion as I became acquainted with their persons; I ceased to view their principles through the medium of prejudice. If "pure and undefiled religion with God and the Father" be this, "to visit widows and orphans in their tribulation, and to keep oneself unstained from this world;" (b) I think I know several, who have a good claim to this religion.

It soon became painful to regard such fellow-christians, some of whom are very near my heart, as straying widely from the only road to happiness by refusing to submit to a church, out of the pale of which no salvation can be had. I dismissed the cruel idea with contempt and indignation. But with it a leading principle of my former belief was abandoned. I know that some of your late ingenious apologists in England, where a writer must affect to be liberal, if he mean to be read, have laboured hard to palliate the severity of this unpopular tenet. Others have rejected it, as no article of their creed. But neither the sophistry of the former, nor the inconsistency of the latter can do away a doctrine so expressly delivered in every public catechism, and profession of faith. Neither transubstantiation, nor the infallibility of the Roman church, are taught more explicitly as articles of faith, than the impossibility of being saved out of the communion of this church. That Roman catholics profess some tenets superfluous, and inimical to christian faith, may be the opinion of a protestant; but that protestants of sense and education are in a state of damnation, must be the religious belief of a consistent Roman catholic. Look into any one of your own writers upon controversy and you will find this argument repeatedly made use of; "Protestants allow salvation to Roman catholics; but Roman catholics do not allow salvation to protestants: therefore the Roman catholic religion is the safest of the two."

In the history of the follies and depravity of man, there does not occur a stronger instance of both, than that such an article should be interwoven into the texture of his belief. Nor can the effrontery of false reasoning offer a greater insult to common sense, than to plead the uncharitableness of a tenet as an argument for its truth. But when we consider further, that this barbarous tenet laid the first foundations for the cruel heresy of the persecutors (1), who under pretext of compelling men into the only road to heaven, and saving their souls, inflicted on them torments, which humanity shudders to relate, that notwithstanding the enormities occasioned by this tenet, it was promulgated

heresy, which is the army of antichrist, standing in the holy places of the church; then let those, who are in Judaea betake themselves to the mountains: that is, let those, who are in Christendom betake themselves to the scriptures. For Christendom is the true Judaea, the mountains are the writings of the prophets and apostles. But wherefore ought all christians, at this time, to have recourse to the scriptures? Because at this time, since heresy has infected the churches, the divine scriptures only can afford a proof of genuine christianity, and a refuge to those, who are desirous of arriving at the truth of faith. Formerly it could be evinced by various means, which was the true church of Christ, which the church of the gentiles; but at present there is no other method left to those, who are willing to discover the true church of Christ, but by the scriptures only. And why? Because heresy has all outward observances in common with her. If a man, therefore, be desirous of knowing the true church of Christ, how can he be able to do it, amidst so great a resemblance, but by the scriptures only? Wherefore our Lord foretelling, that such a great confusion of things would take place in the latter days, orders the christians who are in Christendom, and desirous of arriving at the firmness of faith, to have recourse to nothing but the scriptures; for if they should look up to any thing else, they will be scandalized and will perish, as not understanding which is the true church." In Matth. c. 24. hom. 49. Here I cannot help asking, whether such would now be the advice of a Roman catholic doctor to a person labouring under similar doubts? Would not such a person be rather discouraged from consulting the scriptures, and referred to the decisions of popes and councils? Again, in 2 ad Corinth. hom. 13. "Let us not attend to the opinions of the many; but let us enquire into the things themselves. For it is absurd, while we will not trust other people in pecuniary matters, but use to count and calculate our money ourselves, that in affairs of much greater consequence, we should implicitly follow the opinions of others; especially, as we are possessed of the most exact and perfect rule and measure by which we may regulate our several enquiries, I mean the regulations of the divine laws. Wherefore I could wish, that all of you would neglect what this, or that man asserts for truth, and that you would investigate all these things in the scriptures." How one of the most enlightened doctors of antiquity could write this passage, and yet regard the doctrine of private judgment as heretical, is a paradox, which all the finessing subtleties of modern schoolmen would find it difficult to unravel.

(b) Jud. i. 17.

(1) If any doctrine can be contrary to the religion of Jesus Christ, and consequently heretical, it must be that, which teaches the justice of persecution for conscience sake. If it be said, that this doctrine has been taught and practised by protestants, my answer is, that among protestant catholics, as well as among Roman catholics, heresies may arise.