

MARYLAND GAZETTE.

THURSDAY, OCTOBER 7, 1784.

1784.
of *conditio* ex-
t of the general
Friday the 8th
Harwood, late
ning about 325
es, consisting of
of all kinds, and
And on Saturday
ion whereon Ri-
about 270 acres
d for cash, by
OOD, jun.
randel county.

April 7, 1784.
aving been made
tain depreciate
oldiers in the
ed their claim to
r discharge had
To prevent such
ate of Maryland
will be issued by
whatever, with-
duced, or a certifi-
and company to
e time of his dis-
ment and dis-
person of good
apolis, showing
arge And as
presented, the
he will not here-
than the persons
are issued.

HMOND.
April 5, 1784.
L D,
with three hun-
land, within one
ough, in Prince-
ty situated, con-
ses with a passage
ng, all two stories
with great com-
nily; there are all
a washhouse, ne-
chaife house, and
being built with-
; the land is well
y of meadow and
ngs of water; there
ple trees, besides
premises may be
de known by ap-
MAGRUDER.

red to the general
their next session,
for the inspection
Potomack river,
appointment of a

ber 21, 1784.
B N,
a fauce ladle; a
each of their han-
the London hall-
verfmiths or others
ale are requested to
iving notice to the
er them, shall re-
aid by
S RUTLAND.

by the subscriber,
r next, on the pre-
in Charles county,
iddleton, formerly
Richard Brown. It
oy creek for about
ith a valuable and
1288 acres. The
house, with brick
ith fire-places, and
bove, one of which
ood repair, a part
med kitchen with
and corn houses;
, a new barn, and
cellent fruit, and
duke, and carna-
es well, wheat, to-
e for payment will
e day of sale; bond
quired, and posses-
T FERGUSON.

A LETTER to the ROMAN CATHOLICS of the City of WORCESTER, &c Continued.

NOR will the colours of this picture, hideous as they are, reflect any odium upon you in the eyes of your fellow-subjects. From my own observation I am happy to assure them, that the Roman church in this, as well as in many other particulars, is daily undergoing a silent reformation. The dark monsters of persecution and bigotry are retreating gradually before the light of genuine religion and philosophy. Mankind begins to blush, that near fifteen centuries have been necessary to convince them, that humanity and toleration are essential branches of the religion of Jesus. Among you, few are apprised of the mischiefs, with which the tenet, I am speaking of, is pregnant. The more enlightened reject, or explain it away. Even the most orthodox give it so faint an assent, that except among a few of unutil ignorance and bigotry, its influence is but trifling upon the harmony of society.

The absurdity and uncharitableness of believing with the assent of *faith*, that the members of no christian church, but our own can be saved, is, therefore, to me quite palpable and evident. Yet no sooner do reason and religion sap the foundations of this matter-error, than the fabric raised upon it must totter and fall. Even the boasted intallibility of a living authority is no more, when salvation is allowed to christians who reject such a privilege. For, whoever admits this authority, as an undoubted article of christian religion, must necessarily pronounce condemnation upon those, who *wisely* reject it. To refuse passing such a sentence amounts to a tacit renunciation of the authority itself. But in this, as in many other instances, it is happy for mankind, that consistency of opinion is not always to be found. The uncorrupted feelings of the human heart will frequently set consequences at defiance. While their pernicious principles are deemed a red, and irreparable stain. This must always be the case with the humane, and virtuous, who ground their belief upon authority alone; who seldom enquire into the relations, which the several branches of a system bear to each other; or who, though qualified by nature and education, esteem it an impertinence to think for themselves, or to harbour the least suspicion concerning notions, which they have been taught from their infancy to regard as intallible.

For my own part, no sooner had I relinquished this unwarrantable tenet, than doubts began to arise concerning some others, with which it is so nearly connected. I experienced a very singular satisfaction in regarding my protestant brethren as fellow travellers in the same road to happiness as entitled to the same grace and benefits of redemption with myself. In proportion as the dead weight of authority was removed, the mind recovered its natural spring and energy and indulged itself in the warm feelings of expanded benevolence, which had hitherto been chilled by early infusions of bigotry. To trace each religious truth to its genuine sources of reason and revelation, I considered as the most noble and important employment, that can possibly occupy the faculties of man.

Scarcely, however, had I entered upon this glorious task, when I felt the whole force of Solomon's observation: that "he, who increaseth wisdom, increaseth sorrow." I foresaw the difficulties to which this undertaking would expose me. I knew, that to seek religious information in the writings of protestants, was to incur the severest censures of the church I belonged to. I was persuaded, that from such an enquiry doubts would naturally arise, that might destroy the texture of my former belief and that I was bringing upon myself a series of long and painful conflicts between ancient habits of thinking, and future conviction. As I was determined to acquiesce ultimately in the authority of revelation, the light of reason, and the dictates of conscience, I anticipated in my mind the various disagreeable, and distressful sensations, which a dereliction of former principles would unavoidably occasion. The loss of reputation with a respectable set of people, who from calling me *friend*, would stile me an *apostate*, the imputation of inconstancy; the suspicions attending the very name of *convert*, which with some of all parties is become a term of reproach; the mortification, affliction, and perhaps aversion of kind, and tender relations, who used to regard me as doing some credit to my connections; pity from the benevolent, and abuse from the zealous were the certain consequences of a change in my principles. To a mind not callous to the importance of a good name, to the endearments of friendship, to the affections of consanguinity, and such claiming any pretensions to the apathy of a stoic, such bitter reflections could by no means be indifferent. A dreary prospect opening at the same time from a different quarter, served not a little to enhance the gloomy prospect before me. Held back from my native country and property by a lung, distrestful and iniquitous war (m), destitute of connections, to which I might

look up for assistance, and with a constitution, that promised but a slender share of health, I could not reasonably hope for any situation in life equally eligible with that, which I might determine to relinquish. A decent apartment, a comfortable house in a beautiful and elegant city, and a plentiful table with a virtuous disinterested colleague, were advantages, which I could hardly meet with elsewhere. Neither ambition, avarice, or pleasure could have any charms for me. The humble walk of a Roman catholic missionary, and the indigent obscurity usually attending his vocation in England, had taught me early in life to contract my expectations within very narrow limits. No opening either to dignities or affluence could make any change, at this time, on the temper of my mind. Nor could I be influenced in any degree by the allurements of pleasure. However I might depart from the principles of my belief, the code of my morality was to remain always the same. No enquiry can alter the eternal laws of virtue; no sophistry can justify the cravings of vice. If any should say, (and I expect it will be said,) that I was tired of the law, which obliged me to live single, and was willing to unite myself to a more indulgent community, I can only refer such declaimers to the littleness of their own minds, where, perhaps, they will discover the ungenerous source of so illiberal a reflection. I make no scruple, indeed, here publicly to acknowledge, that for some time back, I have considered the law of celibacy as a cruel usurpation of the *unalienable* rights of nature, as unwarrantable in its principle, inadequate to its object and detrimental in its consequences. The various mischiefs arising from it must be obvious to every man, who will allow himself to reflect dispassionately upon this very absurd, and tyrannical institution (n). I read this, however, been the only exceptionable injunction of your church, I think I can declare before the God, who is to judge me, that as I should have found it my interest, so I should have thought it my duty not to abandon her communion. No action of my life ever authorized you to suspect, that any gratification whatever could induce me to part deliberately with my peace of mind, my honour and my conscience. How circumstances may determine me to act in this particular, is very uncertain at present. This however is evident, that when a certain witness has himself publicly from any society, the discipline of that society must cease to be binding.

Withheld by the difficulties which I have mentioned on the one hand, urged on by the irresistible force of truth on the other, I remained for some time in a state of wretched, though, I confide, not guilty suspense. To sit down contented with the faith of the protestant, to highly appreciate by Roman catholic aetetics, and by Bellarmin himself (o); who, when questioned about his creed, answered, "that he believed what the church believed and that the church believed what he believed," appeared such an insult upon reason, that I could by no means digest it. If a man's belief be not rational; if he submit to human authority without weighing, or understanding the doctrines which it inculcates, this belief is not *faith*. It is credulity; it is weakness. With equal merit might he be a Jew, a Musselman, or an idolater, as each of these grounds his principles upon authority, whose decrees he deems sacred, whilst he neglects to examine them.

Convinced, at length, that in my circumstances (p) enquiry was become a duty, daily matter springing up

in this country in North-America, where his whole property lies. He was sent to Europe when very young, and after passing through some years of very rigid discipline in a Jesuitic academy, secluded from society, and debarred from every species of information, that could make him acquainted with himself, or the world, he was induced to take orders among a body of men equally distinguished by their eminence and their fall. Whatever aspirations, they may lie under of ambition, or avarice, the first raised very few of them to any dignities in the church, nor was the second directed in procuring the delicacies, that pamper the holy indolence of profane conventuals. The scanty revenues of their establishments have been discovered; and their bitterest enemies have ginary treasures is no more, and their bitterest enemies have never impeached the purity of their morals. Cut off by the power, in defence of which they were ever prodigal of their labours, and their blood, they fell pitied by many, who abhorred the object of their zeal; and must be considered by all, as an additional monument of the ingratitude and tyranny of Rome. Under the eye of the pretended father of the faithful, they were oppressed by calumny, and stripped of their possessions, without being allowed to appeal to the tribunal of the public, or the laws of their country. The bull, that pronounced the suppression of their order, forbids them or their friends, under pain of excommunication, to utter or write a syllable in their defence. Such is the tender mercy, and justice of a church, which stiles herself the holy mother, and mistress of all others. The humane reader will excuse this slender tribute of gratitude, which the author pays to the memory of an unfortunate society; in which he received the first lessons of virtue, and principles of religion. The first, he trusts, he shall never forget; although conviction obliges him to abandon some of the latter.

for doubting of former notions, persuaded that *good and negative assent* was insincere, and nugatory, and confident, that the grace of God would accompany an attentive, and upright pursuit after truth, I determined resolutely to discard all inferior considerations, and to be influenced solely by the result of my researches.

With this view, I had immediate recourse to the fountains of information, which the bounty of providence has laid open to man. I read, I studied, I pondered the old and new testament with unremitting attention. In the latter it was easy to discover the *great fundamental, and necessary* doctrines of the christian dispensation. In both there appeared a perfect code of morality calculated to render us virtuous and happy. But I could find in neither the *discriminating* doctrines of the Roman church.

After the volumes that have been written by protestant divines to shew the slender claim of these doctrines to so sacred an origin, it would be useless to dwell any longer upon the subject. It is, besides, a matter of so extensive a nature, that it would carry me infinitely beyond the limits of this short address. It would plunge me headlong into the ocean of controversy, which, as I stated above, it is my wish to avoid. Moreover, it must be obvious to every man, who is but moderately acquainted with Roman catholic polemics, that protestant writers have thrown away much erudition and ingenuity, in retuting pierensions, which were never claimed by their most learned opponents.—I say the most celebrated controvertists of the Roman church acknowledge, that some of her essential tenets are not to be found *at all* in the scriptures, or are delivered in them with great obscurity. This, perhaps, is a fact which you never suspected; I beg leave, therefore, to intance it briefly in a few particulars.

Transubstantiation, or "the conversion of the whole substance of bread into the body, and of the whole substance of wine into the blood of Jesus Christ" is an essential article of the Roman catholic religion. But is this article clearly and evidently delivered in any passage of the bible? Hear what your own most eminent doctors have written upon the subject: "Scotus says, that there is no text of the scripture so explicit, as evidently to claim our assent to transubstantion, without the decision of the church; and this is not at all improbable: for although scripture may appear to us to be evident, as to command the receipt of a dispassionate man, yet it may be read many doubted whether it be so in reality. In a men of the great learning and penetration, among whom Scotus is eminently conspicuous, have thought otherwise (q)." The elegant and learned Melchior Canus, bishop of the Canaries, mentioning "several particulars belonging to faith, which are not expressly delivered in the scriptures," instances among others, "the change of the bread and wine into the body and blood of Christ (r)." Alpronus de Castro, an orthodox and mighty name in scholastic theology, has these remarkable words; "Indulgencies are not to be despised, because the use of them was lately introduced into the church. Many things are known to the moderns, of which ancient writers were totally ignorant. For in old authors, there is seldom any mention made of the transubstantiation of the bread into the body of Christ (s)." Since the decision of the council of Trent, it is become an article of your faith, "that a priest has power to forgive sins." But Peter Lombard, the famous master of the sentences, the Newton, the Aristotle of scholastic divines, was so far from discovering this prerogative in the scriptures, that he rejects it at large, and is supported in his opinion by almost all the ancient schoolmen of his time (t). Their doctrine is thus copiously delivered by Cardinal Hugo, who lived at that period: "The priest cannot bind, or loosen the sinner with or from the bond of the *fault*, or the *punishment*, but only declare him to be bound, or loosed: as the Levitical priest did not infect, or cleanse the leper, but only declared him infected or clean (u)." You will not, I presume question the authority of Fisher, the famous bishop of Rochelle, who sealed with his blood the doctrines he professed. Hear now faintly he discovers the revelation of purgatory in the scriptures. "As it is necessary, says he, that the doctrine

rests principally on the authority of their teachers. "Turbam non intelligendi simplicitate, sed crescentia simplicitatis intus facit." S. Aug. contra epist. Tund. I beg leave to transcribe in this place the rule, which the present learned and pious bishop of Cebes lays down for the lower sort of people. "Let each man, says he, improve his own judgment, and increase his own knowledge as much as he can and be fully assured, that God will expect no more. In matters for which he must rely on authority, let him trust those, who by encouraging free enquiry appear to love truth, rather than such, as by requiring all their duties to be implicitly obeyed, seem conscious that they wish not bear to be freely tried. But never let him prefer any authority to that, which is the highest authority the written word of God. This, therefore, let us all carefully study, and not doubt, that that whatever things in it are necessary to be believed, are easy to be understood. This is my rely on, and trust to its truth, when it declares itself able to make us wise unto salvation, perfectly and thoroughly justified, unto all good works." 2 Tim. xiii. 17. strict observance at the errors of the church of Rome. 1782.

(l) Whoever reads any books written by heretics (or protestants) containing heresy, or treating about religion, without permission of the holy see, by virtue of the Bulla Coenz, incurs excommunication ipso facto. Whoever retains, prints, or defends them is subject to the same dismal penalty. See Art. dekins theology, resolutions practical ad heresim edit. Antwerp, pag. 147. And every Roman catholic divine.
(m) These sentiments began to arise, when there was little probability of the author being able to return to his native country in North-America, where his whole property lies.
(n) The curious reader will find this subject treated with much impartiality and erudition, in an Essay on the law of celibacy, &c. printed at Worcester in 1783, and sold by Rivington and Brew, London.
(o) De arte bene moriens. lib. 2. cap. 9.
(p) They, whom neither education, nor abilities, nor Liqure, qualify to enter upon such enquiries, must rely principally on the authority of their teachers.
(q) Turbam non intelligendi simplicitate, sed crescentia simplicitatis intus facit. S. Aug. contra epist. Tund.
(r) I beg leave to transcribe in this place the rule, which the present learned and pious bishop of Cebes lays down for the lower sort of people.
(s) Let each man, says he, improve his own judgment, and increase his own knowledge as much as he can and be fully assured, that God will expect no more. In matters for which he must rely on authority, let him trust those, who by encouraging free enquiry appear to love truth, rather than such, as by requiring all their duties to be implicitly obeyed, seem conscious that they wish not bear to be freely tried. But never let him prefer any authority to that, which is the highest authority the written word of God. This, therefore, let us all carefully study, and not doubt, that that whatever things in it are necessary to be believed, are easy to be understood. This is my rely on, and trust to its truth, when it declares itself able to make us wise unto salvation, perfectly and thoroughly justified, unto all good works. 2 Tim. xiii. 17.
(t) strict observance at the errors of the church of Rome. 1782.
(u) Bel arm de Eub. l. 3. cap. 23.
(v) Loc. commun. lib. 3. fun. 2.
(w) Lib. 4. sentent. dist. 8. c. f.
(x) Vocab. vulg. 2. in hiet. 2. 16.

Charles-Street.