

# MARYLAND GAZETTE.

T H U R S D A Y, S E P T E M B E R 4, 1 8 0 0.

For the MARYLAND GAZETTE.  
To GABRIEL DUVAL, Esquire.

S I R,

YOUR publication in the Baltimore Telegraph, introducing me by name, as the author of a hand-bill, signed "A Friend to Fair Play," came lately to my knowledge,—and I have seized the earliest opportunity, after my return to this place, to notice it. On your addressing the citizens in Annapolis, and proceeding to remark on that hand-bill, I publicly, in your presence, avowed myself the author, to remove any impression that I was capable of insidiously wounding your feelings, and to meet any responsibility that might attach.

You volunteered an avowed attack upon the president, and two houses of congress, charging them with ignorance or corruption, in this, "that they violated the constitution in more instances than one—and consequently made yourself fair game for a reply.

You seem hurt at anonymous publications.—Had I been a weak man, ambitious of popularity; or vain one, courting to lead a party in the state in opposition to the administration; or had I been a judge, with my signature deriving lustre from my office; in any or all of these events I might have followed your example, and given myself at large to the world;—but perfectly satisfied that there is no celebrity or magic in either of our names, that can give perspicuity to reasoning, or strength to folly, I pursued the examples of older and abler men, who, under assumed signatures, trust the reputation of their productions to their intrinsic merit, undecorated by their real names.

You are pleased to intimate, "that my publication ought to have been conducted with candour and liberality; that it was your study to avoid personalty."—On a review of my piece, I see no want of candour or liberality; if I did, I solemnly declare, in justice to you and myself, I would apologize. But if I am mistaken, if it is deficient in either, I confess, Sir, had your advice been illustrated by your example, I should have doubly felt its force.—Is the insinuation that I am for passive obedience and nonresistance; that it is difficult to unrivet ancient prejudices, and dispossess former feelings? Is the story of Pitt and the rights of man, with the insinuation that you are mistaken if many of your opponents do not coincide in opinion with him? Is your allusion to my former service in the British army? I say are these, or any of these insinuations, in that spirit of candour and liberality, so becoming in a man, and so highly decorous in a judge?—Are they, Sir, evidences of your study to avoid personalty?—

It is painful to speak of ones self,—but it has become necessary to avoid misrepresentation and mistake.—I was born in Maryland, and living in it at the time of the battles of Brandywine and German-town.—I joined the British army December, 1777, and accepted a commission before the age of twenty-one.—I left the United States November, 1778; was taken prisoner by the Spaniards, and sent to the Havana in 1782; returned to New-York a prisoner in 1782; in the same fall went to England, and soon after to France, for the recovery of my health, and did not return to the United States until 1785.—I have lived ten years in Annapolis.—The last five I have been a member of the general assembly; an honour conferred on me without solicitation; and before the acceptance of my seat, I sold my half pay, that I might stand an independent man.—Thus supported by the kindness and partiality of my fellow-citizens, from my soul I pity the weakness, and despise the folly, of allusions to my service in the British army.

I have much reason to believe that you, Sir, approved of me as your successor to represent the city of Annapolis—you have known me for twenty-five years, and in all my habits of intercourse with you and my fellow-citizens, my former political conduct has never been publicly brought into view; until this period.—The time-serving measures of the present day, in the hands of political enthusiasts, rip up and expose the errors and frailties of youth; not as such, with the benevolent design of healing them; but because their authors are in opposition to the election of Mr. Jefferson.—This is the head and front of my offence.

Had I been an alien, exiled from Europe for my turbulence or my crimes.—Had I become the libeller of Adams and the constitution, or the idolater of Jefferson and France: it is more than probable, Sir, the necessity of this letter had never existed.

Why you again revert to the early conduct of my life, "speak to me as I am, nothing extenuate or set down ought to malice."—Disclose facts; because insinuations leave to the bosom of malignity, (not yours, Sir,) every thing that malice can suggest.

Now to your answer to my hand-bill. You have an attention to minorities, your publication proves it; and you say, "you only claim, as an individual, the right of judging for yourself."—God forbid I should ever infringe the rights of any man, Sir, in earnest? are you simply giving your opinion to the world? Have you

not undertaken to advise, inform and instruct the people of the errors of their government, and the incompetency of their president? Believe me, Sir, I can justly appreciate the right of freely examining public characters and measures, and I can equally distinguish between the independent exercise of that right, and the attempt to influence the public mind by every exertion and energy in your power. Have you not struck off an extra number of Annapolis papers, to give extensive circulation to your publication? And have you not, in every part of Anne-Arundel county, addressed the people at their various meetings, to enforce your opinions; to be appointed an elector yourself, with a view to turn out the president?—I do not censure you for all this. You are honest and open in your belief; but surely such conduct is more than what your answer states, "that as an individual you only claim the right to judge for yourself."—And having so written, and so acted, am I not correct in my hand-bill, in calling on the people to see if the writers in favour of Jefferson have more wisdom, patriotism and constitutional knowledge, than Adams and the majority of the two houses of congress? If, Sir, I had ever compared you to them, and you had sunk in the scale, there was nothing to wound your feelings, because the comparison is made to the ablest man and public bodies which I know.—

My hand-bill states, that you think differently from general Washington, with respect to the alien bill. This you have endeavoured to answer, by quoting a passage from his letter, and then stating, that it relates exclusively to France.—I grant you, Sir, that French aggressions were the remote cause of writing that letter;—but do these expressions relate to France, "no one can more cordially approve of the wise and prudent measures of your administration; they ought to inspire universal confidence?"—No, Sir, they are an unqualified approbation of John Adams's conduct up to that time. You say that general Washington could not approve of the sedition bill, and five millions eight per cent. loan. True, Sir, he could not approve of measures not in existence at the date of his letter, nor did I so say. My hand-bill speaks pointedly of the alien bill. Mr. Adams approved it on the 25th June preceding the date of the letter. This bill was considered as an important defensive measure. It greatly agitated the continent; and is it probable, is it possible, Sir, that Washington, who lived three days distant from Philadelphia, whose heart beat high for his country's welfare, whose solicitude for information was as unbounded as his means of acquiring it, should be ignorant of the passage of that bill eighteen days previous to his letter—a defensive measure, connected, as such, with the army of which he was then accepting the command? No, Sir, Washington knew it; the approving that bill was a measure of Mr. Adams's administration, and as such received Washington's unqualified approbation.—I feel myself justified and correct in the hand-bill's stating, that you and Washington differ in opinion.—

This you retort on me by a fair stroke, and a true one, "that I differed in politics from the immortal Washington."—But I have lived to see my error, and for many years have most sincerely repented of it; and I trust it will not be long before you feel equal contrition, and make as public an avowal.—For believe me, Sir, when either of us differ from the opinions of Washington, the world will not hesitate a moment to decide.

You appear offended that my hand-bill should term your publication "visionary, chiefly extracted from the works of Virginia democrats, and the substance of the whole to be found on the files of the Aurora, and in the libels of Callender."—When that hand-bill was published, very few of your numbers had appeared, principally confined to the alien and sedition bills; and you admit part. (I say greatest part,) of your arguments on these bills to have been taken from Mr. Maddison's report to the Virginia assembly. This report I call a democratic one, no offence to Mr. Maddison; I believe him a great man, that he gave much assistance in framing the federal constitution, and was highly instrumental in its adoption by Virginia.—But his report, from which you have so largely borrowed, was drawn up, (if I am correctly informed,) to justify those disorganizing resolutions of Virginia, which were condemned on great discussion by every state in the union, (except Kentucky;—perhaps I err; I have heard, but do not know the fact, that one of the states let them lay on their table, and that another, forgetful of propriety, threw them under.)—That a metaphysical publication, in opposition to, so decided a sense of the union, may be termed visionary with propriety, I think no one can doubt.—I now call on you, Sir, to point out one new idea in your publication at the date of my hand-bill, that I cannot find in Mr. Maddison's report, or the other papers alluded to.—I will go through the Auger talk of examining those papers, and collating them with any ideas, then published by you, and that shall be now referred to as new ones.

As to Mr. Jefferson's religion, I will not charge you with intentionally misrepresenting my hand-bill,—your immense political anxiety does not afford you leisure to reflect.—The hero of Cervantes was wise, liberal and good, but touch the chord of chivalry, and his pulse beat to madness.—When or where have I charged in my hand-bill, that Mr. Jefferson wants religion, or is a deist? you misconceive me; conscious of my own infirmities, I enter into the bosom of no man.—His religious sentiments I leave to God and himself. It is not the man but his writings, that I attack; the tendency of his expressions to demoralize the world.—You think I have not read his works; believe me, Sir, I have, (even his letter to Mazzei,) and with more attention than you are aware of.

I admire universal toleration; but his expressions are these, "It does me no injury for my neighbour to say, there is no God, or twenty Gods; it neither picks my pocket nor breaks my leg."—If this be true as to one neighbour, it is true as to all, and every man's neighbour, and of course extends to the whole community.—Now if there be no God, or twenty Gods, the religion of our Holy Saviour, who was the son of God, is destroyed,—and hence, according to clear logical deduction from his doctrine, it does no injury for a whole community to disbelieve the religion of Christ, by avowing there is no God, or twenty.—The whole tenor of your life is a denial of such principles; the allusion to "picking a pocket, or breaking a leg," is an indelicate one, unworthy the subject; it has neither wit, humour or reason to recommend it, and is more in the stile of a disciple of Voltaire, in ridicule of religion, than in support of its belief.—Again, Sir, the next idea is, "if such a person's testimony, (meaning one who denies God, or believes in twenty,) can not, in a court of justice, be relied on, reject it, and be the stigma on him.—But what stigma can attach to a man if all his neighbours believe the same thing? A man, like Mr. Jefferson, placed by the smiles of fortune above the temptation of violating his duties; a man of his enlightened mind and beneficent dispositions, with the strong perceptions of moral right, may pass a life of unimpeached integrity in this world.—But are the bulk of mankind so circumstanced? In your commerce with the world as a man, and your experience as a lawyer and a judge, have you found the rewards and punishments of a future state, superinduced to the pains and penalties of human laws, adequate to restrain the commission of offences? Does not the profligacy of mankind, even under the restraints of religion, give daily proofs to the world of violations of chastity, life and property. Remove the fear of God, the religion of Christ, and the restraint of hereafter, and am I not correct in saying that we shall be deluged in the accumulated horrors that have attended the orbit of the French revolution?

It is the sentiment of Mr. Jefferson as published, not his private life or belief, that I attacked.—But as in answer to my hand-bill you have departed from the charge, and gone into evidence of his belief in the religion of Christ,—I will examine that evidence. These words from his publication constitutes your 1st proof. "I tremble for my country, when I reflect that God is just, and that his justice cannot sleep for ever."—Is there, Sir, on reflection one word of this quotation that goes further than deism.—The Mahometan acknowledge God, they fear his justice, and believe in a future state, but are they christians and believers in the divinity and religion of Jesus? do you not perceive, Sir, how illogical your conclusion is from your premises—that a belief in God, is proof of belief in his son?

Your 2d proof is an extract "from the act for establishing religious freedom."—Now, Sir, for my life, (if he wrote that law,) I can see no proof in it of his individual sentiments in favour of christianity.—Mr. Jefferson's object was universal toleration, and to effect that, be his individual opinions what they might, his knowledge of legislation and the world had long taught him to know, that a bill must be drawn to suit the ideas of those who are to act upon it; and I presume, if atheism or deism had appeared on the face of such a bill, a Virginia legislature would never have passed it; hence his sentiments and his language may well be at variance.—Do not mistake me, Sir, I am only examining your proof, not saying or asserting that he is not a christian, I repeat that I leave his religious sentiments to God and himself.—But I also trust, that I have satisfactorily proved his printed ones are incompatible with the safety of society; and that I have justified my hand-bill.—Whether Mr. Jefferson's sentiments and language are at variance, whether he has two languages, one confidential and one official, I leave to be established by God; who made the charge,—but if he will act as president of the United States, and retain the sentiments expressed in the letter to Mazzei, all the world must see that his lust for dominion would induce him to accept authority over what he terms an Anglo-monarchical faction, and administer even the forms of a British government, in preference to honourable retirement, or avowed and open opposition. PHILIP B. KEY.