XVIth YEAR.]

W E D N E, S D, A Y, August 23, 1809.

[No. 3267.]

egiscellany.

For the MARTLAND GAZETYE.

No. II.

on the Church BILL and QUAKERS PETITION.

S an electioneering handle is attempted to be made of the above, by wrefting into political purposes, and rendering touse of delegates unpopular, I shall enour, in the spirit of justice and charity, ater on their motive of approving of the

public confequence, be Quakers will not admit the lawfulness the, founding their objection on our Sa-'s command, " Swear not at all, but let communication be yea and nay." It be obvious to the intelligent, who confis he reading and connexion of the whole compared with other portions of scripthat the swearing here alluded to are of levity, not judicial. When our Sareprobated the odious practice of swearand admonished his hearers, the emphawords " not at all," should be attended and it will be understood to read thus, year not by Heaven at all," affigning the on, " for it is God's throne, nor by the for it is his footftool," &c. neither shalt fwear by thy te head," &ccr every where peding with his injunction his reason, on canst not make one hair white or k," therefore, as the head and the earth, are the workmanship of God, to swear ny of them is to swear by God, the first cause. " Swear not at all then," viz. my thing directly or indirectly relating m. See this interpretation in the 23d ter of St. Matthew, where the indifcre-fin and folly, of the Jews, in their pracof loofe swearing, is rebuked by our Sair in the same manner as if he was now ppear on earth, he would fee sufficient e to reproach and forbid many, (as he

the turbulent Jews,) on that vile custom wearing by this and by that, as many inreet people are in the habit of doing .-Jewish adjuration, or practice of judicial ering, was to elevate the eyes, and hold be right hand, as if in the presence of the ine Being; hence that passage of the mist is explained, "And their right hand right hand of falsehood." The universa-of the prohibition is a novel thing, and was so understood by the Disciples, or primi-Christians. St. Peter, St. Paul, St. lions in the nature of naths. St. Paul "I call God for a record upon my foul;" nother place for a witness, &c. Again, en verily swear by the greater, (viz. Jeah,) and an oath for confirmation is to man end of all firife." Not "yea and " an affirmation, or negation. Govern-

it itself would often be insecure where the fare of the public was highly concerned, without the formalities of an oath, most would not be satisfied, where their lives a'es were in jeopardy. God himfelf reres in an oath, these conditions, truth, gment and righteousness; even our blessed iour himself, when he was required to at, viz. "adjured by the living God," the Jewish custom was,) "to tell the truth, ether he was the Christ the Son of God not;" he took no offence, but conde-oded to answer. See James v. 12. Every vilh Rabbi knows there was, and is a inction, as well with them as with us, been swearing directly or solemnly before d, and swearing loosely, by any inferior ob-

tof veneration, as by Heavens, my hor, my foul, &c. Rash and vain swearing

y is forbidden, but in truth and charity are justified. See the nature of oaths

rnedly treated and fully explained in Pa-

Whole Duty of Man, Article 39 of the urch of England, &c. As for myself, I ve always entertained a high sense of the tues of Quakers. In cases of contracts, would as foon admit their affirmation as my men's oaths, but in the weightier mat-'s of the law, as "death and judgment," eir affirmation, however respectable, is ob-Rionable; their conscious scruples is against em; it disqualifies them from giving a firm d unprejudiced judgment. To do justice therey then, by the confirmation of an th, is a Christian's duty, when required by

e magistrate; religion does not forbid it, d redson enfoins it as a juror's qualificam, and judicial fatisfaction; hence the leflature, in my opinion, judiciously refused allent to the Quaker's petition of exempon, and this is faid to be " withholding the urest rights of citizenship from one deno-

the Senate, is, in the opinion of some-llicklers for retributive justice, quite sight, per-fectly justifiable. The Christian doctrine requires us " to do as we would be done by;" this is retributive justice; experimental policy invites us to do even a distant good, but how is a distant good to be obtained if the experi-

ment is never attempted, or a present good established, if the apprehension of suture evil deters? This strange mode of warfare is humiliating in the extreme; it hamlirings your legislative government; it renders it useles, or an aristocracy necessary.

It is of the first importance to the community the people should know their real situation; it is essential to the public welfare that they should have a firm reliance upon, and full confidence in, the integrity and capatity of the federal delegates. True philosophy and candour will condemn acts of indifcretion or

injustice in the senate, (if wrong,) as it does those of individuals.

When a new fituation would arise out of a political controversy, it is difficult to forefee events; for instance, whether our delegates " have violated the constitution," (as publicly charged;) whether the fenate has not deviated from the path of justice and honour, as infinuated, and what the consequence; but the foresight of an enlightened man would yield to the chance which seemingly deranges his opinion or calculation. The statesman becomes a visionary when he neglects the picient to enter into fortuitous combination, or rigid to mark what he conceives amis, to promote party purposes; funcels may flatter his pride or his prejudices, but offends reason. As there are no men without errors, fo there are no focieties without their reciprocal rights.

If it was right to grant the Quakers, Moravians, &c. an exemption from Iwearing, it is right to grant it to other denominations of Christians who respect the voice of a tender conscience as much as they do. If it was right to grant the Roman Catholics a: others a charter of incorporation, ergo, it must be right, (on the same principle,) to grant it to the Lutherans or Episcopalians, when they

"When a superb obelisk," says Montesquieu, " is composed of a single block, it must either stand erect, or laid level with the ground." No doubt the authority of our government can change, annul old laws, or create new ones, when the safety or interest of the state requires it. The fafety or interest of the state, I conceive, is not concerned in the question, whether an inoffensive seet shall swear or affirm in our courts of law, but the interest, credit, and perhaps safety of our consitutional government, is concerned in granting equal rights and privileges to its members. A large majority of our delegates in the late fession of the legislature were of this opinion; they decided on the justice and utility of the Episcopal Church Bill, declaring, on the face of it, it appeared to them " reasonable and proper to be granted," and who doubts their truth? What was its oftenfible object? To establish a rational and legal authority in the convention of the Protestant Episcopal Church of Maryland, to regulate and conduct the affairs of the faid church, their plan to preserve, improve, purchase or dispose of, donations or rents-(see the law and their petition,) to found by means or funds, to inculcate and propagate " religion and reason more extensively." This scheme of benevolent consecration in contemplation was however frustrated by vapourish fear or policy. Demofarcical imputations and charges have appeared deeming it an attempt to establish the church supremacy, as being an ally or an enemy of the state, as preferring a regal government to a popular form; such ideas and assertions respecting it has defeated, and would defeat the virtuous object of any bill, and mortify authors, friends and supporters. They go farther. Artfully to complete the climax, it is infinuated, "the Episcopalians are inimical to the universal freedom of religious opinions, shew a disposition to engross power with a view to abuse it. That the legislature has withheld the dearest rights of citizenship from one de-nomination of christians, whilst they attempted to cloath another fet with powers," the extent of which, though defined, appears to alarm. " If," (adds the author of a late Address to the Public,) "they have not manifested the same spirit of intolerance towards the Methodists as they have done to the Quakers, the reason is, they thought the Quakers, &c. were fo few in number that they could withhold from them the rights of citizenship without injury to their party, but the other fects are too numerous, until by degrees they got powerful enough to deprive them of their rights, when they might make the yoke as

To those who have a glimpse of real happi-

heavy as they pleafed."

dear rights from another fet of Christians by of the house of delegates, and in the experi- those who are not so; but though I love the enced zeal and moderation of the clerical or-der, such allegations and surmites will have no effect; their principles and virtues will, I hope, be cherished and engraven on the hearts of many of the people of Maryland.

If their great aim is proved to be profitable,

conducive to the interest and happiness of the community, they merit national thanks and not private reproach. The House of Delegates passed and approved the petition of the Protestant Episcopal act of incorporation; the Senate refused it; both could not be right. In this land of liberty, whilst such refusal wanes explanation, I trust it is not dangerous to tell the truth, or state national differences. In defence of the Church Bill I add-The constitution of our Church is Episcopal, and is governed by bishops; it may be justly accused for the inequality of its livings, many of them being too poor to maintain a clergyman, with his family, with any kind of decency. We may also justly accuse some vestrymen for suffering the parish to be long vacant, and the Glebe-lands selfishly appropriated, or long remaining unaccounted for; witness the state of the parishes in the neighbourhood of this city; some churches are burnt, or in a ruinous situation; the Convention faw, or knew these evils existed, and wished to remeydy them. They coveted, if it was a crime to covet, to make better provision for the poor clergymen, and thereby encourage virtuous and learned young men to take holy orders; they withed also to fee the poor instructed and their children educated, " to promote the cause of religion and virtue," as it is expressed in the bill; to erect this glorious fabric, and carry this plan into execution, committees were to be appointed under the authority of the convention, funds to be created, and donations received from the liberal and the charitable to defray their own and all reasonable expenses—Its excellent effects would be feen and felt in regard to the spiritual and temporal interest of many, consequently of the state itself, hence the Convention were folicitous to procure a legislative fanction in behalf of the church's government, and its internal economy, but you are accused of " taking too much upon you, ye sons of Levy ;" your committee, as the author of the handbill states, "were to take possession of the church or churches, and other property, belonging to the parish, to be vested in the committee, who might use, manage and apply, such funds, and so forth, and report only to the convention, and not to the parish or congregation."-Certainly the Convention itself would have to report to the public, &c. and be responsible for the conduct of its committees to the legislature and the law. As for the following expressions and infinuations respecting " a knowing ministry, a money loving ministry, arming clergymen with alarming powers, as an entering wedge to a great plan, (viz. a plan to make the Protestant Episcopal Church the established Church of Maryland,) and that it would not be wife in them boldly to come forward and fay fo," I think them reprehensible and indecorous. Discretion, indeed, is a good thing; we should have been happy to see it displayed in the address to the public before us; but why is it fo freely supposed any political power and consequence granted them will prompt them to display an intolerant spirit, &c. more than any other religious fociety? Where is the foundation for that and other ferious charges? Are they not phantoms of a wild imagination? We are members of the church of England, and that church is admitted, by the intelligent and unprejudiced, to become, beyond any other national church, tolerant in its principles and orthodox in its faith. With respect to religious liberty, moderation is its governing character. Not to enter upon the motives of the reformation, or the great and thining characters which contributed to its establishment, it is certain that Episcopal government, excepting the few years of the civil wars and Cromwell's usurpation, has ever fince prevailed in England to the prosperity of the subject and the tranquillity of the state, and if religious sectaries have multiplied, divisions are heard of, and civil licentiousness prevailed there, it is on the same principle they have appeared here, namely, a tenderness in matters that can affect either conscience or liberty: and as to points of doctrine and reverential conduct, many of its members, laity as well as clergy, in America as well as in Europe, have greatly distinguished themselves by their zeal, learning and abilities; and their writings, fuch as Wilberforce on Religion, Neckar on Religious Influence, &c. and others on liberty and toleration, proves it, cohlequently are defervedly held in high estimation by many of the clergy of every denomination. As for myfelf I would fay, I heartily love and highly effeen all the clergy who possess zeal in which I have travelled, where this bre with discretion, have a devout reverence for of theep has been introduced. In England ination of Christians;"but withholding other nels in the wisdom and benevolent intentions those who are good, and am heartily forry for and France the greatest care and expense as

virtuous clergy of our church very much, and have an eager defire to express it in all kinds of fervice, yet I would never prefume to be their Champion, or that of the House of Dele gates, by writing an apology for, or windi-cating the one or the other, did I retain half the unfavourable sentiments of them; as the writer, (I wish to reform;) appears to do but this wish I am afraid is a hopeles, one yet though I want the skill to mend my watch when it is out of order, yet that does not hinder me from knowing when it is fo in like manner, though I have not the fkill to seeing the faults of fome, I pretend not an ability to rectify the faults of any, but on the other hand I cannot in the least approve fuch as screw up and raise the failings or interpret the intentions of either federalifts of clergymen to a height that surpasses all moderation, and indeed justice, by endeavouring to make them appear what they are not. I shall ever take a fatisfaction in endeavouring to moderate improper opinions and indiscrees charges, when I am fensible of them, but should detest the least thought of bestowing praises where they are not due, or recommending what I conceived were unjust or impolitic fo much for my own apology. I cannot do better than to conclude, by offering up my prayers for the tranquillity and prosperity of the state of Maryland, the House of Delegates, and the Protestant Episcopal Convention.

A LAYMAN. Aug. 11, 1809.

FARMERS REPOSITORY.

The Trustees of the Massachusetts Agricultural Society, with pleasure preserve among their papers the two following letters from the Hon. D. HUMPHRETS, Esq. on a subject of increasing importance to American Manufactures.

Boston, Nov. 28th, 1807.

DEAR SIR,

MORE than five years having now elaps ed fince the introduction into New-England of the flock of Merino Sheep, in consequence of which the Society for promoting Agricul ture in the state of Massachusetts, were pleased to present to me a Gold. Medal, it will doubtless be acceptable to that respectable and patriotic body, to learn that their hopes and expectations concerning the utility of this in teresting species of animals have not been disappointed.

The attempt to propagate the pure Merinos in this country has been attended with complete fuccess. The extent of the experiment insures the duration of the unadulterate ed breed. Instead of degenerating in the quantity or quality of their fleeces, the identical sheep which I brought to this country yield, on an average, half a pound of wood more a piece, than they did at the first shear-ing after their arrival. Nor, on the nices? and most candid examination, is it found, that there is any finer wool produced in Spain than that which is now annually shorn from these same imported Merinos and their full-blooded offspring. The rams born in American rica are, however, generally preferred to those born in Spain, by persons who now make application to my agent for Merino Rams, to crofs the blood of their flocks, in breeding from them by American ewes. It is the op nion of all the farmers in Connecticut, whi have been acquainted with the original flock and its descendants, both of the pure and mingled blood, that they are hardier, better adapted to our climate, and more eafily nourished both in summer and winter than the common breed of American sheep. The are likewise remarkable for being more great garious and less disposed to stray or get over fences than the others. Finally, it may trul be afferted, that they preserve the entire cha racter, shape, features and qualities, of the best Merinos in Spain.

The mixture of the Spanish with the Ame rican blood has succeeded in ameliorating the pile of the fleece beyond my most fanguin expectations. As a proof of the superior a lue of the wool of the half blooded Mering it is a well known truth, that it has been fold for a dollar a pound in Connecticut, at fill dearer in New-York, the present season while the best common wool has been fold about half that price. The half-blooded M rinos produce, more wool, than the comme fricep, and they ordinarily attain a larger fine than the Spanille or American breed, fro which they are descended. The facts he Haren agree in Substance with those establish ed by experience in every country of Euro