

# MARYLAND GAZETTE.

LXVth Year.]

WEDNESDAY, AUGUST 23, 1809.

[No. 3267.]

## miscellany.

For the MARYLAND GAZETTE.

No. II.

### On the CHURCH BILL and QUAKERS PETITION.

As an electioneering handle is attempted to be made of the above, by wresting into political purposes, and rendering a house of delegates unpopular, I shall venture, in the spirit of justice and charity, upon their motive of approving of the bill and rejecting the other, proportioned to public consequence.

The Quakers will not admit the lawfulness of swearing, founding their objection on our Saviour's command, "Swear not at all, but let your communication be yea and nay." It is obvious to the intelligent, who consider the reading and connexion of the whole compared with other portions of scripture, that the swearing here alluded to are of levity, not judicial. When our Saviour rebuked the odious practice of swearing, and admonished his hearers, the emphatic words "not at all," should be attended to, and it will be understood to read thus, "Swear not by Heaven at all," assigning the throne, "for it is God's throne, nor by the feet of his footstool," &c. neither shall we swear by the "head," &c. every where speaking with his injunction his reason, you can't not make one hair white or black," therefore, as the head and the earth, are the workmanship of God, to swear by them is to swear by God, the first and last cause. "Swear not at all then," viz. any thing directly or indirectly relating to God. See this interpretation in the 23d chapter of St. Matthew, where the indifference, sin and folly, of the Jews, in their practice of loose swearing, is rebuked by our Saviour in the same manner as if he was now appear on earth, he would see sufficient cause to reprove and forbid many, (as he did the turbulent Jews,) on that vile custom of swearing by this and by that, as many in these people are in the habit of doing.—

Jewish adjuration, or practice of judicial swearing, was to elevate the eyes, and hold the right hand, as if in the presence of the living Being; hence that passage of the Bible is explained, "And their right hand is lifted up to heaven." The universality of the prohibition is a novel thing, and was so understood by the Disciples, or primitive Christians. St. Peter, St. Paul, St. James, &c. made use of and wrote many exhortations in the nature of oaths. St. Paul says, "I call God for a record upon my soul;" another place for a witness, &c. Again, men verily swear by the greater, (viz. Jehovah,) and an oath for confirmation is to them an end of all strife." Not "yea and nay," an affirmation, or negation. Government itself would often be insecure where the faith of the public was highly concerned, without the formalities of an oath, most would not be satisfied, where their lives and estates were in jeopardy. God himself requires in an oath, these conditions, truth, judgment and righteousness; even our blessed Saviour himself, when he was required to swear, viz. "adjudged by the living God," the Jewish custom was, "to tell the truth, whether he was the Christ the Son of God or not;" he took no offence, but condescended to answer. See James v. 12. "Every man with his neighbour knows there was, and is a fiction, as well with them as with us, between swearing directly or solemnly before God, and swearing loosely, by any inferior object of veneration, as by Heavens, my honour, my soul, &c. Rash and vain swearing is forbidden, but in truth and charity are justified. See the nature of oaths and the nature of oaths explained in Parson's Whole Duty of Man, Article 39 of the Church of England, &c. As for myself, I have always entertained a high sense of the duties of Quakers. In cases of contracts, I would as soon admit their affirmation as any man's oath, but in the weightier matters of the law, as "death and judgment," their affirmation, however respectable, is objectionable; their conscientious scruples is against them; it disqualifies them from giving a firm and unprejudiced judgment. To do justice to mercy then, by the confirmation of an oath, is a Christian's duty, when required by the magistrate; religion does not forbid it, and reason enjoins it as a juror's qualification, and judicial satisfaction; hence the legislature, in my opinion, judiciously refused assent to the Quaker's petition of exemption, and this is said to be "withholding the rights of citizenship from one denomination of Christians;" but withholding other

of the house of delegates, and in the experienced zeal and moderation of the clerical order, such allegations and surmises 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 wants 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 law, or knew these evils existed, and wished to remedy 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 wished also to see 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 seen and felt in regard to the spiritual and temporal interest of many, consequently of the state itself, hence the Convention were solicitous to procure a legislative sanction 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 and 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 insinuations 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 wise in them boldly to come forward and say so," 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 so freely supposed any political power and consequence granted them will prompt them to display an intolerant spirit, &c. more than any other religious society? Where is the foundation for that and other serious 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 shining 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 since 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, such as Wilberforce on Religion, Neckar on Religious Influence, &c. and others on liberty and toleration, prove it, consequently are deservedly held in high estimation by many of the clergy of every denomination. As for myself I would say, I heartily love and highly esteem all the clergy who possess zeal with discretion, have a devout reverence for those who are good, and am heartily sorry for

of those who are not so; but though I love the virtuous clergy of our church very much, and have an eager desire to express it in all kinds of service, yet I would never presume to be their Champion, or that of the House of Delegates, by writing an apology for, or vindicating 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 hopeless 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 so; in like manner, though I have not the skill to make a convert, or though I cannot avoid seeing the faults of some, I pretend not an ability to rectify the faults of any, but on the other hand I cannot in the least approve such as screw up and raise the failings or interpret the intentions of either federalists or 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 satisfaction in endeavouring to moderate improper opinions and indiscreet charges, when I am sensible 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; so 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. HUMPHREYS, Esq. on a subject of increasing importance to American Manufactures.

Boston, Nov. 28th, 1807.

DEAR SIR,

MORE than five years having now elapsed since the introduction into New-England of the flock of Merino Sheep, in consequence of which the Society for promoting Agriculture 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 interesting species of animals have not been disappointed.

The attempt to propagate the pure Merinos in this country has been attended with complete success. The extent of the experiment infuses the duration of the unadulterated 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 wool more a piece, than they did at the first shearing after their arrival. Nor, on the nicest 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 America are, however, generally preferred to those born in Spain, by persons who now make application to my agent for Merino Rams, to cross the blood of their flocks, in breeding from them by American ewes. It is the opinion of all the farmers in Connecticut, who 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 easily nourished both in summer and winter than the common breed of American sheep. They are likewise remarkable for being more gregarious and less disposed to stray or get over fences than the others. Finally, it may truly be asserted, that they preserve the entire character, shape, features and qualities, of the best Merinos in Spain.

The mixture of the Spanish with the American blood has succeeded in ameliorating the pile of the fleece beyond my most sanguine expectations. As a proof of the superior value of the wool of the half blooded Merinos it is a well known truth, that it has been sold for a dollar a pound in Connecticut, and still dearer in New-York, the present season, while the best common wool has been sold for about half that price. The half-blooded Merinos produce more wool than the common sheep, and they ordinarily attain a larger size than the Spanish or American breed, from which they are descended. The facts here stated agree in substance with those established by experience in every country of Europe in which I have travelled, where this breed of sheep has been introduced. In England and France the greatest care and expense is