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THE
WELSH FREEHOLDER'S
VINDICATION

OF
His L E T T E R

TO THE
RIGHT REVEREND
SAMUEL, LORD BISHOP of St. DAVID'S.

Price 1s. 6d.

THE
WELSH FREEHOLDER'S
VINDICATION
OF
His LETTER
TO THE
RIGHT REVEREND
SAMUEL, LORD BISHOP of ST. DAVID'S,
IN
REPLY TO A LETTER
FROM
A CLERGYMAN OF THAT DIOCESE;
TOGETHER WITH
STRICTURES on the said LETTER.

“ After the way which they call heresy, so worship I the God of
“ my Fathers.” PAUL.

“ If TRUTH, with her awful presence, should spread consternation
“ through the sanctuary of superstition, and cast the Idol-Deity to the
“ ground; some PRIEST, more wakeful than his fellows, will *rise up*
“ *early on the morrow*, and with officious hand, will lift up the poor
“ helpless prostrate DAGON, and restore him to *his place*.”

WAKEFIELD on Baptism, p. 3.

Ἄλλο δὲ τοι ἔξέω, Ἥδ' ἐνὶ φρεσὶ βάλλειο Ἰήσιν,
Ὅθ' ἔκιν' εὐδ' αὐτὸς ἄνθρωπον βέη;

ILIAD lib. xvi. l. 852.

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MDCCLXXI.



P R E F A C E.

THE most respectable of the English Clergy, those who enter most fully into the true spirit of their sacred profession, feel many a pang from circumstances that little affect their ambitious and mercenary brethren. Ecclesiastical preferment-hunters, and those who rush into the sanctuary of God merely for the sake of a living, to which they are encouraged to look, are unacquainted with those restraints which give the most exquisite pain to the man of true honour, and manly sentiment.

How afflictive it is to prevaricate with conscience, and to trifle with the most solemn engagements, is only known to those who are Christians upon enquiry, and who are in the habit of cherishing a regard for truth. The embarrassments of these persons make little impression on the higher orders also of the Clergy. The company which they keep, and the affairs in which they are principally engaged, have a tendency to make them think

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lightly

lightly of the difficulties, and to turn a deaf ear to the supplications, of their inferior brethren.

Indeed, were our Prelates and Dignitaries ever so well disposed to relieve the distresses of these worthy characters, yet so unenlightened, so uninformed, are the great bulk of the people, and so strong their prejudices in favour of the Common Prayer, in its present form, that all the power and influence (great as we have lately seen them to be) of these elevated personages, would be scarcely sufficient to effectuate a reform of our public service.— The fear of any disturbance being occasioned by such a measure, and a suspicion that improvements in the *doctrines* might open the eyes of the public to discover those that are wanted in the *civil constitution* of the Church, are sufficient, amply sufficient, yea and more than sufficient, to deter a body of men, above all others ambitious for temporal honours and emoluments, from taking a single step for the relief of these oppressed persons. Let the people of Britain be once made sensible of the propriety and expediency of farther
refor-

reformation in religion, and the point will soon be carried.

To second the wishes of these venerable men, by exciting a spirit of enquiry into religious subjects, by endeavouring to incline his readers to a change in our forms of public worship, by attempting to remove their attachment to scholastic jargon, and their dislike to a scriptural liturgy, and a scriptural creed, the *Welsh Freeholder* regards as by no means unworthy of a good citizen, and a good Christian.

Persuaded as he is that Truth is the only foundation of religion, virtue, and happiness, he declares himself an enemy to all doctrines, professed by Churchmen or Dissenters, which wise and enlightened men have *proved* to be contradictory to reason. Convinced as he is that to bring the mind to submit to a long and absurd creed, is an attempt as impracticable as it would be useless; regarding also that which contains the fewest articles, if firmly believed and practised, as abundantly sufficient for every purpose of piety and virtue;

he

he thinks it his duty, on every opportunity, to declare hostilities against those dogmas which confound the human understanding, to try how far his humble efforts can recommend to the world the unadulterated doctrines of Christianity, and to appear among the friends, though the lowest in rank, of that cause, which has at different times severally engaged the labours of an Erasmus, a Grotius, a Newton, a Locke, a le Clerc, an Emlyn, a Clarke, and a Lardner.

Regarding this cause with perhaps too sanguine expectations of its success, it is with joy and pleasure the Welsh Freeholder has just received intelligence, that a new *Unitarian Society, for promoting religious knowledge and virtue, by the distribution of books*, is about to be established in London on the most respectable footing;—an institution whence the greatest benefits may be expected to arise to the interests of true Christianity.

T H E

WELSH FREEHOLDER's VINDICATION.

W. L. Rice

Reverend Sir,

AS you profess yourself a Clergyman, and I have no reason to question your claim to that title, I beg leave to address you as such, and humbly to present you, or rather the public through you, with a few observations on the notice with which you have been pleased to honour my Letter to the Bishop of St. David's.

In the Preface to a second edition of that Letter, which has been printed in compliance with the loud demands of the public, is contained a brief defence of those parts of it, against which cavils had been raised.

As the Bishop had indulged himself in the liberal use of the most contemptuous language with respect to a person whose writings I most highly value, and from which I have derived the greatest benefits; (and in this declaration there are numbers, I am confident, of the first respectability, who will join me;)—as he had, in a manner as gross as it was unjustifiable, called his learning in question, and dared to depreciate those discoveries which have rendered

rendered the name of PRIESTLEY illustrious in every civilized country, and will transmit it with undiminished lustre to far distant ages of the world; I did not expect that he or his friends would rave so furiously, as from the specimen you have given us they seem to do, at a few free strictures on his scientific and literary services; more especially, as the Bishop must know they might have been made to appear, consistently with justice, still less advantageous, had particulars been exhibited, and the history of his literary proceedings been rigorously scrutinized.

But, Sir, what and if the Bishop was misrepresented, why not clear him? If men of no merit were extolled, why not expose their pretensions? This would have been more politic than to subject yourself to the suspicion, that you were conscious the Letter you so studiously affect to vilify, contained home truths, which made you smart, and which you could not answer; that it threw difficulties in your way which you were not able to obviate; and that therefore you were determined to make out by abuse and obloquy, what you could not accomplish by fair argument and calm reasoning.

In no other way can I account for your representing the *Wells Freeholder's* Letter as a most offensive and monstrous object. Though the picture you draw of it be ugly, and such as may make our neighbours discontinue to fondle and dandle it as a plaything, yet there is no apparent reason why they

they should not still approve of it, view and examine it on every side; for really the heterogeneous and opposite qualities you have described it as uniting in itself, must render it an object of public curiosity. Pray, Sir, examine carefully your *glasses*, and see whether they convey to you a true *phantasm*; it may be they have the property of representing objects the very reverse of what they actually are, and should only be worn when you are endeavouring to discover the Christian spirit and superlative excellences of a famed prelate.

But to be serious, for you seem to hint, rather broadly, that I am very awkward at raillery: I will try whether I can command more of your respect, and give you less offence, in the grave stile of writing. I fear, Sir, you were much hurried by passion, and thus thrown greatly off your guard, when you penned the effusions with which I have just been amusing myself. I am apprehensive you have not that command of temper, so essentially requisite in a business of this kind, or you would not have raked together such a quantity of filth to throw at your opponent.

Lest you should think I am not doing you justice, let us now engage in the disagreeable employment of surveying what you had collected together, those scurrilities in every page of your book, in flinging which at me you must have tired yourself.—You so belabour your antagonist, that you allow him not a moment to breathe and look about him.—

From

From reading your book, one would conclude, that you were writing purposely for those with whom groundless defamation would supply the want of argument, and confident assertions be taken for a complete refutation.

You tell your readers, that *my Letter* is “vague, “flimsy, and illusory,—a shadow,—offering nothing “to the understanding and to the touch,”—as “giving to the sense the impression of undefiled “ugliness, and of inoffensive hostility,”—as “an “apartment connected with a lumber-room of “notes,”—“filled with disorderly rubbish,”—“conceived in the diocese of St. David’s”—“the “homely *manufacture* of Wales”—defiled by “the “dirtiness of insinuation,” and “rendered ghastly “by the poverty of a sneer,” &c. &c. Whatever the *original* may be, I will venture to say, a greater curiosity than the *picture* never appeared in this diocese, or in any other.

Of *myself*, the object of your virulent invective, you say, that I am possessed of “a heart of turbulence, with a hand of imbecility”—as presenting “a mortifying exhibition of our corrupt and weak “nature.” You perceive, Sir, how unhappily you lost your temper, before you got through the first page; we need not wonder then to find you quite outrageous, ere you reach the conclusion of your work. I proceed in the task of bringing together your scattered beauties; in search of which you seem to have racked your brain, and to have ransacked the
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the English language. The variety and plenty in which we meet them, do you credit as an inhabitant of Cambria; and if you be furnished with such a profusion of terms for every other stile, as for the stile of abuse, you must be possessed of a wonderful copia. But perhaps this is your fort.

To go on; you represent me as “the conventicle and field-preacher’s champion”—“more strongly attached to party than to truth,”—“dealing in varnish that does not brighten, and daub that does not fully;”—a panegyrist whose “enmity and mischief” may hurt “my party”—“of very limited intercourse with my species” *—“sporting professions of thankfulness”—“possessing skill in conferring immortality on a profitable calumny”—“a party zealot,”—“having my expressions honoured by your using them,” (a way in which it is my intention to honour you)—“bringing forward transactions in a shape to deceive,”—joining with others in shedding “a pitiless shower of abuse and defamation”—“exercising my bad passions.” They are so thick, that I am quite tired with picking them up. I leave you to finish the catalogue. I ask you, Sir, does this view of your scurrilities please you? You have no mean hand at fabricating them. Believe me, they would not have disgraced the Warburtonian school, when in the zenith of its sway.

This string may divert my readers, as it has diverted myself. You, Sir, ought to be affected by

* Vide note A.

a view of it in a different manner. You have assumed the character of a *Clergyman*, and I have no doubt that you are one; of a minister of the gospel of peace; of the servant of a master whose precept it was, "*love you enemies; bless them that curse you; do good to them that hate you.*" Would it not have been more becoming, to have tried the effects of salutary admonition and instruction, instead of thus storming, and raving, and praying, like the revengeful disciples, that fire might descend from heaven to consume your adversary. This, though it ought not to be, is in character, as to the generality of the aspiring part of your profession. To teach and instruct the people, is a part of the Clergyman's duty that is almost grown obsolete and unfashionable. A plan of gaining preferment more sure and compendious is now adopted. To preach and write down the spirit of enquiry, to truckle to their lay and ecclesiastical superiors, and to be active at elections, are methods far more successful.

Will you be pleased to inform me, Sir, in what sense you designed that the expressions we have been considering should be regarded? Did you mean them as figures wherewith to adorn your composition? or are they so many axioms and postulates, which you must be allowed to take for granted, before you can make good what your work is intended to prove? But a curious passage suggests to me, that you used them as *faggots*. This passage I shall quote.

In

“ In the Unitarian Calendar, it shall not be my fault if you are not distinguished as a saint, or perhaps as a *martyr*.” These elegant phrases with which you ply your adversary, would seem to be designed for the *auto de fè* you are now preparing. Having bound your victim to the stake, having dressed him in a habit ornamented with the pictures of all the devils in hell, and having practised every artifice to enflame the passions of the spectators, your faggots* are made to fly briskly; when your stock is exhausted, you kindle the fire, the flame spreads around him, and the miscreant is consumed in the blaze of the Bishop’s virtues. Your holy vengeance stops not here; it proceeds inhumanly to insult his ashes, and on his sad remains to stamp eternal infamy. Not once tempting the wretch to recant by the offer of a pardon, you outstrip in fervent zeal all your predecessors, who burned the bodies to save the souls of men.

Pleasantries apart; I suppose you intended by these abusive terms, to wound your adversary’s sensibility. But alas! sir, you have unhappily miscarried.—You dealt them in such quantities, and with so unsparing a hand, that no one can doubt they came from one determined to cast as much dirt as he was able, in hopes that some of it would adhere; but they are like stucco mixed up by some unskilled artist, which, though it sticks closely together, adheres not to the wall, with which it was intended it should

* Vide note B.

unite, separates in one entire mass, and falls to the ground, to the great disgrace of the artificer.

Your adversary, without making pretensions to much philosophy, can bear to be censured in company with the members of the Royal Society, with “the Vulcano-men, the cullers of simples, and their circumnavigating president,” those men “who have exiled science from the precincts of the Royal Society.*”

Luckless damsel! thus exiled, why not betake thyself to the philosophic vale of Abergwily, and carry with thee eternal renown to thy Cambrian votaries, attended and cherished by whose filial care, thou wilt again recover thy faded beauty?—Let the transactions that issue from a new society, of which let our Prelate be president, and our Clergyman be secretary, overflow with recondite lore; while the transactions of the Royal Society in London are filled with stupid details of the experiments of such *artificers* as Priestley, Cavendish, Kirwan, Ingenhousz, Watson, Watt, Withering, and Milner; or the trifling electrical phenomena observed by a Lane, a Nicholson, and a Cavallo; the low computations of a Waring, a Maskelyne, a Morgan, and a Le Roy; and the reveries of a Herschell. Believe me, Sir, had I been permitted to choose the persons with whom to share abuse, I should have wished for no others than those whom you have selected.

* Vide note C.

You say, that it is paying your brother Clergy no very extraordinary compliment, to set them down as judges of merit, equally competent with the members of the Royal Society. Pray, Sir, consider what you have said. You are not acquainted with the description of persons who constitute this Society. Scarcely would you have made a declaration so presumptuous and unqualified, had you known, that among them are to be reckoned some of the principal of your Clergy, particularly Cambridge-men, of the ablest among the Dissenting Ministers, and of the greatest among the lay ornaments of your Church. Partial as I acknowledge myself to be to the Principality, I am not quite so blinded as to believe, that there can be a description of men, situated at so great a distance from literary and scientific communications, (no, sir, not even the Clergy, a great proportion of whom have not enjoyed the benefit of an University education,) who deserve to be set in competition with the most enlightened body of men, in this or any other country; with a society, the reputation of which is such, in many places abroad, as to entitle it to peculiar privileges.

You know that in this changeable world we are subject to reverses; but there is no situation so bad, that a worse cannot be imagined. That you must allow to be my case. I congratulate myself, under my present heavy load of detraction, that I find myself in the company of "dictionary makers," "venders of periodical criticism," and "artificers

“ of experiments,” and the several non-descripts included between Priestley and Wakefield.

You who have displayed so much critical skill and ability in the Letter before me, can perhaps say, how much higher, in the temple of fame, the statue of a writer of notes should stand, than the statue of “ a dictionary-maker;” of one who writes answers with a view to preferment, than that of “ a vender of periodical criticism;” and which should have the most elevated situation, the statue of an “ artificer of experiments,” or the statue of an artificer of no experiments.

The defamation of a man so lost to all sense of decency, as in the lump to vilify the members of the first philosophical society in the world, with its president at their head; authors of established reputation, whose labours have acquired immortality to themselves, and rendered lasting services to the world; philosophers, naturalists, and scholars; falls little short of direct praise. Your lance, by this bad management, went not with sufficient force to stick itself in your adversary’s shield, that he might have the pleasure of extracting it; it falls of itself; and so slight is the impression it made, that the point on which it struck is not to be discovered.

Insatiable of censures, my Lords of Oxford, Bangor, Ely, &c. must not escape without their share. You must, however, permit me to regard those quondam Bishops of St. David’s, whom you treat so freely, as consulting better than he who now fills
that

that see, the welfare and security of your church, notwithstanding all his bustle and meddling.

Having, I trust, satisfied you as to the effect of your abuse of *me*, I shall next consider your treatment of my *publication*. You say, that as a composition, “the worth of this kind which it possessed, “was insufficient to procure it admission into a “provincial newspaper.” This, sir, is false.—“This,” to honour one of your expressions, “is to “march to assertion through the breach of truth.” What you ascribed to want of composition, you should have looked for, and you would have found it, in the bigotry of your own party. You represent it as so humble as to be placed beneath criticism, and charge it with a general absence of literary merit. Please, sir, to remember, that it was designed for a newspaper, and that it only made its way to the press, as a separate publication, on the most urgent solicitations of one who possesses a higher claim to candour and moral worth, than the utmost stretch of charity would lead me to conclude falls to your share. Say what you please of its literary merit, and you will not affect its author. Literary merit was not his object. Humble as he is very willing to allow his powers to be, he respects them too much, to exert them to the utmost when writing for a newspaper. He has too strong a sense of propriety, to lavish the time and study which he has ever found finished compositions to require, on the creature of a day. He professed and apologised

for his predilection for plainness and homeliness of garb, and felt no apprehension of falling under the censure of any of the description to which you belong. A neat elegant style, in opposition to one so inflated and stiff as your's, I would not be thought to undervalue, though I do not think myself bound, on every occasion, even to endeavour to be perfect in this way.

To him who knows the value of time, cases may occur, wherein it is very warrantable not to regard fine writing; and the object may simply be, to be understood. And truly, sir, this was the object that I proposed to myself. If you and your friends have derived any entertainment from your criticisms upon it, enjoy it and welcome; a province which however hardly became you, till yourself had acquired a more correct and chaste style of writing, than that which you have in the present instance chosen to adopt. Though I may have suffered in literary reputation, if I have succeeded in exciting the attention of any of my fellow citizens to important truths, and to the late discussions they have undergone, my end is completely answered. I did not set up as the instructor of my countrymen in any point; had I assumed that character, I ought to have appeared in a dressless loose; but as I aspired at no other than the humble post of directing to works already published, to indulge in a negligence, consistent with the inferior nature of my employment, appeared to me

me as in no wise improper. If I have been the means of bringing any among my countrymen acquainted with such books as the following, viz. Lindsey's Apology, and Sequel; his Address to the Young Men of the two Universities, in two parts; Dr. Priestley's Institutes, his Letter to a Philosophical Unbeliever, his History of the Corruptions of Christianity, and Tracts in controversy with Bishop Horsley, and his smaller Theological Tracts; the Theological Repository; Wakefield's Enquiry; the Hints to a new Association; and the Consistent Protestant, &c.; could I induce them to furnish themselves with the improved versions of the Scriptures, that will speedily be presented to the public, I have no doubt they would deem my object to have been a worthy one, and would consider themselves as under greater obligations to me, who have brought these books to their knowledge, than to you who would wrest them out of their hands, and make a *martyr* of me who have introduced them to their notice. To have been the means of giving rise to effects of this sort, would afford me a complacency far out of the reach of your petulance and spleen to disturb; my mind would be transported with the idea of having been the instrument of accelerating the downfall of that system of error and superstition, which you are so desirous to prop up.

It was also my design to convince the Bishop, that there were in his diocese, those who were indignant at his unwarrantable treatment of men,

who are an ornament to the Christian name and profession; that there were those who had spirit to resent the insults, which his ostentatious zeal had hurried him to throw out under several forms.

You have now all the assistance I can give you towards learning "the estimate and character" of my publication. You indeed, sir, have made but a poor use for the *public*, whatever you may have done for *yourself*, of this affair of mine, of this "*thing* of challenge and of insult." Your readers have little reason to be obliged to you for this "forward zeal," which you so much blame in me, but which you are so careful to imitate, and which impelled you to array yourself so formidably with buckler, and shield, and lance, to attack "a *thing* which offers nothing to the understanding and to the sense," "a *thing* of inoffensive hostility," "of undefined ugliness," and of course what could do no harm; so that taking your own account of it for the true one, you seem to have been typified in a remarkable manner, by the redoubtable knight Don Quixote, when once on a time he made his formidable attack on a windmill. Had you made the best possible use of this Letter of mine, which you so violently condemn, finding that a leading design of it was to recommend certain books which you deemed prejudicial, and which you would therefore endeavour to exclude from the country, you should have undertaken to point out their evil tendency, and the sources whence the prejudice would

would arise. You might have accounted on your own principles for the growing numbers of Unitarians. You might have stated what had been attempted by Mr. Lindfey, and Dr. Priestley, and shewn their want of success. Here you would, no doubt, have introduced with advantage the exploits of your admired hero, the great champion of the Church. You might have shewn, that his victories had not only been trumpeted by interested priests, echoing his own assuming vaunts, and rewarded at the instigation of dissipated courtiers, uninformed in these matters, but that he had been graced by the same which the approbation of the impartial and the judicious confer. From this manner of proceeding, your readers would have derived information, and I should have stood a better chance of being set right, or have had a fairer opportunity of convincing you of your error; and you would have gained more credit to yourself, than results from the abuse, you so plentifully deal out to one party, and the panegyric which you heap on the other; "varnish," sir, "that does not brighten, and daub that does not fully." The men from whom you detract, still hold up their heads in society, and receive the homage and respect of the worthy and the wise, notwithstanding the attempts of your sturdy champion to overwhelm their credit and reputation. The heart to conceive, and the hand to execute, are, as you observe, different things.

On

On the merits of the Dissenters, as a part of the body politic, let a quotation from Mr. Hume put you to shame; on our turbulence let this be a comment; says this historian, certainly no ways partial to us, “so absolute” (speaking of the arbitrary conduct of Elizabeth) “was the authority of the crown, “ that the precious spark of liberty had been kindled and was preserved by the puritans alone; and “ it was to this sect, whose principles appear so “ frivolous, and habits so ridiculous, that the “ English owe the whole freedom of their constitution.” Hume’s Hist. vol. v. p. 189. A sensible writer, quoting this passage, thus comments on it: ‘ Whilst every enlarged and liberal mind ‘ rejoices in the consideration, that the cause of ‘ civil and religious liberty is, in this age, better ‘ understood, and more generally patronized, than ‘ in former times, the Protestant Dissenters are ‘ peculiarly entitled to triumph in the recollection, ‘ that these two most invaluable blessings have been ‘ preserved and handed down to their fellow-subjects, in consequence of the firm adherence of their ‘ forefathers to the cause of liberty and truth, both ‘ civil and religious.’

The fondness of a father, it is probable, led you to rescue from oblivion the Letter of *Pannius*. In this turgid epistle I can discover nothing, this predilection excepted, that could thus have entitled it to distinction. It only informs us that the Bishop’s Letter was a private and not a circular one; which
only

only impeaches the cowardice of the writer, while it neither removes nor palliates the indecency of the act. Why the spiritual father should be warranted in taking such a liberty with one of his sons, and not with all, you, sir, must explain. Besides, the language appeared well to become a public edict, while it was ill adapted for a private letter. Here allow me, sir, to advert to our conduct with regard to Mr. Fox; let this great man explain it, and not "a party zealot like yourself." Our late application to him, he confessed, flattered him greatly, as it contained an unquestionable proof, that a very respectable body of men, who had differed from him most widely in some political opinions, gave him full credit for honesty of principle, and goodness of intentions; or they never would have entrusted him with the management of their cause. For their desertion of him the Dissenters feel no shame; they were hurt at his coalition with a man, whose administration they, together with Mr. Fox, had regarded with the deepest aversion. They considered the India-Bill as setting up a new power in the State, and they took part with the monarch; they disapproved of his principle, and therefore withdrew from him their support. The Dissenters, unlike you and your "brethren of the gown," are attached not to men, but to measures. They are not to be *put upon** countenancing what they disapprove; and hence they are very contented to lie under your

* Vide note D.

charge,

charge, of unsteadiness of attachment, while they see not how it can be removed, without sacrificing their integrity. From Mr. Fox they have since very generally differed on the question of the Regency; but still, with the most enlightened and best-informed of their fellow-subjects, they admire his open and manly conduct; and would go, in supporting him, to the utmost limit that is consistent with their principle of a steady veneration for the public good. They fancy, and they rejoice in it, that they see in him a mind that is gradually opening to the best and most extensive political views, which he adopts, not on the authority of any man or set of men, but which, by the discernment that so eminently distinguishes him, he traces to their true principles, while his transcendent genius with ease surveys all their probable operations. What has been transacted on the continent and in America, must, on a mind like his, have had this effect; while the long opposition, in which he has been and still is engaged at home, must form him to that political wisdom, which will make his country one day look up to him as its greatest blessing, under the character of a truly wise and patriotic minister; who, overlooking his ease and his interest, will set himself in earnest to improve the condition of his fellow-subjects, by bringing about the reformation of our decayed constitution.

From this pleasing subject, I again return to your complaints. I cannot see why we should be blamed
for

for joining with you, against what was deemed a common enemy. Let those Dissenters, who profess "friendship" to your Church, make good their characters to consistency: with a defence of these I have no concern. It is a crime of which I resolve never to be guilty, while the Church continues to be as corrupt as it now is. Individuals in your Church, in the Church of Rome, and in every other Church, however badly constituted, that are honest and well-intentioned, I shall respect; and should be sorry to be outdone by them in candour and good offices. Such, sir, is my dullness, that I cannot for my life find out the cause why our adherence to the house of Brunswick should be less meritorious, because, like other subjects, we should have suffered, had the Pretender prevailed, any more than I can understand why the disloyalty and open rebellion of many members of your Church should be thought less heinous, because they were so disinterested as to support the cause of one, known to be hostile both to their religion and to their liberty. Here, in order to be even with you, I ought to recount the services which the established Clergy have rendered to their country, by their zeal in preaching up passive obedience and non-resistance, the divine right of kings, and the duty of subjects to yield implicit submission. Good people! it is for no fault of theirs, it is from no want of their concurrent aid, that we have not a government as arbitrary as that of Turkey; always loyal
when

when there is no pretender in the case; courageous when there is no danger; and decided when there is no interest at stake. I do not include all Churchmen under this description, but those blessed high ones, a double portion of whose spirit seems to have been transfused into you and Bishop Horsley; nor do I mean to say, that the Church has always acted this part, but that this has been its general bent. But I forbear: the present age may, and posterity will read all this, and much more, in the impartial page of history.

Next comes our "literary industry," which you choose to call "spirit of attack." What does this spirit of attack indicate? A consciousness of the goodness of our cause. Not, I grant you, that we think it impossible we should be wrong, but that we think ourselves to be right: if we thought otherwise, and acted as we do, we must be made up of materials different from those which enter into the composition of men in general. It argues then, at least, that we seriously believe our cause to be good. What, I would ask, can recommend it to us, but an opinion of its superior excellence? You have other and different ties, to bind you down to certain articles of faith, and forms of worship, which would palliate your devotedness, did you not carry yourselves with such overbearing insolence towards those, who, having not the same reasons, treat them as they deserve.

You

You seem not to be pleased with those among us, who are “dictionary compilers,” “venders of periodical criticism,” and “artificers of experiments.” Our offence, as to these matters, lies, I presume, in your esteem, not so much in our engaging “the attention of Europe;” as in this, that our dictionaries, our articles of periodical criticism, and the details of our experiments, have diminished that profound reverence with which the people have been wont to regard their Clergy; that they make them indisposed to admit three to be no more than one, and one to be equal to three; less inclined to adopt the idea, that He, who is the Creator of the universe, compared with which our globe is not a perceptible atom, should become an infant, be subject to every human infirmity, and at length be put to death by his creatures. Having seen pointed out by these experiments, so many traces of the divine benevolence, they are apt to become averse to a system, which represents the Deity as resolved upon revenge, which can only be appeased by the eternal misery of the whole human race, or the sufferings and death of a being of equal rank and dignity with himself. From this obnoxious tendency, works of that kind, I apprehend, are not to be exculpated; and hence to priests they are objects of consistent hate. It is this that galls you. *Hinc ille lachrymæ!*

You next charge us Unitarians with the “venom of heresy and irreligion.” I must again remind
you,

you, fir, that hard names do but ill fupply the want of argument. Chriftianity itfelf was once, you know, a herefy, as was alfo your immaculate Church; and you, fir, puffed up as you are with the pride of orthodoxy, and perhaps pampered by its emoluments, would at this day be deemed in Spain as abandoned a heretic as myfelf. According to what is called herefy, we, Unitarians, worship the God of our fathers. The queftion remains to be decided, whether it be in reality a herefy, or the true doctrine of Chrift; and whether the tenets, to the truth of which you have *fevorn*, be fcriptural, or, like your rites and your ceremonies, the mere devices and inventions of men. Irreligion is a ferious reproach, and it became you to have inveftigated, before you had fixed it on any body of men. Report fpeaks not true, or Unitarians in general are as much diftinguifhed by the amiablenefs of their virtues, as by their fuperior information and liberality. You ought to have known from fact, as well as from reafoning, that between a long abftrufe creed, and piety and good morals, there is no connection whatever. While the perfections of God, and the accountablenefs of man are held, all is fafe that enlivens devotion, and that warms the heart to the love of goodnefs. A little attention would have fhewn you, that the reafon why men have fo generally fupposed, that good conduct can only confift with the notions which they feverally hold,

is to be resolved into the association of ideas; and though you may be persuaded ever so strongly to the contrary, there appears to me to be no more connection between the belief of the Trinity, and the practice of virtue, than there is between the sight of a trunk and good dancing; though I am sensible some persons would be less virtuous, were they to disbelieve it; just as Mr. Locke tells us that a young gentleman, who had learnt to dance exceedingly well in a room in which there was an old trunk, could never perform except there was a trunk placed in the room where the dance was held. Opinions in themselves should never be condemned as criminal, when fairly acquired and honestly professed; though the debasing influence of those that are wrong, ought most studiously to be avoided.—The iniquity lies in enjoining upon one man the opinions of another, and tempting him, by honours and emoluments, to profess them outwardly, while in his heart he holds the very reverse. For being the cause of much of this sort of double dealing and insincerity, your Church has a great deal to answer; and if it perseveres in keeping up the present rigid terms of admission, its guilt of this kind will go on to accumulate in an increasing progression.

You would have obliged the Unitarians, no doubt, had you made good against them the charge of *heresy*. Though, sir, they pay not implicit deference to the propositions contained in the Nicene creed; which, had they been more consonant

to the Christian verity than they in reality are, ought never to have been set up as standards of faith to the Christian world, as being sanctioned by a meeting, the proceedings of which every man of learning knows to have been notoriously irregular and disgraceful;—though they reject with contempt, the arrant nonsense and unchristian bigotry of the Pseudo-Athanasius; yet they assent, as fully as you do, to that creed, which in your service book is called the Apostles;—they believe all which you, in your disputes with unbelievers, chose to bring forward as the Christian doctrine, viz. that there is one God, and one Mediator between God and man, the man Christ Jesus;—that the Deity is of himself, and not induced by any thing out of himself, ever ready to dispense pardon to all those who by repentance and amendment render themselves meet for its reception;—that his clemency extends to all but those who would abuse it;—that salvation is within the reach of all, and that none are by unalterable decrees deprived of its benefits. Why these simple, beautiful tenets, which composed the creed of the first Christians, and of the great body of them in the time even of Tertullian, (though the original simplicity of the Gospel had been much corrupted by the philosophising Bishops;) which was again revived by the most learned among the reformers from Popery; which has derived lustre from the friendliness discovered towards it by Grotius, from the open avowal of it by Locke, Newton,

Newton, Le Clerc, Haynes, Lardner, &c. in times past, not to mention the great names that adorn the profession of it in our own; why these should be branded with the name of *heresy*, you, sir, should have shewn, before you ventured so confidently on the use of the term: having not done this, you can only be regarded as a *malicious petulant maligner*, who, by ill-founding names, strives to excite prejudices in his readers against what he dislikes. Yea, sir, it would have been an employment worthy of your mighty abilities, to have shewn us how such tenets as the following, which you once believed, or you have forsworn yourself, namely, that God has irreversibly decreed the salvation of some, and as certainly appointed the eternal damnation of others; that God is unrelenting, and forgives not the offences of his penitent offspring; that before he pardons contrite transgressors, he requires, for satisfaction, the sufferings of innocence; demanding, before he consents to save even a few of the human race, a victim of equal rank with himself; also, that the sin of one man has involved in guilt the whole human race, and was sufficient to have damned it to eternal torments; and that man of himself is unable to perform one single good act;—how tenets so derogatory to the character of the Deity, that reflect such dishonour on his government, that tend so much to debase our natures, and that sap the foundations of morality, should be exclusively dignified with the name of *orthodoxy*.

I take no pleasure in holding out to you this horrid picture, nor in stating the dishonour it reflects on your situation; but the truth must not be concealed; and I wish it could be uttered with a voice that would penetrate every corner of the nation, and that would rouse the people of Britain to rise as one man, to require that the public service of religion be cleansed from these pollutions, which press hard on the consciences of the most worthy among the Clergy, which drive many to infidelity, which render others indifferent to all religion, and which keep from the Church numbers, whose talents and whose weight of character would render it eminent service.

“The friends of religion and order,” you inform us, “still constitute the nation.” In the cant of persons of your description, religion means those articles of faith, and that form of worship, which are established by law. That the bulk of the people are attached to this, no one will dispute. But this attachment of the majority is no proof that a religion is true; for you know, sir, that the majority are not always in the right. If the suffrages of the many are to decide, idolatry, far surpassing all other religions in the number of its adherents, must be the true one; but if the intrinsic merits of a religion are to make good its claims, this test will hardly prove more favourable than the above to that to which you are attached. Indeed how in reason can it be expected, that a Church, set on foot by one of
our

our monarchs who was a disgrace to the name of a king; fostered, during the minority of his successor, by a person, who, whatever other merits he might possess, and though an Archbishop of Canterbury, was guilty of two acts that have transmitted him to posterity as a persecutor and a coward; and brought well nigh into the state under which it exists at present, by a woman, whose interference in ecclesiastical matters was most arbitrary and indecent; who, in retaining several of the Romish ceremonies, consulted a passion natural enough, but not confined to her sex, namely, a love of shew and pomp; and who, it is notorious, made religion, in many instances, bend to policy:—that a Church, in the construction of which such a quantity of suspicious materials (Popish tenets, usages, and maxims) was used with no very discriminating hand; a Church, reared up under the management of builders every way so ill-qualified, as were Harry the Eighth, Cranmer, and Queen Bess, (which it were easy to shew at large) and actuated, as it is well known they were, by motives the most foreign to those which ought to have influenced the votaries of true religion;—that a Church, so circumstanced in its origin and subsequent advance, should labour under the greatest blemishes and defects, is what might have been looked for, and what has actually taken place. Your boasted Church-establishment is perhaps, of all those which at this time exist in Europe, the most distinguished

by priestly pride and clerical negligence, the most hostile to free enquiry and the progress of knowledge. At no period was faith in absurdities more insisted on, and the voice of calumny raised higher against those who reject its dogmas. Whether this belief in them by your leaders be only a seeming profession, a *thing* of politics, taken up to support the crazy edifice, now that several pillars on which it was wont once firmly to rely, are either tottering or fallen, is a subject upon which, perhaps, it would be indecent publicly to indulge conjectures. Were I less a friend to your establishment than you take me to be, I should wish no more harm to befall it, than would arise from perseverance in such conduct; from having all its Bishops such as Horsley, and all its Clergy such as yourself.

With regard to national churches, we see America flourish very well without any; and whether one may be so constituted, as not to infringe on the natural rights of men, so as to offer no snares to their integrity, so as to be no hindrance to the prevalence of truth and virtue, is a question, concerning which the most enlightened among the friends of liberty, civil and religious, are not agreed. As to the effects of all past institutions of this sort, no doubt can be entertained. The history of established Churches, calling themselves Christian, from their commencement to the present time, is the history of corporate bodies striving to enslave the minds of men, to debase them by superstitious practices,

practices, to fence them against the entrance of light by every possible artifice, and ever most busy and active in defeating the schemes, and plotting against the happiness and tranquility, of those who would make the world more wise. That here and there a few priests may have been exemplary in the discharge of their pastoral functions, and that some may have had their virtue improved under the influence of devotedness to such as possessed little of it themselves, are benefits for which we cannot acknowledge ourselves indebted to religious establishments, but which are rather owing to the excellent principles of what you call our *weak and corrupt nature*; yet which really in itself is not weak and corrupt, but is rendered so by the gross and pernicious corruptions and defects of most existing constitutions, civil and ecclesiastical.

The question relating to the expediency and lawfulness of religious establishments, is comparatively of late date among us. Our principal writer in these matters, the venerable Micaiah Towgood, has contented himself with descanting on the merits of your single establishment, without adverting to the general question. The deepest wound which the cause of establishments has ever received, was inflicted by one of the sons of your Church. Archdeacon Blackburne was the man "that dispatched the shaft to the seat of life." If you wish to be acquainted with the benefits that result to the world from establishments, peruse, sir, the *Confessional*, a

book in which, if any where, “ your eyes will be “ opened to your own ignorance ;” the author of which, possessing acuteness and penetration that seldom have been equalled, employed them most happily on this performance, which, to the disgrace of your Clergy, has yet received no answer that is in any repute ; and to fill up the breach which it has made in the ramparts of the sanctuary, is an undertaking that will not, I presume, be courted by the great repairer of our Welsh Churches, or by his humble imitator. Never were the advocates of any cause reduced to such wretched shifts. The defences of your establishment, which have of late been made by its sons, are a scandal to all serious Christians. They have been conducted on principles, which would equally justify idolatry in China, Mahomedism in Turkey, Popery in Spain, and even Presbyterianism (to you, I suppose, the most obnoxious of all) in Scotland and Holland.* This blessed ground, which was, I believe, first started by Hobbes, unless it be that Hooker less openly availed himself of it, has of late without scruple been taken up by your Clergy ; but, unhappy people ! such in regard to argument and reason is their pitiable state, that even this fails them ; the case of Ireland, where the Presbyterians are twice, and the Roman Catholics three or four times as numerous as the members of your Church, renders this ground disgraceful, as it is untenable.

* Vide note E.

The note which perhaps has given you most offence, though you only hint at it, is that in which I proposed the abolition of the Church establishment in Wales. Judging from the facts there mentioned, it struck me very forcibly, that in the principality the expence of it might be saved. Being, sir, one of those who in every concern are advocates for fair dealing, and who like to see that for every penny laid out a pennyworth be given, it appeared to me somewhat incongruous that this poor country should be drained of so many thousands, while so little benefit accrued to the inhabitants, in the way of religious instruction.

You contemptuously represent me as the “ conventicle and field-preachers’ champion.” Of this character, sir, I am not ashamed. Of the eccentricities of these men of good intentions I am not the advocate; but as diffusing good principles, and promoting good morals, among a class of people who much stand in need of this attention, these despised men appear in my eye far more respectable, as being more useful, than the indolent haughty corps to which you belong, consisting in general of individuals uninformed in their professional duties, and of others, who, though they may be acquainted with them, are too proud to stoop to discharge them. On this disagreeable topic I mean to give you a little respite, intending, however, to resume it in another point of view before we part, and referring my readers for more intelligence in these matters

matters to the Confessional, and to Dr. Priestley's familiar Letters to the inhabitants of Birmingham, and to his Letters to Mr. Burke.

“ To the weak argument against the Trinity, “ drawn from its incomprehensibility, or in other “ words from the incapacity of the mind to form “ any representation or phantasm of it,” we have it confirmed by all the weight of your authority, “ that nothing stronger can be opposed than the “ equal incomprehensibility of the Unity.”* By the pompous words *representation* and *phantasm*, I take it you mean the same thing that I should express by the term *idea*. If you allow, as you seem to do, the incapacity of the mind to form an *idea* of the Trinity, the doctrine as an object of faith is gone for ever. On this hinge let the question hang, and there can be no doubt as to the side to which the judgment of the impartial will incline. The thinking part of mankind have now, for a long time, I believe, been in the habit of acquiescing in Mr. Locke's position, that where we want ideas, we want knowledge of all kinds; therefore to give assent to, or to believe a proposition, of which we have no ideas, or (which is the same thing) of which we have no knowledge, must be left to such profound theologues as yourself, and will not, I imagine, be attempted by persons of ordinary understandings. But perhaps this philosopher's mechanical way of appreciating degrees of assent, you

* Vide note F.

may despise. Having, like your Prelate, founded the profundities of Platonism, having been illumined by the contemplations of the sage himself, and farther instructed by the *sober disquisitions* of his followers, you may teach us how faith may be exercised without any knowledge of its object,—a piece of service much needed, and which your side of the question, on the point before us, seems to require, in order to be defended. For a dissertation on this subject, your admirable knack at clear reasoning, and perspicuous writing, eminently qualify you; I therefore recommend to you the undertaking.

Though it be allowed on all hands that the divine nature is incomprehensible, still we strenuously contend for the power of examining your representations of it, and the propositions you maintain respecting it; for the right of determining each for himself whether they be consistent or contradictory, whether your arguments in support of them be fair and well-founded, or fallacious and sophistical: we likewise claim the privilege of comparing your notions on the subject, with those that are held by others. If with one breath you tell us, that there is one God, and with the next, that the Father, one distinct person, is God; that the Son, another distinct person, is God; and superadd a third distinct person, who also is God, and that these three are equal; but that by an ineffable union they are one, in the strict sense of the word, we regard you as
dealers

dealers in jargon, as vending a commodity which, in barbarous times, would have procured you respect and admiration, but which, in an enlightened age, only exposes you to ridicule and contempt. While the whole tenor of the Old and New Testament is in support of the divine Unity, we will not be awed, by your clamour and hard appellations, to a surrender of our reason, nor induced to acknowledge, besides the one God and Father of all, two other objects of religious adoration.

Unitarians are often represented as being influenced in their rejection of the Trinity by the pride of reason, and a contempt for revelation; whereas the fact is, that we reject this doctrine because we think we can demonstrate it to be as hostile to Scripture* as it is to reason. This goodly doctrine we believe to have been fabricated by those who had been educated in the schools, to which we owe the notions of occult qualities and intelligible forms, and introduced into the Christian Church, together with a torrent of other absurdities, in a degenerate age, when a rage for deifying prevailed; when not only the Saviour of mankind was raised to the rank of a God, but his Mother, his Apostles, and a legion of Saints and Martyrs, were converted into objects of religious worship;—when theological doctors openly maintained ignorance to be the parent of devotion, and gloried in believing things because they were impossible;—at a time when truth was

* Vide note G.

judged not to have force sufficient to make its way in the world, but was thought to require the friendly aid of pains and penalties, and privation of goods;—when St. Augustin, to whom we owe the doctrines of predestination and original sin, in the shocking forms under which your Church maintains them; yes, sir, when your admirer St. Augustin, as good a Platonist as the Bishop or yourself, and who confessed that he understood not the Trinity till he had studied it in the school of Plato, openly maintained the lawfulness of stripping heretics of their temporal possessions. If you would go still farther back, to trace the origin of this doctrine to its remoter sources, they will be found in the Oriental philosophy, whence Plato derived his wisdom; a philosophy which held the divine nature to be prolific; that believed in two principles, the one good and the other evil; that maintained the incarnation of divinities, the pre-existence and transmigration of souls, and all the opprobria of modern systems of divinity, which once exercised so dire a sway over the human understanding, and which in part remain, as a cause of scandal and offence to our holy religion. While you maintain that this and such like tenets constitute orthodoxy, we must remain subject to the charge of heresy, under no apprehension that the obloquy of the term will prevent our numbers from increasing, among those who think and enquire.

The present pursuits of philosophers seem to be not a little offensive to you; and not without reason

truly; for these pursuits, while they are most favourable to true religion, make a dreadful havock within the confines of every system of corrupt religion. When this world was believed to be the center of the universe, and the sun, moon, planets, and fixed stars, daily to turn round it, and the race of man was deemed the only tribe of rational beings, except the inhabitants of the empyreal Heaven; then it would far less shock the mind to believe that the Creator should become man, that he should live and die for the benefit of his creatures. Even philosophers, if any in this state of things could deserve the name, with notions so high of the importance of man, with views so low and unworthy of God, might with less difficulty admit this account; like the wisest inhabitants of some solitary island, who, knowing of no other human beings besides themselves, might easily be brought to credit the tale, that the sun and moon, which rose and set only to supply them with light and warmth, did upon a time pay a visit to their ancestors, and render them eminent services:—a tale this infinitely more credible than that which the orthodox Christian believes. But modern physics place the mind on an elevation, which makes the absurdity of the method of thus rescuing man from misery appear enormous, and the end proposed, though weighty, infinitely less momentous. To me it is often matter of the greatest wonder, and seems to require the greatest possible stretch of candour, to believe

believe those sincere, who, having been made acquainted with the systems upon systems of worlds which modern discoveries have brought to light, can for a moment harbour in their minds the sentiment, that He, who makes and governs these, should become an inhabitant of this world for above thirty years, exercise an ordinary trade, subject himself to much suffering from his creatures, and at length suffer them to put him to an ignominious death. But this is a tenet, the absurdity of which must strike as forcibly the natural good sense of every unbiassed and unprejudiced mind, as it will that of the wisest and most accomplished. Let the inquisitive among the inhabitants of this diocese, examine impartially, and give in their decision, unawed by the frowns of Priests or Bishops, regardless of their threats, and unmoved by their sneers; and were they to be followed by the other inhabitants of Britain, orthodoxy then would have cause to tremble; prevalent would be the dissatisfaction with our present forms, and loud would be the demands for alterations in our established creeds and confessions.

You see I had well nigh totally forgot the Bishop. Indeed, sir, the subjects which your work has given me occasion to consider, might well put him out of my mind; to me they appear of far greater importance than any Bishop, or even a whole bench of Bishops. But as you make him the most conspicuous figure on the canvass, it were not handsome to pass him over without some particular attention;

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more especially as I owe to his Lordship the pleasure of my acquaintance with you. I must be permitted once more to make free with him, while I slightly descant on those services, on which are founded his claims to “the applause of Europe,” and which, I grant you, we shall never succeed in drawing from him, it being an absolute impossibility.

If I have said or insinuated any thing against his Lordship’s *personal* character, it has been undesignedly; it was with his public conduct that I was concerned; and I am not conscious of having stepped out of my province; and as you bring forwards no particulars, and my recollection furnishes me with none, I am at liberty to consider this suspicion of yours, for it is such rather than a charge, as having no real foundation, but to be the mere effect of an excessive fondness for his Lordship. With your account of the sentiments which his Clergy entertain of his Lordship I am not perfectly satisfied; I do not however expect to hear of their making a public disavowal of it. Though his merits in the discharge of his pastoral duties be as great as you would make them, still, sir, for the man who has made the basis of his transient celebrity the detraction of distinguished worth; who has raised himself by attempts to depress superior eminence; who has acquired a character for great abilities by maintaining doctrines that insult reason; who has in every instance of his interference set his
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face againſt all that is liberal, againſt all improvements in our civil and in our eccleſiaſtical conſtitution, you will attempt in vain to excite, in the generous boſom; ſentiments of eſteem and reſpect.

Your reputation would not, perhaps, ſuffer by lavishing praiſes on a controversialiſt, who, inſtead of diſcuſſing with the perſon on whom he made his attack the grand points in debate, ſtudiouſly fought to divert the attention to leſſer matters; who, inſtead even of attempting to anſwer his arguments, ſet **himſelf** on magnifying a few trivial miſtakes; who, inſtead of overthrowing his poſitions, ſtrove by the confidence of hiſtone, and the loudneſs of his vociferation, to cry down his opponent as incompetent; who, to defend the doctrines of which he ſet himſelf up the champion, was conſtrained to have recourſe to a juſtly exploded ſyſtem of metaphyſics; who, to counterbalance the credit which his adverſary had by a *few lucky experiments* acquired, gave it out that he underſtood what men who have given proofs of profound erudition have pronounced unintelligible, and repreſented himſelf as converſant with the reveries of ſpeculatiſts, whoſe argumen- tation, when in any degree intelligible, is a burleſque upon reaſoning.*

But in Plato's ſchool the Biſhop is a mere novice, a very tyro; the tranſlator of *Plotinus*, the modern advocate for the *ancient Polytheiſm*, muſt regard him as a boaſting ſmatterer, pluming himſelf on an

* Vide note H.

acquaintance

acquaintance with the divine philosophy which he professes, while in reality he is the votary of a modern barbarism.

Augustine, Petrarch, and Bishop Horsley, studying in this school, have been confirmed in the Trinitarian doctrine; they learnt here to conceive more readily of there being three divine persons, each of whom is God. Mr. *Taylor*, a harder student in the same school, has found out that there are divine persons, or Gods, to the number of several thousands. He is shocked at the unworthy ideas of the Deity entertained by the Bishop and those of his persuasion, who make the godhead so barren, as to have produced only two divinities; while on his system the glorious perfection of being prolific is rendered illustrious, by the production of a numberless race of divinities. In this school, this man has learnt, not only the doctrine of many gods, but the pre-existence and transmigration of souls, to aspire after the converse of genii, and of other superior beings, to discern the truth of the Ptolemaic system, and like you the folly and inutility of experimental philosophy, which Lord Bacon took so much pains to recommend. Hence, when natural philosophy is calumniated as unfriendly to right sentiments in religion, let it be remembered that the philosophy, the study of which Dr. Horsley has set himself so industriously to recommend, has led one, who has studied it with the most diligence, into the profession of idolatry, such as was estab-
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blished in antient Greece, to acknowledge the divinity of Jupiter, Juno, &c. Whenever the philosophy which arrives at general principles by induction from particulars, is accused of favouring heresy, let it be remembered that the boasted science of universals, the science of superior minds, which opens men's eyes to their own ignorance, and disposes them to be orthodox, leads to *paganism*, and has actually made (shocking to tell!) one of the most famed of its modern votaries an avowed idolater. It would seem then that we cannot be Trinitarians on Bishop Horsley's principles, but at the extreme hazard of being pagans.

I admire the daring policy apparent in our Prelate's attempts to render fashionable the Platonic philosophy; while I am confident, that, by the good sense of this age, they will be treated with the scorn and contempt they deserve. For were a rage for Platonism to revive, the world would again be filled with sprights and ghosts; noxious caverns would again be inhabited by dæmons; fountains, and rivers, and groves, would have their presiding divinities; and the empire of the priests would return.

I would observe one thing more as to the Bishop, and I have done with him. Being the enemy of intellectual freedom, it became him to stand up as the advocate of civil oppression. To treat the rights of two millions of his fellow-subjects with unfeeling levity, to mention their hardships with malignant

fatisfaction, was consistent with his character for political wisdom, and the wonted generosity of his mind. Really, sir, the *Review of the Dissenters' Case* outdoes, in taunt and insult, all the former productions of his pen. Report says, that for this he is soon to be called to an account, by one who will not trifle with him. If you, sir, are possessed of that *generosity* which you profess, recommend this publication to those of your neighbourhood, whose minds have been soured by the Bishop's sophistical and bigotted declamation.

May you, sir, enjoy all the satisfaction which your attachment to this ghostly father of your's is calculated to afford; continue to be his enraptured admirer; may you be his less humble imitator and his more stout defender, than you have shewn yourself to be in the letter before us; and all the pleasing reflections, which the greatest success in this way can give, you will enjoy unenvied by your present correspondent. My lot it has been to direct my veneration to a person of a very different character; to be instrumental, in the most inconsiderable degree, in promoting whose designs, of ridding the world of superstition and error, is the greatest happiness after which I aspire. For this reason, and not on account of any apprehension I feel, that the reflections, which have been so industriously thrown out against this illustrious person, can in the least hurt him, it is that I am solicitous my readers should know how unfounded they are, and the
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the motives whence they have originated; that they may not be influenced by them, to neglect deriving from his works the light and improvement, which they are in so superior a degree calculated to communicate. For the benefit therefore of persons, who in this matter may have been misinformed, I shall beg leave to subjoin a quotation from a very able writer of the present age, who, speaking of Dr. Priestley, thus expresses himself:—

“ It is with pleasure I embrace this opportunity
 “ of doing justice to the character of a man who
 “ deserves well of his country. I am persuaded,
 “ though he has been treated as an heresiarch, and
 “ an innovating, restless sectary, there is not a
 “ body of learned men in the world, except one,
 “ who would not cheerfully acknowledge him for
 “ a brother and a companion.”

“ So far from confining his views to the narrow
 “ line of polemical divinity, there is scarce any
 “ branch of literature which he hath not success-
 “ fully cultivated and improved.”

“ He is one of those few men who do not advance
 “ new doctrines with a view to surprize the igno-
 “ rant, or to acquire a character of uncommon
 “ penetration. The investigation of real and use-
 “ ful knowledge and truth, is his favourite object,
 “ and the discovery of them his reward.”

“ He thinks freely, and speaks and writes as
 “ freely as he thinks; following no authority, a slave

“ to no system, he ranges uncontrouled by prejudice, fear, or interest.”

“ Though he has had many difficulties and enemies to struggle with, he was as steady in maintaining his principles when his substance was precarious, as since the encouragement of the public, and the patronage of a noble Lord, whose discernment of merit will not be disputed, have made him independent. Cicero thought it his duty to shew the people the absurdities of the pagan religion; and Dr. Priestley has rescued Christianity from those gross errors and mysterious absurdities by which it has been long obscured and disgraced, and reconciled it to sense and reason, and those fixed principles, in which the liberal and intelligent part of mankind must always agree.”

“ It is with him an invariable maxim, that truth, happiness, and virtue, always mutually assist and support each other; and that ignorance, folly, superstition, and vice, are inseparably connected together. He looks upon it as the greatest solecism, that Heaven should have given us mental faculties only to be suppressed, or that any benefit can arise to society from limiting them by secular laws and ordinances. He is the enemy of all pious frauds and religious errors, however dignified by authority, or rendered sacred by antiquity, being persuaded that mankind will be virtuous in proportion to the enlargement of their
“ ideas,

“ ideas, and the rectitude of their judgment; there-
 “ fore he is not solicitous, in his pursuit of truth,
 “ what prejudices he may shock, what system he
 “ may overturn, or whose territories he may in-
 “ vade. He may, perhaps, express his mind more
 “ openly than timorous and delicate men would
 “ chuse; but as long as there are the same means
 “ of defending, as there are to attack, it would be
 “ an ill compliment to any doctrines of reason and
 “ religion, to suppose they could suffer by honesty
 “ and plain dealing.”

“ He has paid the tax of censure, which is gene-
 “ rally levied upon those who dare to think for
 “ themselves; but though he has met with more
 “ insult and abuse than most men in the present
 “ day, I am persuaded he would not disarm his
 “ enemies even of the liberty of aspersing him. While
 “ his moral character remains unimpeached, he is
 “ content with every other reproach, and he thinks
 “ the approbation of the candid and deserving an
 “ ample recompence;—with them one genuine
 “ virtue of the heart will atone for a thousand mis-
 “ takes of judgment. But bigots have no tender-
 “ ness, no feeling; the want of faith is never to be
 “ redeemed; a scruple, a doubt fixes upon the most
 “ blameless life irretrievable reprobation. If the
 “ Doctor has called in question popular opinions
 “ without grounds, he will be the more easily
 “ refuted. But, let him not be silenced whether
 “ right or wrong; there can be no policy in restrain-

“ ing the progrefs of knowledge, unlefs it can be
 “ proved, that we have arrived at the fummit of
 “ perfection, and that all farther improvements
 “ are to be defpaired of.” Vide two Letters to
 the Prelates, printed for Johnson, A. D. 1773.

So far is he from being “ the great propagator
 “ of anarchy” and confufion, as you represent him,
 that no man has difcourfed with happier fuccels
 on government and order, and fhewn, in a clearer
 light, the impolicy of civil and ecclefiastical oppref-
 fion. Indeed, fir, whatever be the fubject upon
 which he treats, he is moft careful of treading on
 the ground of fure principles and indubitable facts.
 Hence it is, that in the numerous contefts, into
 which, by his intrepid love of truth, he has been
 drawn, his victories have been fo fignal. But his
 fuperior talents raife him lefs in the opinion of his
 friends, than his active virtues and amiable man-
 ners. He, to the fatisfaction of having rendered
 unparalleled fervices to the caufe of fciences, and
 of having raifed higher the condition of his fellow-
 creatures by deftroying their prejudices, and
 teaching them to follow, in their moft important
 concerns, the deductions of reafon, adds that of
 difcharging the duties of his private ftation in a
 manner truly exemplary, and with a degree of fuc-
 cels worthy of his exertions. Much as I admire
 him, honourable as I think it to bear openly my
 testimony to his merits, yet, fir, if you conclude that
 I think myfelf obliged to adopt all his opinions, or
 that

that I do actually agree with him in every particular, you will do me injustice. The most able and successful authors I regard only as guides; and the greatest among them I consider as entitled to the praise, not of being perfect, but to that of being less fallible than his brethren.

“ You are likely,” you tell us, “ to transmit your faith and your Church unimpaired to your children.” If you mean that it will go down unaltered to your immediate descendants, no one will, I believe, care to dispute the point with you. But you must mean more than this, for you take care to assure us, “ that this is the only age in which we can be heard;” and if that be the case, the Church will go down unimpaired, not only to your children, but to your latest posterity. You would have done well to have informed us, what there is in this Church to exempt it from the fate of other human institutions. The public mind, I apprehend, stands in need of information of this nature. An opinion very different from that which you entertain is gaining ground. All cannot bring their minds to admit the stability of a Church, the heads of which have their time and attention taken up in the lay-administration of the kingdom, to the utter neglect of their spiritual charge; most of the dignified and many of the beneficed Clergy of which are equally chargeable with professional delinquency; while in the major part of its officiating ministers, there is a notorious neglect of duty or an incapacity

incapacity for its discharge. It appears to me highly unreasonable to presume on the permanency of a Church, the doctrines of which are the *cre-
denda* of an unenlightened age, just emerging from Popery; a season of all others the most unfit for constructing articles, to determine the faith of all future ages, even if this business were allowable for fallible man, in any situation, to undertake; of a Church which in its offices —— the Deity, and damns all men who reject its dogmas;* a Church which holds up four objects of religious worship; which absolves the most profligate of all their sins, in the hour of sickness, though there be no space for repentance; which returns thanks to Almighty God, for having taken those to himself, who on earth were admitted into no good society; which dispenses, by its Prelates, the Holy Ghost to all who receive holy orders, though many of them are at the time known to be extremely vicious and dissolute; and which transfuses, through the fingers of these ghostly fathers, what in an instant makes good Christians of the vilest of the community. To believe that a Church, the administration of which is thus corrupt, the doctrines and rites of which are thus absurd and irrational, and moreover so immoral in their tendency, is secure of lasting continuance, would require a faith of the same nature with that which you possess. The attacks of enthusiasm on one side, and of reason on the other; the growing infidelity among the higher ranks of the com-

* Vide note I.

munity;

munity ; the changes to which, the increase of corruption and of our national debt, must at some future period give rise; the examples of correcting abuses given us by our neighbours; the zeal and diligence of its enemies, their abilities, and above all the superior goodness of their cause; certainly wear the aspect of danger, and must alarm the considerate friends of the Church. You, however, seem confident. Your confidence, if feigned, is politic; but it may be real; instances of it, equally unreasonable, are not unfrequently to be met with. Though the advancement of natural science had made it highly fit, and therefore extremely probable, that our Pharmacopeia should undergo a revision, yet I dare engage that many a country apothecary might have been found, some years back, who believed it to be as little susceptible of improvement, and as little likely to undergo any alteration, as you may deem our forms of public worship. Equally confident, I doubt not, were the zealots of the Romish religion, in the days of Leo the tenth, that the power and authority of their Church would be transmitted down undiminished to the latest times. And a very little time back, the Clergy of France were as free from apprehensions as to the security of their revenues, as their brethren of Britain and Ireland are at this day with respect to theirs. But human affairs we see are unstable; they ever change from worse to better, or from better to worse; though ultimately every change is for the better. With
this

this view of things, I shall indulge, in my dream, that we are advancing towards the abolition of all slavish hierarchies and usurping establishments; slowly it may be, but surely and inevitably. How near, or how remote the period is, in which this will happen, I pretend not to predict; nor, as a friend to truth, do I hope for its too speedy arrival, though the sufferings of conscientious individuals would dictate a different wish. Regarded in a public view, the downfall of a reigning superstition may happen too soon, before the public are ripe for such an event; and by reason of this unpreparedness, another superstition may be set up, though one somewhat less obnoxious, and thereby our condition be little improved; whereas no danger can attend its happening late, provided that in the mean time the friends of truth and free-enquiry are not remiss; the longer it is before this is brought about, the more solid and extensive the benefits that may be expected.

I cannot be brought to believe, that the advantages we enjoy, in being able to contemplate religion free from the prejudices which a Popish education must have formed; to examine the Scriptures by the rules of an improved criticism, and in the light which a more accurate knowledge of the countries in which took place the transactions they relate, and of the customs and manners to which they allude, reflect on the sacred volume; nor yet ~~that~~ the aids we derive from the labours of those
learned

learned persons, who have been at immense pains to trace the additions which Christianity received from Platonism, from the subtilties of the Aristotelian philosophy, and from the extravagancies of the Oriental wisdom, whether borrowed from their original sources, or taken up after they had been incorporated with the ancient heresies; I cannot be brought to believe that these advantages will always answer no other end, than to benefit a few curious minds, and have no beneficial effect upon the public profession of religion. Yea, sir, I cannot help abiding in this persuasion, while I remain convinced that truth is of more value than error; that mankind have an irresistible propensity to prefer the one, and to shun the other; that the former elevates the mind, while the latter debases our noblest powers. The expectation is rendered more strong, when it is considered, that there are and ever will be men of enlarged views, who can soar above the allurements of ease, the charms of worldly greatness, and the insipid applauses of the great and low vulgar; who will act with diligence and vigour, in promoting the interests of truth, and in exposing all that is not sound, animated by the consciousness, that in so doing they act in concurrence, most effectually and eminently, with the benignant Author of their being, and cheered by the hope that at some time or other, the cause they have most at heart will have a glorious and splendid triumph.—
The perfections of the Deity, the author and guar-
dian

dian of truth, justify the hope, and warrant the expectation. The spirit of enquiry is abroad in the world: vain and ridiculous will be every attempt to suppress its career: to this no stop can be put till its last demands are satisfied. Truth, when once she has been made an object of attention, possesses advantages, which, in spite of all the difficulties with which she may have to struggle, and of the ties and holds by which error would retain her dominion, must render her finally victorious, and draw after her universal preference.

These speculations are, I think, founded in the principles of human nature, agreeable to the usual course of things, and greatly corroborated by present appearances. To indulge in them affords a satisfaction and a delight which it is impossible to enjoy with your notions; and nothing that you have written has shaken in the least my confidence in them. Indeed the writings and the conversation of the ablest of your party, only serve to impress my mind more strongly with the excellence of the cause which you attack, and of the badness of that which you are obliged to defend.

Immoderate as is the size into which this letter has swollen, under my hands, I cannot dismiss, without farther notice, an extraordinary passage in your Letter. It has been already quoted. It is that in which you inform us, "this is the only age in which we can be heard." This position proves your regard for truth to be very faint, your head to be very weak, or "your
" intercourse

“intercourse with your species to be very limited.” Had you favoured us with the reasons on which you built this conclusion, which you sport so confidently, you probably would have afforded us entertainment. How came you, sir, to think that enquiry would soon be at an end; that every passion of this kind would shortly be for ever stifled; that the undisturbed and universal empire of superstition was about to commence; and that the maxims of intolerance would be speedily revived; that the bulk of the people of Britain will soon, to a man, unite in regarding the thirty-nine articles as of equal authority with holy writ, as indisputable as the axioms of Euclid, or the Newtonian laws of philosophising; that the prejudice against the Athanasian Creed will soon be done away, and that this celebrated formula will be cordially subscribed by all the faithful? If you cherish expectations such as these, and are anxious not to be deprived of the satisfaction they yield, I would advise you by all means against extending *your intercourse with your species*, and to fence yourself carefully within your *little field*, lest you should discover how matters really stand, and the illusion should entirely vanish. Leaving you to pursue these reflections, having no desire you should be thrown into that state into which you fancied your Letter had reduced me; and, judging myself inexcusable, should I not, when I have it in my power, relieve you from the pain, to which your idea of my situation, must expose

a person of your tender feelings, I will, fir, honestly thank you for a considerable degree of amusement, for being set on a train of reflections that I consider as very useful and pleasing, and, I would trust, for something of more consequence, for an opportunity of exciting, in some of my countrymen, a love of enquiry, and a thirst after a just and rational knowledge of religion, the most momentous of all concerns, and that in which, of all others, it is most important that we should be set right.

Now, fir, if it must be so, farewell "for ever!" And is then your resolution absolutely fixed? Yes, unalterably fixed. "My arm is too weak," you say. But what if my muscles should acquire hardness by art and exercise? for art and exercise, you know, can do wonders. What if I should polish my weapon, and I should be induced once more to appear in the amphitheatre, may I not hope that you will again suffer yourself to be turned out against me, to put my skill and courage to the proof? No, you are resolved to refuse. Really, fir, you act wisely. A greater proof of your wisdom it would, have been, perhaps, never to have appeared in the field at all. Adieu then, fir, finally! Neither your talents, your acquirements, or your temper, will cause any to regret your declining any farther contest. Your reasons are evident. You calculate, I doubt not, rightly, that at no season can you retire more honourably than at the present. Should you, however,

ever, be by any means led to change your resolution, remember that I am in no wise obliged to notice you. My object is answered. I have hinted at the subjects to which I wished to direct the attention of my countrymen; and I have referred to the writers by whom they are amply discussed. I flatter myself, likewise, that owing to my interference, feeble as it may have been, the voice of detraction in these parts against Unitarianism will be rendered less loud, and misrepresentations less current; that the impartial and well-disposed will hesitate before they give their assent to them, and forbear to censure till they have examined.

I am,

Reverend Sir,

Your very humble Servant,

A WELSH FREEHOLDER.

P O S T S C R I P T.

THE *Welsh Freeholder* is confident, that his readers will not be displeas'd with the insertion of the following shrewd Letter, which he has received from an anonymous correspondent. He feels the utmost satisfaction, in having his conduct and views approved and sanction'd by so able and learned a person, as he conceives the writer of the Letter before him to be. On its merits it would hardly be proper in him to enlarge; of these, after a fair perusal, let the reader judge.

“ Sir,

“ AS a friend to free enquiry and rational religion, I must beg the favour of being permitted to express my gratitude, for your seasonable exertion to stem the torrent of absurdity and ecclesiastical power with which we are threatened. Piteously worsted in the unequal conflict with Dr. P——, his Lordship probably rejoiced in the thought, that the Welsh Bishoprick, the reward of his distinguished prowess, would afford him an undisturbed retreat; where he should recover from his wounds, and have still an opportunity of employing the remainder of his strength, in attacking (like *Αίας Μαστιγοφορος*) the feeble and unresisting Dissenters of Wales. Easy he might think would be the conquest. Herein you must have convinced him of his
“ mistake.

“ mistake. You, sir, have abundantly proved that
 “ there are among us, who can detect plausible
 “ pretences to superior erudition, who can answer
 “ imposing sophisms with substantial argument,
 “ who can treat ‘great swelling words of vanity’
 “ with successful ridicule, who can smile at the
 “ folly of ecclesiastical hauteur.

“ It is a debt, sir, you may justly expect to be
 “ paid by your dissenting countrymen, to acknow-
 “ ledge their obligations for your interference.—
 “ The *manner* in which you have made this oppo-
 “ sition discovers to me, that your sentiments
 “ concerning this Prelate are in unison with my
 “ own, and with those of many among my acquaint-
 “ tance. The man who, in a theological contro-
 “ versy with one of the greatest characters of the
 “ age, avows his determination ‘to strike at his
 “ adversary without remorse;’—who unblushingly
 “ professes to destroy his opponent’s ‘credit, and
 “ the authority of his name,’ by depreciating his
 “ character as a philosopher, and affecting to cha-
 “ racterise, as merely ‘certain lucky discoveries,’
 “ those improvements in science which for these
 “ last twenty years have attracted to this country the
 “ attention of all learned bodies in Europe;—who,
 “ because a plain passage in history is irreconcil-
 “ able with his paradoxical assertions, does not
 “ scruple to consider an illustrious ornament of an-
 “ tiquity as capable of ‘wilful falsehood’ and per-
 “ jury, nor to represent a similar ornament of mo-

“ derntimes, who undertook to defend the venerable
 “ *Origen*, in the same defamatory language;—who
 “ can stain his character as a minister of ‘ the pure
 “ and undefiled religion’ of the gospel, by dabbling
 “ in the turbid waters of election politics;—the
 “ man, I say, who answers to this description, what
 “ person of honour and generosity can contemplate
 “ without *indignation*? But when this man is
 “ viewed in a different light, as betraying the
 “ extreme of incompetence, where he discovers
 “ the extreme of confidence,—as pompously ana-
 “ lysing the opinions of an author, (viz. *Zuicker*)
 “ whom probably he had never read, and which
 “ opinions the author is found not to contain,—as
 “ gravely maintaining, that a Father may beget a
 “ Son by the contemplation of his own powers,—
 “ as attempting to silence the cavils of scepticism,
 “ by the obstinacy and violence of his assevera-
 “ tions,—and as rendering these and other absur-
 “ dities conspicuous by the eminence of his situa-
 “ tion,—our *indignation* will be softened into a
 “ *smile*; and the complex emotion excited by the
 “ whole of his character will be rather pleasurable
 “ than painful.

“ Such, sir, seems to have been the emotion,
 “ under the influence of which you wrote the Let-
 “ ter of the *Wells Freeholder*. You have indeed
 “ treated me and my friends with considerable
 “ entertainment. And why should we not thus
 “ divert ourselves? Our cheerfulness certainly is
 “ innocent.

“ innocent. The Bishop’s friends however tell us
 “ —‘that you discover an unchristian spirit.’ But
 “ surely it is not inconsistent with Christianity to
 “ ridicule affectation, intolerance, and absurdity;
 “ and this is all that you have done. Let them
 “ triumph, that their ‘ religion lifts up its mitred
 “ head in Courts and Parliaments.’ Let them
 “ content themselves with the enjoyment of those
 “ honours and emoluments, civil and ecclesiastical,
 “ from which we are injuriously excluded. But,
 “ oh! let them not deprive us of our last consolation
 “ in this state of *hopeless* depression! Let them not
 “ insist upon it, that, like the captive Hebrews,
 “ at the waters of Babylon, we hang our *barps* upon
 “ the willows, sit down and weep! Let them not
 “ deny us that amusement, which has long solaced
 “ us under oppression, and in some measure recon-
 “ ciled us to it, viz. laughing at the follies of our
 “ oppressors!

“ Without doubt, sir, you have read the Letter of
 “ the indignant Clergyman. To allude to a curi-
 “ ous expression of his own, his object seems to be,
 “ *to drown you with the vapour of his mouth;*’ but
 “ take comfort, it cannot ‘*taint the atmosphere in*
 “ *which you breathe.*’ If you honour this Rhapso-
 “ dist with a reply, he has dressed himself ready
 “ for your entertainment in his conical cap and
 “ feather, and his coat of many colours. Some
 “ strictures upon his pamphlet may counteract the
 “ effects of his bold declamatory manner. Though

it may be said justly of him, and likewise of his
 “ dioceſan *ιδιώτης μὲν ἐν φιλοσόφοις*, yet the other
 “ part of the ſentence may be equally applicable,
 “ *φιλοσόφος δὲ ἐν ιδιώταις*.

“ Allow me, fir, to requeſt you would go on in
 “ your laudable attempts to enlighten the minds of
 “ your countrymen. Your perfeverance, joined
 “ with the indiſcretion, intolerance and zeal of the
 “ Biſhop of St. David’s, may, under the bleſſing
 “ of Providence, be the means of exciting a ſpirit
 “ of enquiry among us, and conſequently of acce-
 “ lerating our defection from this antichriſtian
 “ eſta bliſhment, which is gradually falling into
 “ diſrepute.

“ Hoping you will excuſe the liberty I have
 “ taken, in thus expreſſing my ſentiments,

“ I am,

“ Sir,

“ With unfeigned eſteem,

“ Your obliged Countryman,

“ Feb. 3d, 1791.

X. Y. Z.”

NOTES.

 N O T E S.

(A) Surely our Clergyman must be an animal magnetist, and when he wrote this must have been thrown into the luminous crisis.

(B) — *fævitque animis ignobile vulgus;
Jamque faces et faxa volant; furor arma ministrat.*

Does it not seem, from the temper of this pious man, that there are Clergy in our times, and in our own country, to whom it would not be disagreeable to have the same games played with heretics, as in former days? But perhaps I may be doing our Clergyman wrong, and that, like many a harmless scold, all his malice finds vent at his tongue, and he would not, with his hand, hurt a single hair of your head.

(C) Our Clergyman cannot here allude to the late rejection of Mr. Cooper by the society, for he is an “*artificer* of experiments,” an improver of such low things as our manufactures, and therefore he could not be displeas'd with that measure.—He must then either refer to the offence taken by a very eminent mathematician against the Royal Society, in which he was justified by many of his associates in the same studies, but in which affair, from Dr.

Kippis's account, which has never yet publicly been called in question, it appears the society was not chargeable with blame. Or he must have in view the revolution which of late years has taken place in the studies of philosophers; a revolution that may be displeasing to pedants, but in which every enlightened person must rejoice; as having already been productive, and likely to become still more so, of the most important benefits to mankind. The philosophy which analyses the air we breathe, the materials of which our bodies are formed, those by which they are supported, by which our disorders are healed; which explains the innumerable processes that nature is every moment conducting before our eyes, and in which we are very materially interested; the philosophy, in which have laboured the Bacons, Boyle, Hales, Bergman, Priestley, and Cavendish, is of more immediate and general importance, than the sublime researches (though these are invaluable, and never sufficiently to be prized) which engaged the attention of the philosophers who flourished in the last, and in the beginning of the present century.

(D) How the Clergy are sometimes *put upon*, we learn from a good story told by Dr. Priestley, in his *Letters to Mr. Burke*:—

“ When the Dissenting Ministers waited, by
 “ appointment, upon an Archbishop (Cornwallis)
 “ in order to get his vote and interest for relief in
 “ the

“ the matter of subscription, which was then under
 “ consideration in parliament, after both himself
 “ and his brethren had voted against us on a former
 “ occasion, he assured them, that though their
 “ bench had concurred in rejecting their applica-
 “ tion before, it was no measure of *their's*, but
 “ that they had been *put upon it*. On their expres-
 “ sing some degree of surprize at this, he put his
 “ hand upon his breast, and said again, ‘ upon
 “ my honour, we were put upon it.’ This he
 “ evidently thought a sufficient apology for his own
 “ conduct, and that of his brethren. So valid did
 “ this excuse appear to him, that he had no feeling
 “ of the dishonour which such conduct reflected
 “ upon the whole bench, and what a despicable
 “ idea he was giving of himself, and of his bre-
 “ thren, to us Dissenters, who are used to think and
 “ act for ourselves, and are not to be *put upon* by
 “ others. Can such conduct as this, which the
 “ situation of your dignified Clergy necessarily leads
 “ them into, inspire persons of high rank, or of
 “ any rank, with sentiments of respect? I will
 “ venture to say, it is impossible. Pretend what
 “ you will, you must, and you do hold them in
 “ contempt, as much as we do ourselves. It is the
 “ feeling of indignant honour. It is the natural
 “ sentiment of man towards his degraded fellow-
 “ creature, which in some measure reflects disho-
 “ nour upon himself, as being of the same species.”

Vide Letter ix. p. 92, &c.

(E) Here

(E) Here it may not be improper to introduce, from the works of the late learned, virtuous, and amiable Doctor Jebb, a pleasant quotation, which is worthy to be read as much on account of the justice of its remarks, as its exquisite humour.

“ Dr. Tucker, in the postulata on which he
 “ founds his “ Apology for the Church of Eng-
 “ land,” has puzzled me to some purpose. He
 “ asserts, that all societies must have some com-
 “ mon ‘ center of union;’ and that those persons,
 “ who propose themselves to be candidates for
 “ offices and honourable distinctions, in any soci-
 “ ety, must be supposed to approve of its ‘ center
 “ of union,’ in the main. “ Center of union!”—
 “ What can be meant by a center of union?—I am
 “ puzzled, beyond measure, by this same center
 “ of union.

“ I have looked into the thirty-nine articles,
 “ into the Athanasian creed, but find no ‘center of
 “ union’ there; I have looked into the Canons of
 “ the Church, where I find many hard names,
 “ and many hard things, but no ‘center of union’
 “ there. After much enquiry, I think I see some-
 “ thing that throws light upon the matter, in the
 “ fifth definition of the first book of Sir Isaac
 “ Newton’s Principia.

“ I will therefore give the definition itself, and
 “ make such remarks upon it as seem pertinent to
 “ the case in hand.

“ Philo-

“ Philofophiæ Naturalis Principia Mathematica.

“ Lib. i. definitio v.

“ Vis centripeta eft vis, quâ corpora verfus punctum aliquod, tanquam ad ‘centrum,’ undique trahuntur, impelluntur, vel utcunque tendunt :” *i. e.*

“ The centripetal force is that force, whereby bodies are from every quarter drawn, impelled, or do any how tend to a point as to a ‘center.’

“ It is well known to philofophers, and to fuch I addrefs myfelf, that the principle of gravitation is that principle which binds together the various bodies which compofe the folar fyftem; and that the point to which thefe bodies tend, and in which, were the projectile force to be deftroyed, they would be all united, is placed in or near the fun.

“ The fun is, therefore, juftly eftemed ‘the center of union’ in the folar fyftem.

“ Let us now confider the Ecclefiaftical Syftem, *i. e.* the fyftem of the modern Clergy, and fee how far the comparifon will hold.

“ The Court is the common ‘center of union,’ or of gravitation to this fyftem.

“ The vis centripeta, or centripetal force, is the power of conferring Dr. Tucker’s ‘offices and honourable diftinctions.’

“ The Bifhops are the larger bodies in this fyftem; fome at greater, fome at leffer diftances,
“ per-

“ perpetually revolving round their sun, rejoicing,
 “ as they roll, in the heat and radiance of the
 “ royal favour.

“ The moons or satellites, in this system, are
 “ their Lordships’ chaplains and dependants.

“ The Archbishops of Canterbury and York, like
 “ Jupiter and Saturn, mightily influence their
 “ inferior brethren.

“ Mercury represents the Bishop of Peterbo-
 “ rough; Mars, my Lord of Gloucester; and the
 “ heavy, dull, phlegmatic Bishop of ——— is
 “ represented by the earth.

“ The comet of 1680 (let the Cambridge men
 “ beware of it) is the university of Oxford; a few
 “ years ago in its aphelion, but now, with rapidity,
 “ descending to the sun.

“ The words ‘undique trahuntur,’ i. e. ‘are
 “ drawn from all parts,’ imply, that atheists and
 “ infidels, arminians, jacobites, and papists, are
 “ lured by Dr. Tucker’s ‘offices and honourable
 “ distinctions,’ to enter into the Church.

“ The word ‘impelluntur,’ i. e. ‘are driven,’
 “ imports, that men are driven to subscribe the
 “ thirty-nine articles by their parents or guardians,
 “ by their expectations of preferment, by their
 “ apprehensions of starving, &c. sometimes, forely
 “ against their will, and, nine times in ten, in direct
 “ opposition to the repulsive power of their con-
 “ science.

“ And

“ And laſtly, the word ‘ utcunq̄ue tendunt,’
 “ i. e. ‘ any way tend,’ ſignify, that it is confi-
 “ dered as a matter of very little conſequence, in
 “ this univerſal gravitation towards Dr. Tucker’s
 “ offices and honourable diſtinctions,’ what mea-
 “ ſures a man takes to get his preferment, pro-
 “ vided he ſucceeds at laſt.

“ I think I have now diſcovered the ‘ center of
 “ union,’ which, according to Dr. Tucker, the
 “ ſubſcribing members of the Church of England
 “ approve of in the main.

“ ACADEMICUS.”

Vide Jebb’s Works, vol. iii. p. 104, 108.

(F) The complacency with which our author alleges this argument of our modern champion, reminds one of a requeſt made by that zealous Clergyman *Shenkyn ap Rees* to Dr. Waterland, at honeſt Whiſton’s trial.

See Cordial for Low Spirits, vol. iii.

(G) For a proof of this, I would refer my readers to Lardner’s Letter on the Logos; his four ſermons;—to Dr. Priſtley’s familiar Illuſtration of ſeveral paſſages of Scripture;—and to Mr. Lindſey’s anſwer to Robinſon. But a work I would recommend as moſt full and deciſive on this ſubject, is
 “ The Scripture account of the Attributes and
 “ Worſhip of God, and of the character and office
 “ of Jeſus Chriſt, by Hopton Haynes, eſq;” lately republiſhed.

N. B. All

N. B. All these may be had of J. Johnson, No. 72, St. Paul's Church-yard.

H) From this censure even the admired Plato is not to be exempted. The bewitching charms of his style will ever attract the attention of scholars and men of taste, to his works, as models of elegant composition. But to consult him on any point that requires solid reasoning, would argue the want of a sound mind; for in his disquisitions, instead of being guided by a cool and wary judgment, he commits himself to the government of an imagination that knew no restraint. If to trace effects to their true causes denominate the Philosopher, he had no pretensions to the name; but he was, it cannot be disputed, the most pleasant and skilful contriver of marvellous and sublime fiction that ever lived.

(I) It is much to be lamented, that the spirit which our Clergyman discovered in his Letter has not rendered the following animated language of the venerable Dr. Jebb, less proper for him to read.

“ Go now, presumptuous Priest, go, preach the
 “ doctrine of the Articles; a doctrine, in almost
 “ every instance, opposite to the doctrine thou hast
 “ read.” [viz. that of the Gospel.] “ The daring
 “ spirit of infidelity shall accompany thy progress;
 “ mitred corruption shall sit enthroned beside thee;
 “ and every vice, which deforms our nature, shall
 “ be found in thy retinue. Yet go on fearless in
 “ thy

“ thy course. Inflated with pride, misled by pas-
 “ sion, with hypocrisy for thy guide, in imitation
 “ of the worst of popish saints; in opposition to
 “ the voice of reason and the gospel, and in defiance
 “ of thy own convictions, denounce damnation,
 “ and fulminate the everlasting terrors of avenging
 “ heaven, against all who shall dare to differ from
 “ the established creed. Be the god of conscience;
 “ penetrate the heart; be the advocate of intole-
 “ rance, the adversary of every scheme of reforma-
 “ tion. Be the patron of each vice, the scourge of
 “ virtue, the enemy of thy country, the enemy of
 “ man. The wise man shall despise thee, the
 “ friend of human nature shall detest thee, but
 “ administration shall promote thee to great ho-
 “ nour, and the episcopal bench shall hail, with
 “ songs of gratulation, thy success.”

Vide Jebb's Works, vol. iii. p. 210.





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