

THE MARYLAND REPUBLICAN.

"FREEDOM IS THE BRILLIANT GIFT OF HEAVEN—ITS REASON'S SELF—THE KIN OF DEITY."

Vol. I.]

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CONDITIONS OF THE MARYLAND REPUBLICAN.

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All communications (post-paid) from literary gentlemen, will be thankfully received; and, if admissible, shall receive immediate attention.

From the American.

FELLOW CITIZENS.

A sense of duty to you, and feelings of self preservation, have induced me to address you on the subject of that execrable attempt to give new powers and constitution to the convention of the Protestant Episcopal Church. A more audacious plan, a more injurious design, never was displayed in America. I am of an age to desire rest; of a temper to seek quiet. But there are some unprincipled men who will never suffer others to be at rest. They are forever contriving to deceive and impose on their fellows, who must watch and combat, or be despoiled of their rights.

I have fought once to secure the common freedom, and after seeing the violent invaders obliged, by arms, to abandon their unjust attempts. I cannot bear to be cheated out of them by a set of hypocritical knaves, under pretence of "promoting virtue and religion." After driving the soldiery of England out of the country, to see it possessed by their priests, and to be given up to land by the federalists as they are ready to give it up by sea. When I read the Church Bill, I saw the hands of the clergy stretched out over the length and breadth of the land, seizing, in every corner and quarter, the alleged property of the Episcopal Church. I saw the deeds and wills of our forefathers rising from the dust in every county, and brought to judgment by the committee of the Episcopal Convention. The lines run athwart the country, and inquisition made for every secret fault. Claims set up to lauds and improvements were the unconscious possessors now repose in safety. Better a thousand times to suffer the old proprietaries of Maryland to come in again and compound again with them, than have to deal with the embodied clergy that never die.

Such a body never existed but in Italy, where the church swallowed up the state entire. It exists not in England. The tremendous power would affright them there. There are no bounds to it but the bounds of the state.

That you may know what sort of men you have to deal with, let me carry you back a few years and mark their several attempts, when you will see with what a steady purpose, without ever losing sight of their object, these reverend friends of God and man have proceeded.

In 1784, if my memory fails not, a bill was prepared at the suggestion of Dr. Smith, an Episcopal clergyman, famous for what he was and what he was not, who had sought refuge here from Pennsylvania, and patronised by Mr. Chase, for laying a tax upon all persons for support of the clergy.

Every one might direct his tax to the parson he chose, but payment must be made, and one or other of the clergy would get it; and some that nobody would give to otherwise, had their chance. A little provision, however, was made in this bill, pretending to promote virtue and religion in every sect, for a favorite church, by enacting that were there was not a sufficient number of persons of any sect to maintain a clergyman, their tax should be paid to the minister of the Protestant Episcopal church.

This infamous bill was disappointed by the religious people, who chose delegates to the assembly that voted it out of the state.

They got the convention of the Protestant Episcopal Church incorporated (the first time.)

They got the assembly to pass an act for the establishment of vestries in every parish in this state. (Though there was neither church or sect in many places.)

The assembly legislated for them; forced their members to secede, and made all their bye-laws.

In the spirit of this legal establishment, when Parson Bend and Ralph quarrelled, one for a place and the other for his sovereignty, the attorney general of the State, then L. Martin, who took up the cudgels for the former, declared, that the state of Maryland was by law laid off in parishes by metes and bounds for the benefit of the Church of England or Protestant Episcopal Church, who of right had jurisdiction therein.

Accordingly when the vestry of St. Paul's, over-ruling Christ Church in Baltimore, refused to elect a clergyman that was the choice of the people, and put in another to the utter disregard of the people, the latter found they could not help themselves their own clergy had cunningly got the laws framed for their purpose, so that when they would have moved in their own way, they found themselves so fastened that they could not move hand or foot. If they built a church for the minister of their choice, the old vestry would come and seize it as soon as it was finished. In this situation there was no remedy but an application to the legislature for a power which every other sect possessed, to build and own a church, to choose and keep a clergyman, independent of the vestry of the Parish. If it had been a federal assembly they would never have got leave. They are always willing to tie up, but never to loosen the bonds of the people. A republican majority however upset what the federalists in 1798 had done. It was difficult to unite, but they cut the knot. They passed a bill for a general incorporation, by which every church, without coming to the assembly may have the benefit of incorporation; a measure desired for years, but always opposed. They empowered a number of persons, able to maintain a clergyman, to choose one—to build a church—and to possess it, let the vestry say to the contrary notwithstanding. They set the people of the Protestant Episcopal Church so far free; and so far contributed to the growth of religion, which is best promoted by giving men the power to obtain the preacher they find most persuading and convincing to themselves. But it gave great umbrage to the clergy, who preferred their own overruling power for the "promotion of virtue and religion."

They had gone a step further in the convention that met at Easton on the Eastern Shore, I think in 1798 or 1799. A motion was made to address the legislature to declare by law no marriage ceremony valid unless performed by the ministers of the Protestant Episcopal Church. Parson Bend can tell who made this motion; and General Sprigg of Washington county, and Mr. James Brown of Queen Anne, who were members of that convention, can, as I am informed, tell also. I beg the excuse of these gentlemen for mentioning them. But it was in consequence of a conversation reported to me in Annapolis, were these two gentlemen were present. The question respecting this motion was asked. General Sprigg with his usual frankness, said it was so, and Mr. Brown when appealed to, was silent. It would be instructing to see the minutes of that convention, which have since been carefully put out of sight."

In short, Fellow Citizens if you do not cut up by the roots all church establishments, you will find them silently spreading till they fill the whole soil of Maryland, and defy your power. For as they grow, your liberty will be rooted up. They are as contrary to the honour of God as the good of Man. For these two ever go together. The christian religion needs nothing of human laws, but to be let alone by them. It grew, not only without laws, but against the most violent laws. It increased against all passions, prejudices and powers of barbarous corruption, despotic laws, and acute though misinformed philosophers. If these men have not talents, piety and zeal sufficient to maintain it now, when almost every thing is in its favor; it is plain their work has been all wrong; that the salt has lost its savour, and is good for nothing but to be cast upon the dunghill. It is plain that nothing contributes more to producing able, faithful diligent advocates for religion and virtue, than leaving them to the free support of the people; who will speedily distinguish the deserving from the unworthy; as the fan in God's hand to separate the chaff from the wheat. PAUL.

FROM THE WILMINGTON WATCHMAN.

Observations on the Maryland Church Bill and Quaker's Petition.

NO. II.

In casting my eyes over the first essay of the Layman in the Mary-

land Gazette, I observed the same disposition in this writer to befame the character of our late worthy President, that has ever distinguished the writers in those papers which are devoted to the interests of church and state. "I know" (says he) "that many disliked Mr. Jefferson, because he was a deist!" Where no proof can be given of the truth of an assertion, the assertion alone is often successfully substituted, as has been remarkably the case with respect to Jefferson. The following extracts from the "Herald of Gospel Liberty," a paper recently established at Portsmouth in New Hampshire, will bear ample testimony of the piety of Jefferson, and powerfully evince that his infidelity has been much less dreaded than his inflexible opposition to church government.

"As there has been much said respecting Mr. Jefferson's ideas of religion, we think it expedient to copy from the Independent Chronicle of May 28, 1804, the following extracts of letters to, and from him—that those who read may see that he is not the infidel he has been represented to be by those who wish to establish an union of church and state contrary to the liberty proclaimed in the gospel."

"The sentiments contained in the following extract of a letter from Mr. Jefferson, evince his independence as a man, his integrity as a politician, and his purity as a Christian."

Extract of a letter from a gentleman belonging to the Presbyterian church in Philadelphia, to his friend in New-York.

"Some time ago I forwarded to Mr. Jefferson, a copy of the extracts of our General Assembly, to let him see the fallacy of the fears of many good people upon his accession to the presidency; that he might see that under his administration, the gospel runs and is glorified. I subjoin an extract from his answer to me. This answer is dated from Monticello, August 12, 1803. After friendly communication, he says, 'I thank you for the pamphlet. The obloquies of monarchists and ecclesiastics, with which I have been loaded on the subject of religion, I have ever considered as the most honorable testimony I can expect from them. They evinced their apprehension, that I would be an obstacle to the alliance between church and state, which some of them avowedly sought, and more of them secretly. Pure religion, unpolluted by political embraces, or political passions, will thrive most when most free; and if it has experienced any benefit from the present order of things, it has proceeded from that encouragement which arises from a consciousness that it is free,' &c. &c."

"The following extract of a letter from the President of the United States, is affixed as a recommendation to proposals of William Pryce and William Black, of Wilmington, for publishing by subscription: 'The history of our blessed Lord and Saviour JESUS CHRIST, with the lives of the holy Apostles.' It would seem that these publishers, both of whom were federalists, the first a pious Episcopal clergyman, the latter printer of a federal paper, did not believe the story of Mr. Jefferson's infidelity."

Extract of a letter from the President of the United States.

Washington, October 15, 1803.

SIR,
"Your favor of the 10th is duly received, and I subscribe with pleasure to the work you propose. It comprehends exactly the most interesting period of christian history, and it will be the more interesting if, as I presume it does, the plan embraces the object of giving the primitive and earliest opinions entertained: being persuaded that nothing would place christianity on so firm a base as the reducing it simply to its FIRST and ORIGINAL PRINCIPLES."

I am, &c.
TH: JEFFERSON.
The Rev. William Pryce.

Is this stale and malignant charge of deism dictated in the spirit of justice, charity and love? Those amiable qualities which the Layman so much boasts of (for want of possessing them) throughout the whole of his unjust, uncharitable and unworthy performance.

Blush for shame! ye infidels in disguise, of whatever denomination; who would clog the wheels of religion with human institutions; making a gain of godliness; teaching for doctrines the commandments of men; saying and doing not; binding heavy burdens and grievous to be borne; laying them upon men's shoulders, without so much as touching them yourselves with one of your fingers; craving to be greeted in the market place, and to be called of men Rabbi, Rabbi, instead of preaching freely to the poor without coveting man's, from them, according to the command of Christ.

Hang down your heads and be confounded ye revilers of Jefferson, who style him an infidel because he is a friend to pure religion in its primitive simplicity, unpolluted with political embraces!

And finally; O blush! thou pretended Quaker, the Editor of the Baltimore Federal Gazette, who hast branded thy peaceable neighbours—thy fellow professors, who are opposed to church and state government, and who are denied by the friends of the Church-bill liberty of conscience, with the opprobrious epithets of lying party-men, jacobins and atheists! When the light that is in a man becomes darkness, how great is that darkness! Amen! Yea, so be it.

CHRYSOSTOM.

† See the Gazette of the 29 August.

Few persons in this section of the Union have any idea of the extent to which the functions of the pulpit are abused by many of the federal priests of New-England. The station itself ought to command respect; but when we find men clothed with this cloak, whose conduct and language are in direct violation of all the duties which that station requires of them, we are bound the more to detect and condemn their sacrilegious hypocrisy.—We are astonished to hear of the deliberate mockery of religion and order, and the barefaced prostitution of the most sacred ordinances, by men in such stations. But it requires the blessings of a long reign of an established church, and established ministry to reconcile people to these things.—The pulpit, which is designed to be the oracle of God's holy word to man—and fast-days which are appointed to give a solemn opportunity for a communion with, and humiliation before the Deity, are employed for inflammatory political harangues, of which we give our readers the following sample.

EXTRACTS FROM

PARSON SPRING'S FAST SERMON.
Delivered at Newbury-Port, (Mass.)

"The French Legions have not yet crossed the ocean; though I believe the late President expected to realize their assistance before the expiration of his eight years residence in the capital. We have one of their Generals with us; but no prefect, as yet, in official form."

"Added to the public expense, which has been necessary to prevent the pressing distress of thousands and thousands of the reduced inhabitants; who among us can estimate the real loss which we sustain, by the numerous legal meetings and conventions of the people, which have proved absolutely requisite to put a check at least to the daring strides of administration in coincidence with the dominant views of France? For, though our federal representatives on the floor of Congress have done all that men could do by argument and address, WE KNOW, that if the people were not active and resolute, with great loss of time and interest, THAT WE SHOULD NOW BE AWEED, BROKEN DOWN AND CRUSHED by those troops of ADMINISTRATION which were designed to enforce the embargo acts to the extent. It was the seasonable exertion of the people, which prevented the raising and organization of those armies, which were intended to STILL us by the sword and the LOSS OF BLOOD. Blessed be God, we do not see them and were they now organized they could not be quartered in New-England. We have no room for their tents. The land will not hold them. I review the debility of

administration to execute that enslaving merciless purpose by the dread of arms, with thanks to God for raising the spirit of the people, by the necessary though expensive measures which were accepted by the people. If we had slept much longer, France, and administration would now smile and triumph over us in a haughty stile. For we must believe that they intended to take away our strength by depriving us of our interest and depressing our spirits. But they are sadly disappointed for the present; because there is not, in consequence of the spirit of the people, who begin to open their eyes, sufficient national influence to execute these numerous, unfeeling, arbitrary acts. These petty armed vessels must go into the dignified retirement of the dry dock; for they never were calculated for national defence, and we fear were originally designed to EMBARRASS OUR COMMERCE, and compel our submission, among other measures, to the will of France!"

"We have a militia of great strength, but if this President, though I will yet hope better things, embrace the motives of his predecessor in the appointment of officers, the patriotic soldiers of New-England and the other states, will not follow them, and cannot be compelled."

"Britain pities us, because she is too elevated and condescending to blame us. For she knows, while we deprive ourselves of rich commerce, to gratify Napoleon, by rejecting her offers, that a few battle ships might easily batter down and demolish our seaports, and oblige us to fly to the mountains and back woods for safety. But she will not do it. It is not for her interest; nor is it for our interest to provoke her much more, unless it be best to destroy ourselves by becoming tributary to France, like the nations of Europe, who must drag out their days in slavery and sorrow and oppression.—How lamentable, how pitiful and disgraceful our national prostration! If the departed spirit of Washington be permitted to visit us, he laments the hard calamity of federalists, and returns, hoping, that in the revolving state of sublunary things, we shall see better times."

"Public measures, in the course of eight years, have deprived us of a vast portion of our interest, probably if good judges, who have impartially attended to the subject, are correct, to the amount of two hundred millions of dollars! We have also lost many able seamen, who, to prevent begging and starving, have shipped themselves on board foreign vessels and left the country.—This is a heavy loss, whether they were naturalized, or Americans by birth. I am sensible that this instance of our adversity, like all others occasioned by the embargo, affects the hearts of mad democrats like the adversity of the Spanish patriots.—For the embargo was DESIGNED to prove a DISTRESSING, rather than a saving salutary measure.—Those who put it on, meant to keep it on, AND WITHOUT PITY IN THEIR HEARTS, OR A TEAR IN THEIR EYES, DID ALL THEY COULD to make the YOKE MORE AND MORE HEAVY AND GRIEVOUS by additional weights, till they were absolutely forced to desist; and even then, devised a different mode of operation to effect their original purpose, as we have much reason to fear. For the WISDOM of the BRITISH CABINET does not invest every master of a ship with power to impress our seamen. Some commanders are rash men who will offend. The temptation put in the way of indiscreet captains to kindle the flame of war between us and England, is greater than many people apprehend, if not too subtle to be administered by our administration.—To avoid it, I hope our active men will not venture very far in the dark."

"Think of it a moment; what would be the state of the church, if the nation were now actually under the direction of that butchering Emperor, who is ready to soak the earth with the blood of half the human race, rather than not subdue and rule the rest? Do you believe it, my hearers, that our administration have pledged their love, their confidence and exertions to such a bloody mon-