

your bidding, to surrender the common privilege of human nature, the right of private judgment in matters of religion—because he will not put out his conscience to keeping to *you*—because, in a word, he declines recognizing you in your self-constituted character, as director-general of the faith and practice, in every punctilio, of your fellow Christians, he must be “dragged”—as others, alike eminent in rank and religious character, have as unceremoniously been—“before the public, in the columns of a respectable newspaper, for the purpose of censure.”\*

It is high time, Sir, that this system of intimidation, so little complimentary to the principles and understandings of those whom it is intended to awe and control, were checked. It is of the very essence of spiritual despotism. History amply attests that it has been the most effective pioneer and inseparable attendant of the prostration of the civil liberty of professedly christian nations. The highest ecclesiastical authority ought, in our humble judgment, forthwith to interpose, even as a matter of policy, to rescue the provincial branch of the Anglican Church from the stigma and humiliation of having such despicable arts employed to augment her influence. To every discerning mind they indicate *conscious* moral weakness. Christianity repudiates them as unholy, and true wisdom rejects them as impotent and unworthy. They may in some instances coerce an abject submission, and procure in others, a negligent or hypocritical acquiescence; but they can never operate enlightened conviction, and for one whom they attract they will repel a hundred.

Your reasons for practically asserting, in your capacity as the conductor of a religi-

ous journal, a claim of supremacy over the consciences of Churchmen, and for rendering all Dissenters, by the unscrupulous employment of calumny and caricature, as odious as possible, are I doubt not, quite satisfactory to your own mind. But until the exploded maxim, that, *the end sanctifies the means*, is restored to favour and authority, they will never form a satisfactory vindication of such conduct to others. It is in vain to allege that you are impelled by zeal for the unity of the Church,—by a pious solicitude to protect “the seamless garment of the Redeemer” from the violation of unholy hands; you ought to remember that there is a species of zeal, which, while its *sincerity* is above all suspicion, scorches the brain, and causes its subject to mistake the visions of his own fancy for the verities of Inspiration. With the decided preference which you avow for your own denomination I have no fault to find; but the manifestation of that candor and indulgence to others, which you have a right to expect them to exercise towards you, would, permit me to say, be much more ornamental to your character, as a professed disciple of our common Lord, than the spirit of haughty intolerance which your writings breathe. Sympathizing just as little as yourself, with that religious *indifference*, to which I am prepared to admit many of the current professions of courtesy and liberality are to be transferred, I nevertheless cannot divest myself of the impression that your spirit is too much akin to that which, on a certain occasion, prompted the disciples to say, “Master, we saw one casting out devils in thy name, and he followed not with us; and we forbade him because he followeth not with us.” You know the reply. On this monitory incident a sensible commentator has well remarked: “There are men calling themselves Christians, who seem to look with doubt and suspicion on all that is done by

\* See the Hon. Chief Justice Robinson's Letter to the Church, republished in “the Wesleyan” of April 20, 1842, from “the Church.”