

93 Connecticut Gazette, 4 April 1788

To the PRINTER Of the CONNECTICUT GAZETTE,

SIR,

On a subject so interesting and diffuse, as that of the new proposed plan of national government, it is no wonder, considering the imbecility of human nature, that men of talents, and uprightness, should differ in sentiment; but how the term Antifederal came to be applied indiscriminately to all who have thought that system wanted amendment, I am at a loss to account for, but on such principles of depravity, as really needs a new name, unless we apply an old epithet, which might possibly alarm and affright some of your delicate readers. It is very certain, that five years ago, the man who should have attempted a demolition of the old system (if that may be called old, that has existed but twelve years) would have justly deserved the epithets of insurgent, tory, &c. which are now so liberally dealt out by a set of men whose frantic zeal, and views of interest, has led them to make a licentious use of that strongest barrier of civil liberty, the liberty of the press. I am sensible however, that public authority ought not to abridge that liberty, though an ill use is sometimes made of it, any more than to

deny the benefit of air to a great part of mankind, least they blow up a fire to burn a house, or a city. But I believe every man who has an acquaintance with letters, and with the affairs of mankind, is sensible that the liberty of the press may be in a sense restrained without any act of the ruling powers. A spirit of censorism has been prevalent almost ever since the new constitution made its appearance, against those who had any scruples about it; but I had thought it was in a measure subsided, until I observed a paragraph in a late publication in this state, in the words following, viz. "The character of Antifederal, seems to be synonymous in almost every point of view, with that of Tory, Insurgent, and the like; enemies to good government." The editor of this paper has not informed us, whether any of his correspondents have furnished him with this observation, or whether it is the production of his own mind: be that as it may, I only wish through your paper, which I hope is free, to call on the candid public to consider, whether such observations as the foregoing, indiscriminately thrown out, do proceed from the overflowings of a good heart, or have the remotest tendency to do any good whatever. Whether such reflections are, or are not invidious, ungentleman-like, and repugnant to truth itself, the impartial public will one day decide; from whose judgment there will

be no appeal.

I am, Sir, a well wisher to the constitution, a friend  
to government, and your customer.