

The Landholder to William Williams, *American Mercury*, 28 January 1788

Whenever one man makes a charge against another, reason and justice require that he should be able to support the charge. In some late publications, I have offered my sentiments on the new Constitution, have adduced some arguments in favor of it, and answered objections against it. I did not wish to enter into a controversy with any man. But I am unwilling to have accusations publicly thrown out against me without an opportunity to answer them. In the late Convention, when a *religious test* was the subject of debate, you took the liberty of saying, *that the Landholder* (in treating of the same subject) *had missed the point; that he had raised up a man of straw and kicked it over again*. Now, sir, I wish this matter may be fairly cleared up. I wish to know, what is the real point? Who and what the *real* man is? Or in other words, what a religious test is? I certainly have a right to expect that you will answer these questions and let me know wherein I am in the wrong. Perhaps you may show that my ideas on the subject are erroneous. In order to do this, it would not be amiss to offer a few reasons and arguments. You doubtless had such as were convincing, at least to yourself, though you happened to omit them at the time of the debate. If you will show that I am in the wrong, I will candidly acknowledge my mistake. If on the contrary, you should be unable to prove your assertions, the public will judge whether *you or I have missed the point* and which of us has *committed the crime of making a man of straw*.

Not doubting but you will have the candor to come to an explanation on this subject, I am, sir, your humble servant.

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