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### **Remarks On The Life and Writings Of Dr. Jonathan Swift, Dean of St. Patrick's, Dublin**

**Orrery, John Boyle of**

**London, 1752**

The Argument against abolishing Christianity.

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AND WRITINGS OF DR. SWIFT. 61

who could prevail upon himself to ridicule so good a man as Mr. BOYLE? The sword of wit, like the scythe of time, cuts down friend and foe, and attacks every object that accidentally lies in its way. But, sharp and irresistible as the edge of it may be, Mr. BOYLE will always remain invulnerable.

*The sentiments of a church-of-England-man, with respect to religion and government*, was written in the year 1708. It is adapted to that particular period. The style of the whole pamphlet is nervous, and, except in some few places, impartial. The state of *Holland* is so justly, and, at the same time, so concisely delineated, that I cannot help transcribing it. Speaking of the *Dutch*, the author says, “*They are a commonwealth founded on a sudden, by a desperate attempt on a desperate condition, not formed or digested into a regular system by mature thought and reason, but huddled up under the pressure of sudden exigencies; calculated for no long duration, and hitherto subsisting by accident in the midst of contending powers, who cannot yet agree about sharing it amongst them.*” This tract is very well worth your reading and attention: and it confirms an observation which will perpetually occur, that SWIFT excels in whatever style or manner he assumes. When he is in earnest, his strength of reason carries with it conviction. When in jest, every competitor in the race of wit is left behind him.

*The argument against abolishing Christianity* is carried on with the highest wit and humour. Graver divines threaten the irreaders with future punishments: SWIFT artfully

artfully exhibits a picture of present shame. He judged rightly in imagining that a small treatise, written with a spirit of mirth and freedom, must be more efficacious, than long sermons, or laborious lessons of morality. He endeavours to laugh us into religion; well knowing, that we are often laughed out of it. As you have not read the pamphlet, excuse a quotation, to which may be prefixed the old proverb *ex pede Herculem*. “ I would  
 “ *fain know* (says the Dean) *how it can be pretended;*  
 “ *that the churches are misapplied. Where are more ap-*  
 “ *pointments and rendezvouses of gallantry? Where more*  
 “ *care to appear in the foremost box with greater advantage*  
 “ *of dress? Where more meetings for business? Where*  
 “ *more bargains driven of all sorts? And where so many*  
 “ *conveniencies or incitements to sleep?*

The papers which immediately follow are entirely humorous, and relate to PARTRIDGE the almanac maker: and although they are not only temporary, but local, yet by an art peculiar to SWIFT himself, they are rendered immortal, so as to be read with pleasure, as long as the English language subsists.

To these succeeds *A project for the advancement of religion, and the reformation of manners*, written in the year 1709, and dedicated to the Countess of BERKLEY. The author appears in earnest throughout the whole treatise, and the dedication, or introduction, is in a strain of serious panegyric, which the Lady, to whom it is addressed, undoubtedly deserved. But as the pamphlet is of the satirical kind, I am apt to imagine, that my friend the Dean put a violence upon himself, in  
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