

# REMARKS

Upon a Pamphlet, Entitled, **VI**  
*A LETTER to a Friend in the  
Country, containing the Sub-  
stance of a SERMON  
preached at Philadelphia,  
in the Congregation of the  
Rev. Mr. Hemphill.*

## WHEREIN

The Terms of both Christian and Mi-  
nisterial Communion are so stated, that  
all Impositions in religious Concerns  
are exploded, a proper Enclosure pro-  
posed for the Security of each religious  
Society; and the *Commissions* of the  
*Synod* justified in their Conduct to-  
ward Mr. Hemphill.

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Rom xiv. 22. *Hast thou Faith? Have it to thy self before God.*  
Gal. ii. 5 *To whom we gave Place by Subjection, no, not for an  
Hour, that the Truth of the Gospel might continue with you.*

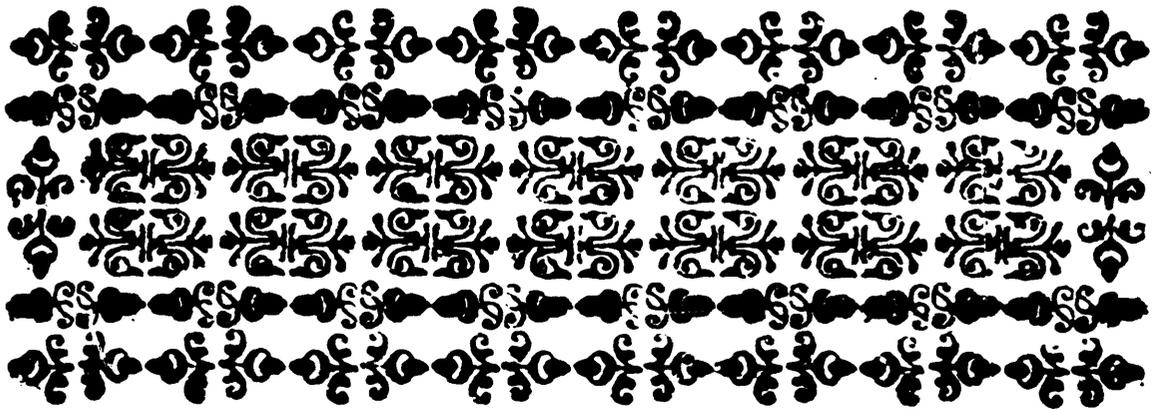
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In necessariis Unitas, in non-necessariis Libertas, in  
utrisque Charitas.

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*From Philadelphia*



# REMARKS

Upon a Pamphlet, Entitled,

*A LETTER to a Friend in the Country, containing the Substance of a SERMON, preached at Philadelphia, in the Congregation of the Rev. Mr. Hemphill.*

**I**T is a sad and affecting Prospect, to consider the Distractions and Confusions, Heresies and Schisms, that the Church of Christ has laboured under for above fourteen hundred Years past, by the Impositions of *Cree ds*; and a Desire of Dominion over Men's Consciences, from the specious Pretence of *contending earnestly for the Faith*, and of preserving the Purity of our holy Religion. Under this Embrage, almost every Sect and Party have in their Turns, when they have had the Power in their Hands, used coercive Methods, to bring others to the same Profession

feſſion with themſelves; or as it has been commonly phraſed, to the Profeſſion of the *orthodox Faith*; till by devouring and being devoured one of another, the inhuman Violences and Barbarities that have ſucceſſively obtained, had almoſt effaced out of the Minds of Men, all Remainers of that brotherly Love, Peace, Charity and Beneficence, that are the peculiar Characteriſticks of a Diſciple of the *Prince of Peace*.

But bleſſed be God, we are now in an Age of *Liberty*; an Age, wherein the Cauſe of *Liberty* has been moſt excellently defended, by many learned and ingenious Perſons, againſt all the Claims of *Tyranny* and *Perſecution*; that it's hopeful the World will begin to conſider themſelves as rational Creatures and free Agents, and not ſo tamely put their Necks under the Yoke for the future.

But as one Extream commonly begets another, there now appears greateſt Danger, that *Liberty* will be abated to *Licentiousneſs*, and that to eſcape *Impoſition*, we ſhall open a Door to *Infidelity*, and inſtead of *Charity* and mutual *Forbearance*, we ſhall make *Shipwreck of the Faith* as well as Peace of our Churches, by the mixt Communions of thoſe moſt oppoſite to one another, in the eſſential and fundamental Articles of their Faith.

And we cannot but ſuppoſe, that the Pamphlet now under Conſideration, has a direct Tendency to this ſad Event, notwithstanding the many valuable Truths, ſo fairly ſtated, and rationally eſtabliſhed by it.

But leſt we may lay open to Miſapprehenſions, and be ſuſpected for Patrons of either of the fore-mentioned Extreams, it may not be improper, to  
give

give the Reader a general View of our Sentiments of the Cauſe under Conſideration, before we proceed to particular *Animadverſions* upon that Diſcourſe.

In Order to this, we muſt premiſe, as an immutable Foundation of all juſt Concluſions in the preſent Caſe, that no Methods of *Force* or *Violence*, no temporal Injuries of any Kind, no Prejudices to the Eſtates, Honours, or Comforts of any Man or Society of Men, are ever lawful, upon the Account of any Difference in mere matters of Speculation, or any different Sentiments in Articles of Faith, or Principles of Religion. Theſe fall under the immediate Cognizance of every Man's Conſcience, which has no Maſter upon Earth, and is accountable to none but the ſupream Lord of Conſcience. As no methods of Force or temporal Injury, can have any Tendency to convince the erroneous, or to alter their inward Perſuaſion whatever it be; ſo it can be no proper Method of promoting the *Kingdom of Chriſt*, which is *not of this World*, and which wants none of the Laws or Sanctions of the Kingdoms of this World, to advance or eſtabliſh it. The Fountain of *Peace* and *Love*, can never be ſuppoſed to be the Author or Encourager, of *Cruelty* and *Barbarity*, or to eſtabliſh his Interests in the World, upon the Ruins of all Humanity, Kindneſs and Compaſſion. This were not only to violate the Laws of Nature, and to ſubvert the great Deſign of the Goſpel, which is to bring us into an Eſtate of *Peace* with God and with one another; but alſo to place us upon *God's Throne*, and to give us Dominion over the *Servants* of another *Maſter*.

As a Conſequence of this, it muſt alſo be obſerved, that

that every Person, and every religious Society, have the same Title to suppose themselves in the Right, and to stedfastly adhere to their own Sentiments whatever they be. For tho' there certainly is from the Nature of Things, an infinite Difference between *Truth* and *Error*, and infinite Danger of damnable Delusions; which should prompt us to the most serious and solemn Search after the Mind and Will of God in his Word: Yet it is impossible for any Man to have greater Evidence of any Doctrinal Truth, than the full and firm *Persuasion* of his own Mind. And every one that has attained this *Persuasion*, how different soever from other Men, or how distant soever from the Truth, has all the Assurance that he can have, or that any Body else can have, of being in the Right; and is therefore utterly uncapable, without new Conviction, of thinking otherwise than he does. From whence follows the necessary Liberty of *private Judgment*, to all Men, and to all religious Societies in the World; since the Faith of one Man can no ways affect the Safety of Another; but every one must Believe and Answer for himself. And since no Man can have any Assurance of being in the right, but what must be also allowed to those of a contrary Persuasion, by all that disclaim Infallibility.

This also leads us to observe, the Necessity of mutual Forbearance, Kindness and Charity towards one another, notwithstanding our different Speculations in doctrinal Points. For I have no more Cause to be displeas'd with another, for his different Opinions, than he has to be displeas'd with me. 'Tis as much out of his Power, as out of mine to help

help thinking as he does, unless he has been criminally negligent, in seeking after Truth.

This introduces the *thorny Question*, how far Christian Communion in all sacred Ordinances should be extended? To which we Answer, It should extend to all, that we can charitably suppose to be real Christians. Whatever Errors any one embraces, that are in our Opinion consistent with *vital Christianity*, should be no Barr to his enjoying Communion with us in all Ordinances. That is, all that are united in what they suppose the *Essentials* of Christianity, should unite in partaking of all the Privileges of it, and *not fall out by the Way for they are Brethren*. To refuse these the Privileges of Christians, that we can charitably think belong to Christ, is to *beat our fellow Servants*, and to reject the only Claim, that any Men in the World have, or can have, to these Enjoyments. For it is only on Account of our being *Disciples of Christ*, and our Interest in him, his Covenant and his Salvation, that we partake of the Seals of the Covenant; which must therefore belong to every one, that has visibly the same Interest with ourselves, all his Mistakes notwithstanding; unless he throws a Barr in his own way by his scandalous Conduct. — But then on the other Hand, we can't admit those to Communion in sealing Ordinances, whose Errors we suppose inconsistent with the Grace and Favour of God. This were to seal the Covenant to those that have no Interest in it, to have Communion with Christ's Enemies, to erect a Fellowship between *God* and *Belial*, and to pave the Way to an utter Extirpation of Christ's Interests among us. It is true, that we are  
not

not infallible in our Judgment, Christ may own them at last, whom we now disown. But yet we have nothing but our own *Persuasion*, to guide us in this *Affair*. If the best *Light* we have, represents them incapable of a *State of Grace*, we must act according to it.

And as to *ministerial Communion*, we should admit all to the Exercise of the Ministry among us, that we suppose qualified for the Work, according to the *Instructions* Christ has given us in the *Gospel*, and capable of doing Service in the Church of Christ, in that important Character, how different soever in Opinion from us. To refuse these, were to reject such as Christ has sent, and to deprive his People of the Advantages he has provided for 'em; as well as to tyrannize over our Brethren, by rejecting their Labours in Christ's Vineyard. To admit others, were deliberately to send *Poyson* into Christ's Household, instead of the *Portion of Meat* which he has provided; and to prejudice, instead of advancing the Interest of their precious Souls. And as every Society must judge for themselves in this Matter; so ought they to take the best Means to be acquainted with their Principles, who offer themselves to the Exercise of that sacred Trust, and with what Apprehensions these entertain, what they believe to be the essential Doctrines of the *Gospel*.

These Things being premised, we proceed to the Consideration of our Author's Reasonings, and to obviate the plausible Objections, which he has thrown in our Way.

There needs no special Remarks upon the  
*Prefacer's*

*Prefacer's* Invectives, against "the Impositions of  
 " *Priests*, whether *Popish*, *Presbyterian*, or *Epis-*  
 " *copal*, &c. Ignorance and Error, Bigotry, Enthu-  
 " *siasm* and Superstition." Let him sound the A-  
*larm* among his Lay Brethren, and awaken their  
 most active Concern for the glorious Cause of *Christian*  
*Liberty*, and we will join with him, in earnestly  
 admonishing them to stand fast in the *Liberty*,  
 wherewith Christ has made them free. Only let  
 them not use their *Liberty*, for an Occasion to the  
*Flesh*; nor for a Cloak of *Maliciousness*.

But our Business is with the Substance of a Ser-  
*mon*, preached in the Congregation of the Rev. Mr.  
 Hemphill; and no doubt preached and published,  
 with a Design to vindicate that Gentleman, and to  
 justify his Claim, to preach what erroneous Doctrines  
 he pleases among the People of our Profession, and  
 to be notwithstanding indulged *Ministerial Commu-*  
*nion* with our *Synod*, when undermining the Foun-  
 dations of our Faith and Hope.

The Question the Author undertakes to consider,  
 is, whether a Man that professeth to believe the  
 holy Scriptures, and the Christian Scheme of Reli-  
 gion as contained in them, ought not to be admitted  
 to *Christian and Ministerial Communion*, if no Rea-  
 son can be alledged against him in other Respects,  
 why he should not?

This he holds in the Affirmative, and seems to  
 suppose it so self-evident; as to need no Arguments  
 to confirm it. All he pretends to, is "to consider  
 " the principal Arguments, offered by those who  
 " contend for other Terms of Communion, than the  
 " Belief of the holy Scriptures." And we must  
 accordingly follow him in this Path.

The first Argument he proposes to answer, is, that a Thing agreed on, by almost all Christian Churches of all Denominations; a Thing universally practiced in the early Times of Christianity, &c. ought not to be abolished, without the strongest Reasons. — Now for the Point in Question, we have Antiquity, Unanimity, and the Practice of the Church Time out of Mind.

Had we framed this Argument, we should have pleaded the Authority of much earlier Times, than are here designed; and have recurred to the Directions given by the Ancient of Days, as our surest Guide in this Matter. For we value one apostolical Canon, more than a Thousand Decrees of Fathers, Popes or Councils; and more than any Practice of all the Churches in the World, how venerable soever it may appear from its hoary Head of Antiquity. For *Antiquitas sine Veritate est Erroris Vetustas*. Cyr. Let the Cause then be tried at the proper Barr.

It is predicted concerning the antichristian or papal Hierarchy, that they should be left to strong Delusions, so believe a Lie, that they all might be damned, who believed not the Truth, 2 Thes. ii. 11, 12. — It is notorious to all the World, that the Papists profess a Belief of the holy Scriptures; and yet the Text assures us that their Errors are damning. Since therefore, their Heresy renders them incapable of the Kingdom of Glory, they are manifestly unqualified for the special Privileges of the Kingdom of Grace. And we are accordingly directed how to behave toward this mystical Babylon, in Rev. xviii. 4. Come out of her my People, that ye be not Partakers of her Sins; and that ye receive not of her Plagues.. From which it is most clearly manifest,

manifest, that there are such, who profess a Belief of the holy Scriptures, from whom we are to withdraw Christian Communion, on Account of their damning Errors and Delusions. And the Reason of the Thing is the same, with respect to all such, whose Errors appear to us equally dangerous. And our Conduct should be the same towards them. This is what the Scriptures require of us, as will appear by the following Considerations.

We are directed in Tit. iii. 10. *A Man that is an Heretick, after the first and second Admonition reject*. Now the Question is, whether any Man may be esteemed an Heretick, who professeth a Belief of the holy Scriptures? If not, Adamites, Anthropomorphites, Muggletonians, Ranters, Socinians, Arians, &c. must escape this Imputation; and the most distant Persuasions in the World, must unite in one Society, from that general Profession of the Truth of the Scriptures, tho', from Principle, obliged to act in continued Opposition to one another; and to be a continued Check upon each other, in their pursuing what they suppose the great Duties of Christianity. But if there may be Hereticks who profess their Belief of the holy Scriptures (as there certainly may if there be any such Thing as Heresy in the World) then we may, and ought to reject some such, as make that general Profession.

We are directed to try the Spirits, whether they be of God, 1 Joh. iv. 1. And the Church of Ephesus is commended for trying them, which say they are Apostles, and are not; and folding them byers, Rev. ii. 2. Now it is a sufficient Trial in this Case, to enquire into their Acknowledgment of the Truth of the Scriptures, when their avowed Principles

Principles are, in our Opinion, repugnant to the whole Tenor of those *blessed Oracles*? If so, the forementioned Contusions will necessarily obtain; and we must have Fellowship with the unfruitful Works of Darkness, and not reprove them. Nay if so, the quoted Texts will be found impertinent. For can it be supposed, that these *false Apostles*, that were tried and detected by the Church of *Ephesus*, were such as denied the Truth of the Scriptures? This would at once have discovered them, their own Mouths would have condemned them, that there would have been no Place for *Trial*. No, it's manifest, that they (like almost all succeeding *Hereticks* in the Christian Church) pretended the Patronage of Scripture, for their damning Errors, which made it necessary to search out their false Pretences, and false Opinions. But if on the other Hand, we may try those, who profess their Belief of the Scriptures, and yet hold what we esteem fundamental Errors, then such a Profession is not sufficient, to entitle every one, both to Christian and Ministerial Communion.

We are taught to *turn away from such, as have a Form of Godliness, and deny the Power thereof*, 2 Tim. iii. 5. These must be such as acknowledge the Truth of the Scriptures, they would not otherwise have the *Form of Godliness*. There can be no *Form* or Appearance of *Godliness*, in those professed Christians, who deny the only Rule and Standard of *Godliness*, the *Book of God*. And how must we turn away from such? Must it be by hugging them in our Bosoms, and receiving them into Christian and Ministerial Communion? That is, must

must we turn away from 'em, by turning to 'em, and embracing them?

The Apostle reproveth his *Galatians*, for being so soon removed from the Grace of Christ unto another Gospel, which was not another; but there were some that troubled them, and would pervert the Gospel of Christ. Gal. i. 6, 7. — From whence it's manifest, that there were such who acknowledged the Truth of the Scriptures (for they brought not another Gospel) who by subverting the Gospel of Christ, rendered themselves unqualified for Christian and Ministerial Communion. How else were the *Galatians* culpable, for following them and adhering to them? We might add many other Arguments from Scripture, against this latitudinarian Scheme: but it's time to hear what our Author has to say.

“When the *Eunuch*, (says he) when *Cornelius*, when three thousand Souls at once were converted, there is not the least Hint, that any of the Articles of Faith now stiffly maintain'd by some Sects of Christians, as essential ones, and esteemed by others not necessary, and altogether rejected by others as erroneous, were imposed as Terms of Communion; or ever mentioned at all.”

It must be granted, that in the first State of the Christian Church, a general Profession of Faith in Christ, was all that was required, in Order to Christian Communion: But it must also be granted, that as soon as any Errors sprang up in those *holy Societies*, they were sharply animadverted upon by the *Apostles*; and all the Churches warned to beware of them. *Beware of Dogs, beware of evil Workers, beware of the Concision*, Phil. iii. 2. *Beware lest any Man spoil you, through Philosophy and vain Deceit,*

ceit, after the Rudiments of the World, and not after Christ, Col. ii. 8. Now I beseech you Brethren, mark them which cause Divisions and Offences, contrary to the Doctrine which ye have learned; and avoid them, Rom. xvi. 17. Perverse Disputings of Men of corrupt Minds and destitute of the Truth,——from such withdraw thy self——avoiding profane and vain Babblings, and opposition of Science falsely so called, which some professing, have erred concerning the Faith. 1 Tim. xi. 5, 20, 21. From which and many more such like apostolick Admonitions, it appears that tho' there were no particular Confessions of Faith and Tests of Orthodoxy then used, in admitting any to Christian Communion; yet the Churches were exhorted to beware of, to avoid, and to withdraw from, those that swerved from the Faith, and were fundamentally erroneous, though with Respect to those, whose Mistakes were to be supposed consistent with a State of Grace, they were to receive one another, as Christ also received them, to the Glory of God, Rom. xv. 7. This was the primitive Practice in this Case, and we see no Necessity of any other Method now.

But with Respect to ministerial Communion, there was more Care and Caution enjoyn'd, in the Admission of Candidates to the sacred Employment. Lay Hands suddenly upon no Man, 1 Tim. v. 22. The things that thou hast heard of me among many Witnesses, the same commit thou to faithful Men, that shall be able to teach others also, 2 Tim. ii. 2. And if any in the Exercise of the Ministry, were likely to subvert the Faith of their Hearers, by their false Doctrines. they were by apostolick Institution to be Silenced, that the destructive Gangreen might

be stoppt, For there are many unruly and vain Talkers and Deceivers, especially they of the Circumcision, WHOSE MOUTHS MUST BE STOPPED, who subvert whole Houses. &c. Tit i. 10, 11. Where by the Way, it may be observed, that some such were to be denied ministerial Communion, who professed their Belief of the holy Scriptures, as they of the Circumcision certainly did.

Thus we have briefly considered this Case, as it is represented by the first and purest Antiquity; and since all the succeeding Ages of the Church, were erring and fallible Men like ourselves, we disclaim all Pretences of building upon their Authority. We disclaim all Arguments from Prescription, Ancient Practices, or the Customs of the best and purest Churches in the World; or any such like vain Apologies for Bigottry, Superstition, and Impositions. We are content, that the Cause be tried and decided, by the only Standard of the Sanctuary.

The second Argument the Gentleman pretends to Answer, is thus proposed,

Every Society, say Creed-Imposers, has a Right to make such Laws, as seem necessary for its Support and Welfare. The very Nature of a Society requires, and supposes this, else it would be open to all Kinds of Enemies; there would be no Provision, no Remedy against the Intrusion of Adversaries, that might destroy its very Vitals. In a Word, no Means to keep them off, or turn them out. And why of all imaginable Societies, a christian one alone, should be deprived of such a Right, is not to be accounted for. &c.

In Answer to which Argument, the Author has very justly observed the vast Disparity, between a *civil*, and a *christian* Society. The former have a Power to make what Laws they think best, for their own Defence and Preservation: but the latter are absolutely subjected to the *one Lawgiver, that is able to save or destroy*. And no Man nor Society of Men upon Earth, have any Power to impose their *Laws*, or their *Interpretations* of Christ's Laws, upon other Mens Consciences. It is true, that "every Subject is equal to any other Subject; their Concerns have nothing to do with this World, every one is accountable for his Belief to Christ alone." Every Christian Society is upon an equal Level of Liberty, and has equal Claim to Power and Authority. It is ridiculous, for one Church or Society to claim that Authority to make Laws, or to impose their Interpretations of the Laws of Christ, which they deny to another Church or Society. For if Christ has given this Authority to any Church, he has given it to every Church, without Difference. He has given no *Charter* to any particular Church, exclusive of others. To say that this Authority belongs to the *true Church*, to the *purest* or *best constituted Church*, is to say just nothing at all. For every religious Society is such to itself; and every one has an equal Assurance of its *Orthodoxy*, and is equally fallible. And then on the other Hand, it is, in like Manner, ridiculous, to imagine this *legislative Power* lodged in every Church, or Society of Christians. This were not only to condemn the *Reformation*, and to justify the *Inquisition*; but to make *God the Author of Confusion in all the Churches of*

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*the Saints*. This were to put the Stamp of Divine Authority, upon all the most contradictory Schemes and inconsistent Decrees, of all the different Sects, that have ever been in the World; to blend together *Light* and *Darkness*, *Truth* and *Error*; and to bind our Consciences to the impossibility of believing all the most unreasonable, and most Opposite Principles and Practices, for *Divine Injunctions*. Whence it follows, that no Church or Society has this Authority. To pretend to it, is to violate that *Liberty wherewith Christ has made us free*.

And it is upon these very Principles, that we oppose this Gentleman's Scheme, and insist upon it, that we are not obliged to admit all to Christian and Ministerial Communion, who profess their Belief of the Scriptures. For tho' it be true, that I have no juster Pretence than any other Person, to determine what is a fundamental Article of Religion; and on that Account to impose my Opinion upon others: Yet I have an undoubted Right, to judge for myself, and to reject those Opinions which I think fundamentally erroneous; and consequently to enjoy the Liberty of my *Conscience*, by refusing Communion with those, that I think unqualified for it. As on the one Hand, I may not assume *Infallibility* to myself, by determining what are Articles fundamentally necessary for others to believe; so on the other Hand, I cannot ascribe that *Infallibility* to others, whereby they can determine against my *Conscience*, that this is not fundamental which I esteem to be so. As I may not impose my *Credenda* on other Men, neither may they impose theirs on me. If I think in my Conscience, *Arianism* (for Instance) unqualifies a Man for my Communion, must I be

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forced against my *Conscience*, to have either Christian or Ministerial Communion with such a Person? What then becomes of the *Freedom* and *Liberty* that this Author so strenuously argues for? And it may be here observed, that this Case is the same with respect to a *Religious Society*, as a single Person. Every *Society* who in their *Consciences* think any one unfit for their Christian or Ministerial Communion, have the *Liberty* to declare him so, and to refuse Communion with him, let his Profession be what it will. None are to be imposed upon in this Matter, against their *Consciences*: For if *Impositions* are lawful in this Case, they are by the same Reason, in all Cases whatsoever.

But our Author tells us, that "if Jesus Christ has not distinctly and positively pronounced, that such and such a speculative Point, understood so and so and not otherwise, is necessary to Salvation, then the *Societies* pronouncing and imposing the Belief of it, according to its own Interpretation, as a Term of Christian or Ministerial Communion, seems plainly to be an unjustifiable assuming a Power, that belongs to Christ alone; a tyrannical treating, as a *Rebel*, one whom perhaps, Jesus Christ himself loves as one of his most faithful *Subjects*; and a manifest Infringement upon the most sacred Laws of Christian Charity."

But by this Gentleman's Leave, we must observe to him, that if the *Society* think, that *Jesus Christ* has most distinctly and positively pronounced, that such and such a speculative Point, understood so and so and not otherwise, is necessary to Salvation, it is the same Thing in this Case, as if it were really so; tho' perhaps they may be greatly mistaken. Tho'

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we are all fallible; yet every *Man's*, and every *Society's* Opinion, is right to themselves; and every one must understand the Mind of Christ, in his Word, for himself, and follow the best Light he has. If therefore, upon the best Enquiry they can make, they think such a speculative Point necessary to Salvation, and the Belief of it necessary to Christian or Ministerial Communion, it's no *Imposition*, *Tyranny* or *Infringement upon Charity*, to declare their Opinions; and to act according to 'em, by denying Communion to those, whom they suppose Christ disowns and will reject at last. But on the contrary, 'twould be the greatest *Tyranny* and *Imposition* that is possible, to be obliged to admit any to Communion that they think unqualified for it; and to sin against their own *Consciences*.

This Author allows, that a *Number of Men*, have the same *Liberty* to think and act in Religion, that one *Man* has. To which he subjoins, "But then what will authorize you, or the Church, to impose these Tenets and Forms upon him, as Terms of Communion?" To which we answer, if the *Tenets* and *Forms* be such as we esteem essential, and necessary to Salvation, that same *Liberty* to think and act in Religion, which was just now granted, authorize us (tho' not to impose, yet) to insist upon, these Terms of Communion. And whatever is farther than this, we acknowledge to be *tyrannical Imposition*.

The Gentleman adds, "You cannot say he is not a Christian, for he solemnly professes to believe the holy Scriptures. Let him alone as to his Belief, may hear him patiently if he is willing to preach to you; for he may be in the right, &c."

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But it's possible that we can say he is no *Christian*, notwithstanding he professes to believe the holy Scriptures. For it's certain to Demonstration, that if there be any ready and invariable Character and Qualification necessary to the being a *Christian*; and if there be any *Idea* belongs to the Word *Christian*, there have been such, who have professed to believe the Scriptures, that were no *Christians*. We challenge this Author, to instance in any one Article of Religion, that some who have made that general Profession, have not disowned. If the Acknowledgment of an *infinite God*, belong to the *Idea* of a *Christian*, the *Antropomorphites*, who thought they could prove from Scripture, that the divine Being had a limited bodily Shape, were no *Christians*. If the Belief of *Christ's Divinity* be necessary, the *Socinians* and *Arians* are, notwithstanding their Acknowledgment of the Scriptures, divested of that Character. If Faith in the *Incarnation* and *Humanity* of Christ are necessary, we could instance in such, that have denied This; and yet own'd the Truth of the holy Scriptures. If it be necessary for a *Christian* that he believe a future eternal State of *Rewards* and *Punishments*, how many are there that forfeit that sacred Title, by their Disbelief of this, notwithstanding their professed Belief of the Scriptures. If the acknowledgment of any established *Ministry* or *Ordinances* in the Church is necessary, the *Quietests*, that pretend to be above Ordinances, have no Right to the Christian Name. If the Belief of *Christ's Satisfaction* belong to the Character of a Christian, we could direct our Author to an Acquaintance with one, that has forfeited that Character, by endeavouring to undermine it. If

none

none of these are necessary, a Man may be a *Christian*, though he disbelieves the Being of an infinite God, both the divine and human Nature, as well as the Satisfaction of Christ, all the Ordinances of Christianity, and all future eternal Rewards and Punishments; And in a Word every Article of the Christian Faith, as might be particularly exemplified. And all this by the strange transforming *Coart* of their professing their Belief of the holy Scriptures.

But we are told, " He certainly is or may be a true Christian; and as such, I think, we may defy all the World to shew from Scripture or Reason, that Jesus Christ, the sole King and Governour of the Christian Church, allows any Man, or any set of Men, or any Nation to refuse him Admittance, to all the Advantages and Comforts of Christian, and consequently of Ministerial Communion. "

We must again entreat the *Liberty* to judge for ourselves in this Matter; a *Liberty*, which we can't but suppose, belongs to every Man, and every Society of Men as such. And if we conscientiously believe he is not, and cannot be a true Christian, that he is not and cannot be qualified for Communion with us, our Opinion amounts to Certainty with Respect to ourselves; and to act against it, is to sin against our Consciences, and consequently against God; unto which no Person or Society may be constrained.

To charge our Opinion with Weakness, Error or Mistake in this Case, is at once to enervate all our Author's fine Arguments for *human Liberty*. For every *Society* in the World, suppose those of an Opposite

posite Opinion to be erroneous; and if this *Liberty* of judging for ourselves be denied to the erroneous, it must be denied to every Body. And thus we should argue all *Christi* *liberty* into the Grave.

It may be expected, we would say something further about *Ministerial Communion* in this Place, since this Author so particularly urges it. "Hear him patiently (says he) if he be willing to preach to you." But must we hear him, whether we will or no! We have but little *Liberty* left, if we have no Choice in this Matter, but must be obliged to hear every one that is willing to preach to us. Let him preach to those that are willing to hear him; but leave us to our own Judgment and Conscience.

He disallows *any Men, or any set of Men, or any Nation to refuse him* (whoever professes his Belief of the holy Scriptures) *Admittance to all the Advantages and Comforts of Christian, and consequently of Ministerial Communion.* Here we must again put in our Petition for LIBERTY, to each *Christian Society* to judge for themselves, who are, and who are not qualified for the Exercise of the Ministry among them; who are likely to serve the Interests of Christ's Kingdom, and promote the Welfare of precious Souls, and who are like to subvert both of these. If we must not judge the Qualifications of our Ministers, we may expect a *Babel*, but not a *Church of Christ*. If we must approve and support such in the Exercise of the Ministry among us, whom we in our Consciences believe are acting counter to the great Ends of the Ministry, we have lost all LIBERTY of being faithful to God, and our own Consciences.

Another

Another *Argument* considered by this Author, was this.

*Private Judgment in Matters of Religion, will certainly be allowed of by Creed Opposers. Now if every Man may judge for himself, then he may join with such other Men as think as he does. They may form a Society, and separate themselves from all others, who in their Way of thinking, maintain pernicious Errors. They may reject any Teacher, that maintains erroneous Notions, in Points which they look upon as essential, &c.*

It must be confessed, that the Gentleman has here fairly stated our Argument; but he has been so unhappy, as presently to forget the State of the Question, and to contest with an Adversary, as opposite to our Sentiments, as his own. For thus he begins his Answer,

"How from the Right of *private Judgment*, it is inferred, that you may refuse a Man Christian or Ministerial Communion, upon Account of his differing from you in Things disputable, I am utterly at a Loss to see." And we profess ourselves at the same Loss, if he means by *Things disputable*, all, or any of those Things, that are not in the *Society's Opinion*, essential Articles of Christianity. These (as we have so often declared before) cannot, consistently with *Christian Liberty*, be insisted upon, as Terms of Communion. In these, let every one abound in his own sense; and let these be disputed as every one pleases. We can't too often declare, that the Door of *Christian Communion*, should stand as wide open as the *Gates of Heaven*; and each Christian Society, have a Right to judge for themselves how wide that is. But then,

then, they are not Things *disputable* with any Society, which they think essentially necessary to Salvation. Let others dispute them as much as they will, they are with them an invariable Foundation, upon which their Hope for Eternity is built.

This being consider'd, we allow that *we cannot in Justice deny to another, that Privilege of private Judgment, which we claim ourselves; nor censure another, upon a speculative Point, not in our Opinion necessary to Salvation; upon which we would not be willing to be censured ourselves.* We allow, that *we should not refuse that Man Communion with us, as a Christian, who (we can suppose) may be deemed by the Almighty himself, a good Christian.* We allow, that there is no Use at all of *Impositions, but to make a Man dissemble, and speak a Language foreign to his Heart.* We allow, that *if a Man of Piety and Vertue, Learning and good Sense, differ much (if not in Essentials) from the Church or Society to whom he offers his Ministry, if these Differences do not affect his Christianity, there can be no Reason assigned for rejecting him.* We only claim the Privilege, which our Author so freely grants, *to make Choice of our Minister, as our Judgment and Conscience directs us.* Thus far we are agreed.

But there is a plausible *Objection* thrown in our Way, which may be supposed to affect our Opinion and Practice; which is therefore necessary to obviate.

“As to the Wrong done (says the Gentleman) to a Man, who is denied Communion with a Society of Christians, it is obvious, that the Thing is not so harmless as our Creed-Imposers alledge.”

He

He goes on to urge, that by being esteem'd an *Heretick*, he may suffer in his Reputation: that by being branded with *Heresy* by the Rulers of the Church, he may want all the Advantages of publick Trust, Honour, Profit or temporal Favours, and so suffer in his worldly Circumstances: Poverty and Contempt may pursue him, and destroy his Health and Constitution; and so he may suffer in his very Person.

This Argument is allowed to be just, against refusing Communion to any, that we can, in Charity, suppose to be true Christians; and that are not in our Opinion, *fundamentally* erroneous. We will therefore leave this Practice to his severest Censures. Let him call it *Tyranny, Persecution*, or what he pleases. But then, if the Man who cries out so loudly of Wrong in this Case, disbelieves such Articles, as are by the Society which disowns him, esteem'd necessary to Salvation, we may answer all these Outcries against *Persecution*, in the Gentleman's own Words. pag. 22. “The Answer is obvious, that Man does not at all pretend to Communion, for he declares himself no Christian.---” “We don't exclude him, he excludes himself.” It is certain that some who have disbelieved the Scriptures, have, for temporal Motives, offered themselves to Communion in Christian Societies. And if this Way of Reasoning be good with Respect to these, it is also good with Respect to those, whose *Errors* are in the Opinion of the Society, equally dangerous. Whether the Society's Opinion be in this Case right, or wrong, it's the same Thing. It is right to them, and they have Liberty to judge for themselves. Must a Society admit an *Enemy*

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to

to the Lord Jesus Christ (for such he is to them) to partake of the special Privileges of his Kingdom, for fear it may be accidentally disserviceable, to such a Person's temporal Interests, to refuse him? They inflict none of these Penalties, by refusing Communion in sealing Ordinances; they are the necessary Consequences of his own Opinion. If it be said, that he cannot help thinking as he does, it is answered, neither can the Society help thinking as they do, nor acting as they do, in refusing Communion with him, while they follow the  *dictates*  of their own  *Consciences* . Let him therefore seek Communion, with those that can in Conscience join with him. There is otherwise no escaping this Dilemma. He must bear with the worst Consequences of his Opinion, or the Society must sin against God, to save him from Temporal Disadvantages.

The Author pursues the same Chain of reasoning, with respect to  *Ministerial Communion* . " A  
 " Man (says he) may have spent his Substance and  
 " Youth, to fit himself for the  *Ministry* ; if he be  
 " rejected, when there is nothing against him but  
 " his refusing to subscribe  *Creeds* , which perhaps he  
 " don't well understand; or in the Belief whereof  
 " he cannot rest entirely satisfied; or if he refuses  
 " it for some other Reason, it is or may be a very  
 " great Disappointment. Then follows the general  
 " Odium, that constantly pursues the poor Soul,  
 " once called a  *Heretick* . The Case is yet worse,  
 " with a Man that has been a Minister for some  
 " Time-----for he is immediately deprived of  
 "  *Office* ; and may, for ought I know, he and his  
 " Family, go and starve on a Dunghill. "

Here

Here again we are content, that he should dress up the impleaded Practice, in as frightful Appearances as he is capable of (For he can hardly give too bad an Idea of it to the World) if he means by  *subscribing of Creeds* , the making any Thing, but what the Society think essentially necessary, a Term of Ministerial Communion. For if a Man be, in the Society's Opinion, qualified for the Work of the Ministry, and like to serve the Interests of Christ's Kingdom, they can with a  *good Conscience* , admit him to the Exercise of the Ministry with them; notwithstanding lesser Differences of Opinion, in extra-essential Points; and therefore, all the Hardships consequent upon their refusing him this Privilege, might be prevented, if they would  *walk charitably* ; and not  *destroy him with their Meat, for whom Christ died* . But then on the other Hand, if he embrace such  *Errors* , as in the Judgment of the Society, unqualify him for a faithful and successful Discharge of that important Trust, they cannot admit him to the Cure of Souls, without  *unfaithfulness to God* , and their own  *Consciences* . Whatever Difficulties, whatever Hardships or Distresses, may follow from their disowning or separating from him, are out of their Power to prevent. They must leave him to the necessary Consequences of his Sentiments; or themselves to the  *Stings*  of their own  *Consciences* . It were therefore as reasonable to impute to them, all the  *Sickness*  and  *Pain* , or other Calamities incident to human Life, as those Sufferings which they could not prevent. Why then should such a Person offer his Service to a  *Society* , that cannot, consistent to their known Principles, receive him? Why should he

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endeavour

endeavour to thrust himself upon those, whose Principles are essentially different from his ?

As for the other Argument, from the various and jarring Opinions, and the Confusions that would rush into the Church of Christ, where *CreeDs* are not imposed, we see nothing in it ; but agree with this Author, that *Unity in Affection* & in reciprocal *Benevolence*, are more necessary for the Well-being of the Church, than *Unity in extra-essential Speculations*.

Thus we are prepared to consider his *Postscript*, the Arguments whereof are most justly and strongly urged, against all *Impositions* of every Kind. But we can't see how they at all affect us, who are as little pleased, with any Pretences to an *imposing Power*, as that ingenious Author can be. Let it be remembered, that we allow no Power in any Church or religious Society, to determine what Articles of Religion are, or what are not essential to Salvation, for any but themselves, and those that are willing to join with them upon their own Principles. We allow of no *Confession of Faith*, as a *Test of Orthodoxy* for others, but only as a Declaration of our own Sentiments ; nor may this be imposed upon the Members of our own Society, nor their Assent required to any Thing as a Condition of their Communion with us ; but what we esteem essentially necessary. If others differ from us, they have *Liberty* to think for themselves, if they will but allow us the same *Liberty*. How then are we concerned with that Gentleman's Reasonings ?

“ Now if all Men are right in following their  
“ private Judgments (says he) even where the  
“ religious

“ religious Rights of others are affected, will not  
“ this justify any Encroachments upon our religious  
“ Rights, that any Man or Body of Men shall  
“ judge necessary and just. --- To apply this to the  
“ *popish* Principles, pray what has the *popish* Church  
“ been doing all this while, but pursuing this very  
“ Principle ? Has she not judged for herself, in  
“ all the *CreeDs* she has ever published ? Has she  
“ not judged for herself, that she is infallible ? Has  
“ she not as the natural Consequence of this,  
“ judged, that all Men ought to submit to her ?  
“ Has she not judged for herself that she ought to  
“ use *Force*, and that *Hereticks* ought not to live  
“ at all ? &c.

The Fallacy of this Way of reasoning, consists in the Ambiguity of the Question ; and in his not distinctly considering, how the Exercising of our private Judgment, affects the religious Rights of others. Let it be first laid down as a *Preliminary*, that every Man has *Liberty*, and every Society has *Liberty* to judge for themselves, and for none but themselves, and all these fine Appearances will vanish. Upon whom then can the Church of *Rome* exercise this *Force*, that her *private Judgment* leads her to ? Must it be upon those that agree with her in Opinion, or those that do not ? They that join in the same Sentiments with her, want no Constraint to be of the Opinion they have already embraced and adhere to. They that are of different Sentiments from her, are out of the Question, and cannot, by these Principles, be the Objects of her *Force* ; for she is to judge for none but herself.

Men

Men may pretend that it affects their *religious Rights*, to be denied Communion in any Society, to which they are pleased to offer themselves. But don't it affect the *religious Rights* of the Society much more, to be forced to admit them, when convinced that they are altogether unqualified Subjects, either for the Kingdom of Grace or Glory? It may indeed, in some Cases, affect the *Reputation* of the former; but it always affects the *Consciences* of the latter, which is an infinitely greater Concern.

Let it be further observed, that the present Debate is about Matters of *Faith* and not of *Practice*. It is therefore, very unjust to argue, from the *Liberty of believing* for ourselves, what is necessary to Salvation, to a *Liberty* of knocking one another on the Head. Our *Faith* can't directly do our Neighbour any Hurt, tho' our *Racks* and *Gibbets* may. We may have full *Liberty* of our *Faith*, without any *Liberty* to do *Mischief*. No Man can do Hurt by his *Speculations*. He may therefore be allowed safely to think for himself. But his *evil Practices* may injure his Neighbour, and should therefore be restrained.

That ingenious Author concludes his Discourse, by observing, that "the other Way of thinking  
" furnishes a very clear Answer to *Papists*, and  
" all others, that are guilty of *Imposition*, if it  
" be but a just one, *viz.* that their whole Scheme  
" is wrong, for they are wrong in forming Judg-

" ments,

" ments, so as to affect the religious Rights of  
" others, other than the express Decisions of Scrip-  
" ture. This cuts the Nerves of all antichristian  
" Authority, and leaves us a fixed Point to rest at."

But it mayn't be improper to enquire here, who are to determine what are, and what are not, the *express Decisions of Scripture*. A late Champion for the Church of Rome, has found the Scripture in express Terms, requiring the Use of that Force, this Author is impleading, in those Words *compel them to come in*. And there is scarce any Society in Christendom, but what suppose they have the *express Decisions of Scripture*, to justify their Sentiments. The *Arians* have express Scripture [ *The Father is greater than I* ] The *Trinitarians* have also express Scripture [ *I and my Father are one* ] The like may be said, with respect to almost all other different and contrary Persuasions. If any of these be told, that they don't understand the Design and Meaning of the Texts they quote, the same Answer will be retorted, with equal Assurance. And so all the same Consequences this Author supposes to follow from the *Right of private Judgment*, where the religious Rights of others are affected, are just as necessary from his own Scheme, as from ours: And our Hypothesis leaves just such a *fixed Point* to rest at, as his does; unless he pretends to *Infallibility* in determining, what are the *express Decisions of Scripture*. And so we conclude, in the Words of the acute and ingenious Mr. *Lock*, in his *Letter concerning Toleration*. pag. 15.

" This

“ This is the fundamental and immutable Right  
 “ of a spontaneous Society, that it has Power to  
 “ remove any of its Members, who transgress the  
 “ Rules of its Institution. But it cannot by the  
 “ Accession of any new Members, acquire any  
 “ Jurisdiction over those, that are not joined with  
 “ it. And therefore Peace, Equity, and Friend-  
 “ ship, are always mutually to be observed, by par-  
 “ ticular Churches, in the same Manner, as by  
 “ private Persons, without any Pretence of Supe-  
 “ riority or Jurisdiction over one another.



## A P P E N D I X



## A P P E N D I X

*To convince the Reader, :hat we govern our  
 selves according to the Principles here as-  
 serted and pleaded for, we annex a Copy of  
 the Synod's Agreement; in the Point debated.*

Although the Synod do not claim, or pretend to any Authority of imposing our Faith upon other Mens Consciences ; but do profess our just Dissatisfaction with, and Abhorrence of such Impositions ; and utterly disclaim all legislative Power and Authority in the Church ; being willing to receive one another, as Christ received us to the Glory of God ; and to admit to Fellowship in sacred Ordinances, all such as we have Grounds to believe Christ will at last admit into the Kingdom of Heaven : Yet we are undoubtedly obliged to take Care, that the Faith once delivered to the Saints, be kept pure and uncorrupt among us ; and to handed down to Posterity. And do therefore agree, that all the Ministers of this Synod, or that shall hereafter be admitted into this Synod, shall declare their Agreement in, and Approbation of the *Confession of Faith, with the larger and shorter Catechisms, of the Assembly of Divines at Westminster* ; as being in all the essential and necessary Articles, good Forms of sound Words, and Systems of Christian Doctrine ;

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and

and do also adopt the said Confession and Catechisms, as the Confession of our Faith. And we do also agree, that all the Presbyteries within our Bounds, shall always take Care, not to admit any Candidate of the Ministry unto the Exercise of the sacred Function, but who declares his Agreement in Opinion, with all the essential and necessary Articles of said Confession, either by subscribing the said Confession of Faith and Catechisms; or by a verbal Declaration of his Assent thereto, as such Minister or Candidate shall think best. And in Case any Minister of this Synod, or any Candidate of the Ministry, shall have any Scruple, with respect to any Article or Articles of the said Confession, he shall at the Time of his making said Declaration, declare his Scruples to the Presbytery or Synod, who shall notwithstanding admit him to the Exercise of the Ministry within our Bounds; and to Ministerial Communion, if the Synod or Presbytery shall judge his Scruple or Mistake, to be only about Articles not essential and necessary, in Doctrine, Worship, or Government. But if the Synod or Presbytery shall judge such Ministers or Candidates erroneous in essential or necessary Articles of Faith, the Synod or Presbytery shall declare them incapable of Communion with them. And the Synod do solemnly agree that none of us will traduce, or use any opprobrious Terms, of those that differ from us, in those extra-essential and not-necessary Points; but treat them with the same Friendship, Kindness and brotherly Love, as if they had not differed from us in such Sentiments.

**T H E E N D.**