

A
DECLARATION

Of the PRESBYTERIES

OF

NEW-BRUNSWICK

AND

NEW-CASTLE

met together at

PHILADELPHIA,

May 26, 1743.

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DECLARATION

Of the Presbyteries of *New-Brunswick* and *New-Castle*, judicially met together at *Philadelphia*, May 26. 1743.

SEEING the Circumstances in which it has pleased the Sovereign God in his adorable Providence to put us, are something singular, we think it may be proper and useful to give this Publick brief Account of them, and of our Manner of conducting ourselves in them. A considerable Number of us have been formerly in a State of Union with the *Presbyterian* Synod in these Parts, and in Possession of the Rights and Privileges of Members of it, until we were unjustly and illegally excluded *June 1. Anno 1741* by a Number of the Members which were that Year convened. Our Exclusion was without any just sufficient Ground: Those our former Brethren who ejected us, grossly misrepresenting us in what they offered as the Reasons of it; and the Method in which it was done, was most arbitrary and illegal, without entering any regular fair Process against us, by tabling Charges specifying the particular Persons the Charges were laid against, offering Proof of the Allegations, and giving the accused the natural Right and Liberty of Mankind of answering for themselves,

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and then committing the Case to the deliberate Judgment of the Synod, exclusive of the two Parties accusers and accused. The very light of Nature will readily dictate to any thinking Person that this ought to have been the Method of Proceeding : But instead of this, while the Synod had another Affair on the Board undetermined, a Paper which had been drawn up and agreed to by some of the Members in private Concert among themselves, was abruptly brought in and read peremptorily, Protesting against our continuing as Members of the Synod, which being read was immediately sign'd without more a-do, by the greater part of the Members then present, excepting those that were Protested against, so that we were Judged, Condemned and Cast Out without any Trial or offer of Trial; nay after it had been desired by some of us more than once, that the supposed Matters of Difference should be debated and try'd; and those who ejected us were both Judge and Party. The whole Proceedure was contrary to all the Rules of Proceeding in any of our Judicatures of the *Presbyterian* Church, in so much that we cannot believe it can be so much as properly called a Synodical Act, tho' done by a Number of the Synod, for the Case was not properly try'd and judged by the Synod in a Synodical Manner, and we much Question if a parallel Instance can be shown in all the Circumstances of it in any Judicature in a civilized Nation.

When we were met together the next Day after our Exclusion, *June 2. 1741.* we declared and entered upon Record, that our Exclusion by the aforesaid Protestation was most unjust and sinful, and that it was our bounden Duty to endeavour to fulfill the Work and Charge committed to us by the Lord J E S U S C H R I S T

as Ministers and Rulers in his House, by carrying on the Government which he has appointed in his Church, and, to that Purpose, after having adjusted the Members of our two Presbyteries respectively, we appointed them both to meet at *Philadelphia* on the second *Wednesday* of the next ensuing *August* as our highest Judicature, to proceed in the manner and capacity of a Synod. Accordingly we met the next *August*, and during our Session at that time, agreed and concluded at the next ensuing Session of the Synod, to claim our Right and Privilege as Members, and enter a Complaint against the Protestors, and desire the Case to be try'd between us and them by the Synod, when it was likely the Members would be more generally met than they were at the preceeding Session, when we were excluded, withal declaring it to be our Duty in the mean time, to transact in the Government and Discipline of **CHRIST'S** House in the Manner we were then doing.

Accordingly we entered our Claim and Complaint at the next meeting of the Synod in *May* 1742. But our Brethren who had Protested against us, were justly so diffident of their Cause, that they refused to submit their Proceeding therein to an impartial Trial; they likewise refused to give any honourable Testimony to the **WORK** of **GOD'S** Power and Grace which he had so remarkably carry'd on in many Parts of the Land, and refus'd to condemn the Passages in the Prints published on their Side which reflect dishonour and reproach upon it. All which occasion'd that Protestation of several of the Members which was soon after Published, and which for the fuller Information of all we think very proper to insert here, it is as follows.

A PROTESTATION

Presented to the SYNOD of *Philadelphia*,
May 29. 1742.

To the Reverend SYNOD now sitting at Philadelphia.

WE the Subscribers, in our own, and in the Name of all that shall see meet to join with us, look upon ourselves obliged, in the most publick Manner, to declare our Opinions, with respect to the Division made in our Synod the last Year, by a Protest that was delivered in by several of our Members.

First. We declare against the Excluding the Presbytery of *New-Brunswick*, and their Adherents, from the Communion of the Synod, by a Protest without giving them a previous Trial, as an illegal and unprecedented Procedure, contrary to the Rules of the Gospel, and subversive of our excellent Constitution.

Secondly. WE declare and Protest against the Conduct of our Brethren, the last Years Protestors, in refusing to have the Legallity of their said Protest tried by the present Synod.

Thirdly, WE therefore declare and Protest, that those Members of the *New-Brunswick* Presbytery, and their Adherents, that were excluded by the last Year's Protest, are to be own'd and esteem'd as Members of this Synod till they are excluded by a regular and impartial Process against them, according to the Methods prescribed in sacred Scripture, and practised by the Churches of the *Presbyterian* Persuasion.

Fourthly,

Fourthly, WE protest against all those Passages in any of the Pamphlets which have been publish'd in these Parts, which seem to reflect upon the Work of Divine Power and Grace which has been carrying on in so wonderful a manner in many of our Congregations; and declare to all the World, that we look upon it to be the indispensable Duty of all our Ministers to encourage that glorious Work with their most faithful and diligent Endeavours. And we in like Manner protest and declare against all divisive and irregular Methods and Practices by which the Peace and good Order of our Churches have been broken in upon.

THIS is what our Duty to GOD, and Regard to the Peace and Prosperity of his Church obliges us to protest and declare; And we desire it may be recorded in the Minutes of the Synod, *In perpetuam rei memoriam.*

Jonathan Dickinson,
Ebenezer Pemberton,
Daniel Elmore,
Silas Leonard,
John Piereson,
Simon Horton,
Azariah Horton.

Ministers.

Nathaniel Hazard,
Timothy Whitehead,
David Whitehead. } Elders.

With this Protestation of these our Reverend and other Brethren we heartily agree, and according to it do still look upon ourselves to be rightful Members of the Synod. 'Tis likely those that protested against us may agree with us to the latter Clause of this Protestation,
“ against all divisive and irregular Methods and
“ Practices

“ Practices, by which the Peace and good
 “ Order of our Churches have been broken
 “ in upon,” tho’ with a very different Ap-
 plication. But it is clear to us that their Methods
 and Practices of Opposition to the Work of
 God, and to the proper Methods of promoting
 and carrying it on, have been the Principle
 true and real Causes of the Breach of the Peace
 and good order of our Churches.

Thus issued the Proceedings in the Synod
 about our Affair at that Time, after which
 our Presbyteries, according to their Appoint-
 ment the *August* before, judicially met to-
 gether to proceed on in our own proper Business,
 and at that Session we entered on Record,
 that having according to our former Agreement,
 entered our claim of Right to membership in
 the Synod, and a Complaint of the illegality of
 our Exclusion, those who had excluded us
 in such an illegal unjustifiable Manner, refused
 to have the legality of their Proceeding therein
 tried by the Synod, on Account of which we
 cou’d not as yet obtain the Possession of our
 just Privilege, and that so it was still incom-
 bent upon us, in order to discharge the Duties
 of our Office, to continue to meet altogether
 from Time to Time, in a stated Manner, in
 the same Capacity as before, since our Ex-
 clusion. And after having done all our Bu-
 siness, which occur’d at that Time, we ad-
 journ’d our meeting to the 4th Thursday of
 May, *Ano.* 1743. According to which Ap-
 pointment we are now met.

And now from what has been said it pret-
 ty clearly appears, what are our true and real
 Circumstances, and what is our Conduct and
 Manner of Proceeding in them particularly.

1st. Those

1st. Those of us who were excluded from the Synod in the fore-mention'd Manner (for one of our Members, tho', before that Exclusion, a Member of the Presbytery of *New Brunswick*, yet was not received by the Synod as a Member, on account of their Act concerning the Previous Trial of Candidates by the Synod, and several of our Members have been Ordain'd since said Exclusion) we say those of us who were excluded in the fore-mention'd Manner, notwithstanding said Exclusion, are still true and rightful Members of the Synod, unrighteously depriv'd of and debar'd from our just Privilege. And to this same Purpose those our Brethren who presented the above Protestation *May 29. 1742.* do Declare and Protest, *that we are to be own'd and esteem'd as Members of the Synod, till we are excluded by a regular and impartial Process.* Which kind of Process, thro' rich Grace, we do not fear. And we moreover look upon ourselves as all having a just and fair Right to Membership in the Synod. The other Bar which the Synod laid in the Way of some of us, by their Act concerning Candidates for the Ministry, being contrary to the form of Government which **CHRIST** appointed in his Church, contrary to the true *Presbyterian* Constitution, and so void and null by the Divine Law, ought as such to be laid aside by the Synod.

And 2d. While our Circumstances continue as they are, it is our bounden indispensable Duty, as Ministers of the Gospel, as Stewards and Rulers in the House of God, to transact among ourselves in the Government which **CHRIST** has appointed in his Church, for that Part of it which is or may be under our Charge, according to the Rules and Constitution of *Presbyterian* Government.

And

And here we think it proper for the Satisfaction of all, concerning us, and as a due Testimony to the Truths of God, to declare and testify to the World our Principles and Sentiments in Religion, according to which we design, thro' divine Grace, ever to conduct ourselves, both as Christians and as Ministers, and ruling Elders.

And *First* as to the Doctrines of Christian Religion, we believe with our Hearts and profess and maintain with our Lips, the Doctrines sum'm'd up and contain'd in the *Confession of Faith and Larger and shorter Catechisms*, compos'd by the Reverend Assembly of Divines at *Westminster*, as the Truths of God reveal'd and contain'd in the Holy Scriptures of the Old and New Testaments, and do receive, acknowledge and declare the said *Confession of Faith and Catechisms*, to be the Confession of our Faith; yet so as that no part of the 23d Chap. of said Confession, shall be so constructed as to allow civil Magistrates, as such, to have any Ecclesiastical Authority in Synods or Church Judicatures, much less the Power of a negative Voice over them in their Ecclesiastical Transactions, nor is any part of it to be understood as opposite to the memorable Revolution, and the Settlement of the Crown of the three Kingdoms in the illustrious House of *Hanover*.

Secondly, Concerning Church-Government, comprehensive of Discipline, we believe and maintain as follows.

1st. That the Lord JESUS CHRIST as Mediator by the Fathers Constitution and appointment, is the alone King, Head and Law-giver of his Church, which is his peculiar, spiritual and free Kingdom, so as none have Authority

thority and Right to give Laws and Ordinances to his Church, as such, but himself only.

2^{dly}. That the Lord J E S U S C H R I S T as a Son over his own House, and King upon his Holy Hill of Zion, has for the Good and Edification of this his spiritual Kingdom, appointed Laws and Ordinances and a spiritual Government to be observed and executed in the same.

3^{dly}, That he has appointed and authorized particular Officers in his Church for the Administration and Execution of the Government which he has establish'd in it, and that their Authority is not lordly and legislative but Ministerial and Executive only.

4^{thly} That the particular Officers which he has authorized for the Administration of this Government, are the Ministers of his Gospel, and other Representatives of their respective Churches or Congregations, Chosen by the People for that Purpose and solemnly set a part to that Charge, and likewise the Office of a Deacon is appointed in the Church, according to our Directory.

5^{thly}, That there is a perfect equality of Power and Authority in all the Ministers of the Gospel, none having of right from Christ any peculiar Powers or Prerogatives beyond or above others.

6^{thly}. That none of the fore-mention'd Officers are to exercise any Acts of Church-Government singly by themselves alone, but in a conjunct collegiate Manner, by mutual Concert together.

7^{thly}. That the proper Church-Judicatures wherein these Officers are to exercise their Office

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 Office and Authority of Government, are first Congregational Sessions, consisting of the Pastors of the Congregations and other ruling Elders chosen by the People and set a Part as afore said : Next Presbyteries, consisting of the Pastors of several neighbouring Congregations, and other Elders sent from their respective Church-Sessions, and other Gospel Ministers in the bounds, if such there be, who are join'd as Members, tho' they be not fixed Pastors of any particular Congregations : Then Synods consisting of several Presbyteries. Again, National Assemblies, consisting of all the Synods in a Nation or Delegates and Commissioners from their several Presbyteries ; and after that if needful, higher Assemblies of Delagates from several national Churches, and last of all if such a Thing were practical and necessary a General Oecumenical Council consisting of Commissioners from all the true National Churches in the World.

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 8. That these several forementioned Judicatures are not Co-ordinate with, but stand in a Line of Subordination to one another, from a Congregational or Church Session, which is the lowest, to a General Council : One Church Session is Co-ordinate with another Church Session, so as that the one has no Superior Authority over the other, to call it to Account, and in like manner one Presbytery is Co-ordinate with another Presbytery, and one National Synod or Assembly with another national Synod or Assembly, but a Church Session is Subordinate and accountable to a Presbytery and a Presbytery to a Synod, &c.

9th. That the several Church Judicatures in a Country or Nation, have Right and Authority from Christ the King and Lord of the Church, to meet and transact their Ecclesiastical Affairs, without the Command of temporal Princes, or even tho' it should be without their Concurrence, or against their Wills, as they did meet in the Apostolick Age and for some Ages after, when the Civil Powers were set against the Church.

These are briefly the chief Heads, of our Sentiments on this Subject: In a Word, we heartily agree with the Plan of Government, laid down by the *Westminster Assembly*, in their Directory for Church Government, as that which is appointed by Jesus Christ, and contain'd in his Word; and so we disown and reject as unscriptural, all other forms and models of Church Government whatsoever.

Thirdly, Concerning Religious Worship, we maintain, 1st. That God the Father, Son and Holy Ghost, three Persons and one Eternal God, is the alone Object of all Religious Worship. 2d. That God is to be worshiped only in such Ordinances and Methods as himself has appointed in his Word and not according to the Inventions and Devices of Men, by whatsoever Authority recommended, or with whatsoever shew of humility, decency, or piety; and we heartily approve of the Directions of the *Westminster Assembly*, in their Directory for publick Worship, as agreeable to God's Word, and recommending all the ordinances of Worship which are of divine Appointment under the New-Testament, and the right Manner of performing and attending upon them, only we wou'd not be understood

to mean as if every particular Direction and Circumstance contain'd therein, were of necessary Obligation upon us : As that for Instance, we must always begin publick Worship first with Prayer, much less that we can now pray for the same afflicted Queen of *Bohemia* therein mention'd, and such like circumstantial Things, which no understanding Person can think to be of necessary or of constant Obligation.

We likewise agree to the Directions of the General Assembly of the Church of *Scotland*, in their Directory for Family Worship, excepting that we see not why Persons of Quality should on that Account be exempted, from Performing the Worship of God themselves in their own Families more than others. And the meetings of Persons of divers Families, therein disapprov'd, are not to be understood of such private Societies as may meet statedly at proper Times, for Reading, Prayer and mutual edifying Conferences, which Societies may be so regulated as to promote mutual Love and Edification, and the greater Advantage of publick Ordinances.

This is a summary Account of our Faith and Principles, and agreeable to the same we Desire and Design, thro' divine Grace, ever to Conduct ourselves, that we may be faithful as Servants in all God's House, and while we remain a distinct and separate Body thus unjustly deprived of our rightful Privilege : We design as soon as Conveniently we can, to erect ourselves into more *Presbyteries*, and that all our *Presbyteries* shall meet together statedly every Year as our highest Judicature under the Name of the Conjunct meeting of the *Presbyteries*, and that the Time of meeting, till we see cause

Cause to alter, it shall be always on the fourth *Wednesday* of *May*.

Moreover we think it proper to give this publick Information, that the Gentlemen who protested against us do still adhere to their Protestation, which occasion'd the Reverend Mr. *Jonathan Dickinson*, Mr. *John Pierſon*, Mr. *Ebenezer Pemberton*, and Mr. *Aaron Burr*, publickly to declare to them, that they cou'd not meet and ſit with them as the Synod of *Philadelphia*, while ſo many of the proper Members were kept out: We farther more do judge, that in caſe the proteſt were withdrawn, yet we cou'd not come into a ſtate of ſettled conſtant Communion with the Proteſtors until ſome weighty Charges we have againſt them, were regularly tried and we received competent Satisfaction concerning them, eſpecially concerning their Oppoſition to and Reflections upon the Work of Gods Grace and Succeſs of the Goſpel in the Land.

Now may the Lord comfortably heal all our Diviſions, eſtabliſh Truth, Holineſs and Peace, ſend his Goſpel in Purity with great Power over the Nations, and bring about the Reſtitution of all Things, which he has ſpoken by the Mouth of all his holy Prophets, ſince the World began, and make way for his Glorious appearing to Judgment and the Triumphant State of his whole Church, even ſo come Lord Jeſus come quickly. *Amen.*