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Socinianism truly Stated;

B E I N G

An Example of fair Dealing in all
Theological Controversys.

To which is prefixt,

Indifference in Disputes:

Recommended by a PANTHEIST to an
Orthodox Friend.

By John Toland?

*Tota ruit Babylon; disjecit Teſta Lutherus,
Calvinus Muros, & Fundamenta Socinus.*

L O N D O N,

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S I R,

I Very well remember the Result of our last Discourse was this, that you hated and that I lov'd those Controversys, which so much divide the World in their Affections and Interests, as well as in their Opinions. And yet after frankly discovering our Thoughts to one another, and impartially examining our several Dispositions, it appear'd, that you who so carefully avoided all Disputes, cou'd never enjoy any Tranquillity, occasion'd by your Concern for the differences of others; and that I who industriously engag'd my self in the Consideration of all their Quarrels, was nevertheless extremely easy and unconcern'd. The reason of these contrary Dispositions in two, who agree in most other things, I take to be, that you, who no less expect than wish to see the different Partys reconcil'd, must needs have a Detestation for every thing that widens their Breaches or retards their Union; and that I, who despair of any Uniformity in Mens Opinions or Practices (which I hold to be impossible) must needs be pleas'd with examining the Grounds of those Notions, and the Springs of those Actions, which tho I cannot help or prevent, yet give me a further Knowledg of human Nature. With submission therefore to your Judgment, I think our whole Difference to be, that you represent Mankind to your self, such as they ought to be, and that I consider 'em but just such as they are; or that you are uneasy to see 'em continue their own Enemy, and that I am easy since they cannot become their own Friends. Now whether a universal
Peace

Peace be possible, or a perpetual War be unavoidable; that is to say, which of us two has the right of the Argument, I neither ought nor will decide without further discoursing you on the Subject, nor indeed without your Concurrence and Approbation.

But you maintain'd at the same time that my Satisfaction cou'd not be so pure and void of allay, as I wou'd have you believe: for you cou'd not imagine that any Man examin'd those Controversys with a perfect Indifference; and so you urg'd that whoever inclin'd but the least degree to any of the Partys, must probably have also some degree of Uneasiness in himself, if not of Unfairness to others. This Assertion of yours I granted to be for the most part true, as it unquestionably appear'd from most Books of Controversy: tho I am pretty well convinc'd, that it is not always so much an Earnestness and a Zeal for the Truth of their own Opinions, nor a Dislike and Aversion to the Falsity of others, that make the Disputants so eager against their Adversarys, but rather a certain political Conduct, which they hold themselves oblig'd to observe in order to please a Party, to which they thus think to render their Vigor no less serviceable, than their Sincerity unsuspected; and provided they find their private Account in this sort of proceeding (which from the Corruption and Ignorance of Mankind they frequently do) no body knows how easy or indifferent they may be in their own Hearts with respect to Opinions of all kinds, not approving nor perhaps understanding the Tenets of any side. So many of this Disposition have bin discover'd in all Societys (being real Free-booters, Adventurers, and Soldiers of Fortune in Controversy) that much Heat and Noise, great Bitterness and Rigor are not such evident Signs of Belief, as many are ready to fancy: and truly I have seen
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and observ'd this interested part so often acted (as the surest and most compendious way of raising a Reputation or an Estate) that I scarce ever knew a Persecutor that believ'd a tittle of any Religion; so far are their Officiousness, Vexations, and Crueltys, from being only the mischievous Effects of a mistaken Persuasion, which is a very good-natur'd Excuse that is commonly made for those Men-devouring Monsters, who themselves have no Humanity, to make allowances for the Education or the Capacity, for the Simplicity or Sincerity of others.

After this Reflection I did further assert, as you may remember, that those cou'd be found in the World (particularly the PANTHEISTS) who not only were, but also appear'd intirely unconcern'd in all Disputes, of which number I profess my self to be one. Their *System of Philosophy* I did in confidence communicate to you; and of this System you acknowledg'd such an Indifference to be a necessary Effect, tho at the same time you neither approv'd the one nor the other, as being equally a Stranger to both: yet for the repose of so good a Friend, I wish you were grown better acquainted with that Indifference of Temper, which in me you seem so much to condemn; for Indifference of Opinion I neither approve, nor believe to be possible. Yet the Opinions of others cannot hurt your Judgment, if you govern it by sound Reason; their Variety must delight your Contemplation, their Opposition will augment your Knowledg, and their Difficulty shou'd abate your Censure. As for those Controversists who are really persuaded of the Doctrines they maintain, some of 'em, tho very rarely, have bin candid, moderate, and impartial, both in stating the Question and managing the Dispute with their Antagonists. The Author of a Book lately publish'd in *Germany*, I am apt to believe may deserve a place among those Worthys. I
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have not yet seen the Book it self, but only the Character that *Monsieur le Clerc* gives of it in the fifth Tome of his *Select Library*. It is written by *Doct̃or Fabritius*, a Professor of Divinity in the Univerſity of *Helmſtad* in the Dutchy of *Brunſwick*, and contains the State and Conſideration of the various Controversys which the *Lutherans* have with *Atheiſts*, *Heathens*, *Jews*, *Mahometans*, *Socinians*, *Anabaptiſts*, *Papiſts*, and *Calviniſts*, or the ſum of all the Controversys that are now on foot about Chriſtianity.

The Author profeſſes in the * Title of his Book, that he has handl'd theſe Subjects in Truth and Charity, and *Le Clerc* bears witness to his Fairneſs and Moderation. At leaſt he cannot err for want of knowing his Duty; for the Diſpoſitions he requires in a Diſputant, and the Rules he preſcribes to him, are perfectly juſt: as that he be a Man of Probit̃y and Piety, learned and laborious, attentive and judicious, an equal Lover of Peace and Truth; that he act without Paſſion or Prejudice, and that he be not raſh in his Suſpicions, Cenſures, or Imputations; that he diſtinguiſh the Opinions of whole Churches from thoſe of particular Doct̃ors, and their Symbolical Books from the Writings of private Divines; that he do not confound fundamental with circumſtantial or incidental Doctrines, the improper Expreſſions of ſome Authors with their true Notions better worded, nor what they expreſly teach with the Conſequences charg'd on 'em by others againſt their Will; that he do not attribute the failings of particular Perſons to intire Societys,

* *Johannis Fabricii, Sacræ Theologiæ Doct̃oris & Profeſſoris primarii, &c. Conſideratio variarum Controversiarum; videlicet earum quæ nobis intercedunt cum Atheis, Gentilibus, Judæis, Mahommedanis, Socinianis, Anabaptiſtis, Pontificiis, & Reformatis, in varietate & charitate inſtituta. Helmſtadii, 1704. in 4to. Pag. 608.*

nor take the Opinions of others from the Books of his own side, but from their genuine Confessions of Faith and other authoriz'd Writings; that he do not multiply Questions, or engage in Disputes for Dispute sake, nor pick endless Quarrels, but propose to himself the defence of Truth, the promoting of Piety, and the establishing of Peace, treating his Adversarys with Sincerity, Meekness, and Charity, without wresting their Words, calumniating their Persons, or provoking them by malicious Insinuations or injurious Expressions.

Since therefore, Sir, for want of equal Helps, Application, or Capacitys, Men must necessarily differ; what a happy Use might they make of their Controversys, and what numerous Discoverys in Nature might their Contests produce, wou'd they but manage their Disputes with these or the like Rules, and with such a peaceable Disposition of Mind! How well *Doctor Fabritius* has follow'd his own excellent Plan, I cannot determin; but that the Execution of so good a Design is very possible, *Monsieur le Clerc* has afforded us a sufficient Instance: for, giving an account of this Book, he took that occasion to make a short *Digression* touching the best manner of treating the present Controversys about Religion; and he has exemplify'd his Method by stating the famous Question about *Socinianism*, tho he be no *Socinian* himself. Nor must you, Sir, as many have done, confound *Arianism* here, or *Sabellianism*, with *Socinianism*, but understand by this Word that System of Doctrine, and that Manner of expounding Scripture, which was taught by *Socinus*, and is now approv'd by his Followers; for some other *Unitarians*, you know, render no religious Adoration to *Jesus Christ*, since they do not hold him to be the supreme Deity, wherein, if they do not act more

consistently with Piety, yet I think they do with their own Opinions more than the *Socinians*.

Seeing at present I have nothing of my own to impart worth your acceptance, and that you do not perfectly understand the *French* Language, I send you hereby the Translation of *Monsieur le Clerc's Digression*, which ought not to be lost to mere *English* Readers, since we have as many Controversys agitated among us as any Nation whatsoever; which I am so far from thinking a Disgrace or Unhappiness, that on the contrary I count it our Felicity and Glory, being the surest Sign of an inquisitive and active Genius, of the love of Truth and increase of Knowledg, and of the envy'd Liberty we enjoy of professing our Judgments about every thing. The Concord of those Places where this Freedom is not allow'd, nor any such Controversys discuss'd, is like Men agreeing about Colours in the dark, or like the Peace restor'd to his Country by a Tyrant after he has made it a Desert; such a Silence being an infallible Symptom of Ignorance, Sloth, and Servitude, of abject and broken Spirits, but not of Union or Science. Now I leave you to *Monsieur le Clerc*, and my self, Sir, to your kindest Thoughts.

Digression.

Digression.

IN order to judg exactly of the Controversys that are among *Christians*, we must distinguish in every Society three sorts of Opinions. The first are *Opinions of Religion*, by virtue whereof they believe they shall be sav'd, and without which they do not hope for Salvation in that Society. The second are *Opinions of Controversy*, which consist in rejecting in one's Judgment certain Doctrines which are contrary to those of the Society, tho Salvation is not made to depend on such a Rejection. The third are *Opinions of Theology* or Philosophy, which are scarce understood by any but those of the Trade, and which the People never pry into or comprehend, tho they are not thought to be therefore in any danger of Damnation. There is no *Christian* Society which does not hold these three sorts of Opinions; but to make the matter easier conceiv'd, we shall take the *Socinians* for an example.

I. The *Socinians* lay down for *the Doctrines of Religion*, That there is an eternal Being, all-wise, all-good, and all-powerful, which has created the Heavens, and the Earth with all that they contain, and Men in particular with a design to do 'em good: That Men, who are come to the Age of Discretion, have all offended him by not living according to the Light they have, and therefore need his pardon for their Sins, excepting nevertheless one Man, who shall be mention'd in due place: That this God had formerly reveal'd his Will to the *Jews* by the means of his *Prophets*, whose Books compose the Volume we call the *Old Testament*: That afterwards he

reveal'd it in a more perfect manner by the means of his Son *Jesus Christ*, born of a Virgin, but otherwise a Man such as we are, altho without Sin, and assisted in a very extraordinary manner by the Spirit of his Father: That *Jesus Christ* has caus'd the same Truths to be publish'd by the Ministry of his *Apostles*, to whom he gave the holy Spirit, and whom he sent to preach to all those that wou'd hear them: That this Revelation is found in the Books of the *New Testament*, which contain all that ought to be believ'd concerning God and *Jesus Christ*, all that ought to be practis'd in Obedience to them, and all that can be hop'd or expected from them: That this *Jesus*, after having perform'd a World of Miracles, suffer'd the *Jews* to fasten him to a Cross, on which he dy'd to confirm his Doctrine, to show us a good Example, and to be able to offer his Blood to God in Heaven for the Expiation of our Sins: That he was bury'd, that he rose again, that he ascended into Heaven, where, after having exiated our Sins, he reigns over all Nature by the Power which God his Father has given him; and that he will come to judg the living and the dead, rewarding those that have obey'd his *Gospel*, by raising their Bodys to enjoy with their Souls a happy Immortality, and punishing the rest with Pains proportionable to their Sins and conformable to divine Justice: That in *Jesus Christ* must be acknowledg'd the Royal Authority which he has receiv'd of his Father in Heaven and Earth; that he must be obey'd, that his Assistance must be implor'd, and that he ought to be worship'd as the only Vicegerent of God, according to the exprefs Commandment of his Father.

This is what can be properly call'd the Religion of the *Socinians*, seeing that it is by virtue of their Belief of these Articles, and by leading a Life agreeable to the
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the same, that they expect to be sav'd; for certainly the true Religion of *Christians* is that which they believe themselves oblig'd to observe in order to obtain Salvation, and without which they are persuaded that they cou'd not partake of Mercy. These points are so clearly contain'd in the holy *Scripture*, that they glory in them, as being ever receiv'd and still believ'd by all *Christians*. They are the Contents of the antient *Creeds*, and particularly of that of the *Apostles*, which is much plainer than the rest. Wherefore in order to absolve or condemn them with respect to what is call'd their Religion, it must first be consider'd, whether this be sufficient or not to obtain the Remission of Sins: and then it must be brought to a Determination, whether a Man who sincerely reads the holy *Scripture*, and that finds in it no more than these Points; who believes and observes them with all his Heart, being likewise further prepar'd to believe and observe whatever he shou'd discover in it besides: whether a Man, I say, with this Persuasion, and dispos'd after this manner, were unworthy of the Mercy of God.

II. Secondly, the *Socinians* have *Opinions of Controversy*, which consist, for example, in rejecting what is taught among other *Christians* touching a Trinity of Persons in one Divine Essence, whereof the second is begotten by the first, and the third proceeds from the other two; touching the Hypostatical Union of the second of these Persons with the human Nature of *Jesus Christ*, yet so as that the other two divine Persons are not incarnated; touching the Satisfaction of *Jesus Christ*, who, according to the greatest part of other *Christians*, has undergon at his Death a Punishment equivalent to what all Mankind had deserv'd; so that the Justice of God
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being satisfy'd to the utmost, he requires nothing else of Men, but that by Faith they accept this Satisfaction which *Jesus Christ* has made for them.

The *Unitarians* reject these and the like Doctrines because they believe they are not reveal'd, nor at all to be found in the holy *Scripture*, without greatly forcing the literal Signification, and joining several Scholastick Ideas to those which the *Scripture* affords us. They do their best endeavour to answer all the Passages objected to them, and to prove their own Sentiments by other Passages, as may be seen in their *Catechism*: Nay they believe that these Doctrines are contrary to right Reason, which Revelation does not destroy but suppose. If they have much ado to bring themselves off in many Passages that are objected to them, and if they wrest some others, as they are reproach'd to have done; it must be confest that the things in question are very nice and difficult, being Mysterys that are above human Reason. 'Tis certain that they are Controversys which may even puzzle the wisest, as Experience has shown, since all *Christians* have almost always disputed about them. But however this may be, the *Socinians* do not make their Religion to consist in rejecting what other *Christians* believe concerning these Doctrines, as if it were absolutely necessary to reject them expressly in order to be sav'd. In their Judgment, one might be ignorant of all these Disputes, without being the less acceptable to Almighty God.

Here then it ought to be examin'd, whether those things wherein we differ from them, be of as great Consequence as those wherein we agree; and whether it be just to damn People, that agree with us in those *Articles of Religion* which we have specify'd, merely for the
 sake

sake of their *Opinions of Controversy* about difficult and obscure Subjects.

III. The *Socinians* have likewise *Theological* or *Philosophical Opinions*, such as what they believe concerning the finishing of the Pains of the Damn'd, which, according to them, are not to be eternal; that it is contradictory to hold God may foresee future Contingents; that the Existence of God cannot be concluded from the Contemplation of Nature, and such other matters.

But they do not impose a Necessity on any Divine, and much less on the People, to take sides in these Questions. They look on these and the like as difficult Problems, where Men may follow different Sentiments; so that supposing all they say about them were confuted, they think their Religion wou'd not be for all that the less true in it self, or the less safe from all Attacks.

To judg solidly therefore of their Doctrines, we ought, as I have said, to examin those which I call'd *Doctrines of Religion*; and if we believe, that, together with a *Christian* Life, they may be sufficient to obtain the Mercy of God, these People may be securely tolerated till God is pleas'd to grant 'em greater Light. After the same manner ought we to consider all the other Controversys which are among *Christians*, and if we found that every Sect retain'd the Essentials, we shou'd pardon all their *Theological Disputes and Speculations*, provided that each of 'em did pardon the rest; for to have peace it must be desir'd by both sides.

F I N I S.

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