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To our Cou(n)trymen dispersed in the persecution of the Gospell, especially to them at Strasburgh, Zurick, Disborough, Emden, Wesell etc Thenglishe Congregation at Frankfurd wisheth mercy & increase of grace from God the father throghe Jesus Christ our Lord.¹

We doubt not derely beloved, but you have heard as well by letters, as report, of the excellent graces & mercie which our good God & heavenly father has shewed unto our litell congregation in this Citie of Frankford, for that he has not only made the magisrats and com(m)ons favorable towards us & loving, but also hath geven them an heart with compassion to tender us, in so mucche that every man helpith us, no man is against us, mucche love, no grudge, glad to please, loth to annoy us. Yea and to declare this good will not to be of the mean sort, nor so small as our brethern have felt otherwhere, they have granted that thing which emongs others, & in other cities, we

¹ Address not in *Troubles*.

colde never obteyne, neither² durst almost hope fore, for what greater threasure or sweeter comfort, can a Christian man desier then to have a churche wherin he may serve god, in puritie of faith & integritie of lyfe? Which thing if we wishe fore, let us not refuse it, seing wher we wolde, we colde not obteyne it. And here yet it is granted in so ample wise, that being subiect to no blemishe, no not as much as to thevels of suspicion (from the which few churches ar free) we may preach, minster (sic), & use discipline, to the trewe setting forth of God's glorie, & good example to others. And for our parts we have not bene negligent, as touching thexecution of the benefitt granted for the 29o³ of July we had God be thanked tow(sic) sermons, to our singular comforte, & great ioye of all godly men⁴. Wherefore bretherne, seing you have endured the payne of persecution with us, we thoght it likewise our dueties to make you pertakers of our consolation, that all together, we may gyve thanks to our loving father which is more tender over us, then the mother over her (Margin: i Cor. io) only sonne⁵, neither soffreth us to be tempted above that we may bere, but even top thissue of the temptation geveth prosperous successe, trusting by God's (Margin: Phil.2) grace, that he which hath geven you that gift, not only to beleave in Christ but also to suffer for his sake, will so direct your harts, that no respect of com(m)oditie ther, nor yet feare of burden here may onst⁶ move you, to shrinke from your vocation, which is in one faith, one minstration, one tonge & one consent to serve god in his churche. What more manifest signe, [p. 27] what playner declaration, what worde more express & lively can we have of duetie & vocation, then when god speaketh in our harts by faith, guydeth us out of perills, through his grace, & now last of all offreth us a resting

² *Troubles* has 'not obtaine nor'.

³ *Troubles* has 19 July.

⁴ *Troubles* has 'heere' added at end of sentence.

⁵ *Troubles* has 'childe' for 'sonne' and marginal reference to Cor 18.

⁶ *Troubles* has 'once' for 'onst'.

place of his extraordinary⁷ mercy? You remember yt before, we resorted together in hope to obtaine a churche, & shall we now draw backe, as unmindfull of Gods good providence, which has procured us one unspotted, & free from all dreggs of superstitious ceremonies? What think you, if the prophet (Margin: Psal. 84⁸) had had this offre, who desired to be porter in the howse of God, & more esteemed one day so spent then a thousand⁹ otherwayes. Either what meant (Margin: [Psalm] 25¹⁰) he when he said, One request I demande of the Lorde, which I will seeke after, that is that I may dwell in the howse of the Lorde, all the dayes of my life. Had David no experience? Or felt he not what grief it was to want the Congregation? And surely we must gra(u)nt, he was fare more perfect than we bee. For he being conversant in this worlde, sett his delight wholly in heavenly things. And many of us (we speke to all our shame¹¹) as if we had already forgott¹² thende of our creation, ar plunged in earthly affections, & worldly respects. So that through our infirmities, this excellent benefitt is like to be frustrate. For some doute who shall be preferr'd: other seeke encrease of learning: many follow the com(m)odity of lyving; certeyne loke for a new vocation: so that it is a wonder to see the deformities of mans affections. God graunt that we may learne at their ensample w(hi)ch (Margin: Matt.22) being called to the marriage, cam not, what it is to esteme in time the worthyness of God's benefitt: lest by the losse of the same, we after fale (Margin: Heb.11¹³) into unprofitable repentance, seking again our losse with teares, as the (Margin: Mich 3) reprobate Esau, & yet never the nere. We charge no one man Bretherne, nor yet meane all, & on what considerations these excuses were pretended, we suspend our judgment,

⁷ *Troubles* has 'exceeding' for 'exrraordinary'.

⁸ *Troubles* has Psal 42 in margin.

⁹ Written M in manuscript, *Troubles* has 'thousand'.

¹⁰ *Troubles* has Psal 27 in margin.

¹¹ *Troubles* has '(we speake it to our shame)'.

¹² *Troubles* has 'forgotten'.

¹³ *Troubles* has 'Heb 12' in margin.

referring the same to our imperfections & infirmitie, wherby the adversarie ceaseth not to batter dayly the wales of Gods temple. As touchinge the point of preferment. we are persuaded thoroughly, that it has this meaning, that every man thoght of himself modestly, humbly submitting himself to all men, unhabling no man, for as muche as you knowe, that he that¹⁴ seketh ambition, glorye, vantadge¹⁵, or such lyke, is not moved with gods sprit (sic), as witness thinstructions that Christ our master gave to his disciples, who labouring almost¹⁶ of lyke a disease, were admonished that he which did excell emongs them, sholde abbass himself to his inferiors. The¹⁷ which maladie Saint Paul perceyvinge to infect as a kanker, (Margin: 1 Thess.1; 2 Thess.1; Col 1; Ph.1¹⁸) most diligently frameth his stile, that he might not once¹⁹ seeme to prefere himself to others in the course of his ministrie. And as for learning, as we wishe to all men most abundance²⁰, so we most [p. 28] earnestly require; that comparing the congregations necessetie, & youre own private commoditie, you wolde rather for Christs sake follow²¹ the better. Yea & we assure you on good advisement, that throghe gods grace, when we shall be assembled together, such orders will be taken, that besides that²² our nation is²³ hable to fornische, we shall have the Citie most forward to procure others. Yf any wolde pretende the hardenes of the Contrie, & charges, our experience may sufficiently satisfie him²⁴, who having travelled throghe most parts, wher the goppell is preched, have not founde so many com(m)odities for

¹⁴ *Troubles* has 'whiche' instead of 'that'.

¹⁵ *Troubles* has 'advantage'.

¹⁶ *Troubles* does not have 'almost'.

¹⁷ *Troubles* does not have 'The'.

¹⁸ *Troubles* does not have '1 Thess 1; 2 Thess 1' in margin.

¹⁹ *Troubles* does not have 'once'.

²⁰ *Troubles* has 'abu(n)dantly'.

²¹ *Troubles* has 'chose' for 'follow'.

²² *Troubles* has 'these things' for 'that'.

²³ *Troubles* has 'shalbe' for 'is'.

²⁴ *Troubles* has 'them' for 'him'.

loss²⁵ charges. Resteth the terme²⁶ of calling, which we referre to yo(u)r owne²⁷ Consciences, beseching yow for Christs sake, to discende into youre selves, without all partiallitie; waying the gravitie of the matter, which is gods, & the seely excuse which the flesh minstreth. Consider what God wolde saye, I have prepared a plentifull & ripe harvest, which standeth in a readiness, & waiteth for the mower, and have appointed the taxe²⁸. I have geven instruments & all things fit for the labour, if thou forslowe it, the cropp is in daunger, if thou loke for oft warning thou declarest great negligence. This speache Derely beloved, or very like, God used to Noah, Abraham, Hieremie²⁹, &³⁰ they thoght their vocation strong. But you throghe Gods benefitt, do not only heare God this³¹ p(er)suading in youre harts, but also have bene, by externe calling, confirmed, & according therunto have walked to the great glorie of God, & profitt of the Congregation. We trust therefore bretherne, & in Jesus Christ require it, that you wolde hyde yo(u)r talent no longer, but having now³² occasion to employe it, you wolde put it forthe, for youre maisters³³ advantage, and youre owne discharge. For if you fele in youre selves like comfort³⁴, as we do, w(hi)ch ar here assembled to heare the word of God preached, & the sacraments minstred, we assure you, you sholde sensiblye perceyve that which the Prophet speaketh in (Margin: Psal.42) these termes, As the chased hart panteth for greadines of waters: even so O Lord my soule seketh after thee: my soule burneth for thirst, in seking the Lord, & saith, alas when shall I be hable to appeare before the face of the lyving god? What thing then ought we to have in greater recom(m)dation, then the ordre & police which

²⁵ *Troubles* has 'less' for 'loss'.

²⁶ *Troubles* has 'tyme' for 'terme'.

²⁷ *Troubles* does not have 'owne'.

²⁸ *Troubles* has 'appointed thee thy taxe'.

²⁹ *Troubles* has 'Ieremiah'.

³⁰ 'Yet' crossed out, not in *Troubles*.

³¹ *Troubles* has 'thus' for 'this'.

³² *Troubles* has 'new' for 'now'.

³³ *Troubles* has 'Master his advantage'.

³⁴ *Troubles* has 'iff your feele in your hartes comforte'.

god has established in his church? That we may be taught by his worde, that we may worship him, & call upon his name with one accorde, that we may have the trewe use of the³⁵ sacraments to helpe us to the same? For these be the means wherby we must be confirmed in our faith, in the feare of god, in holynes of conversation, in contempt of the worlde, & in the love of life everlasting. And for this consideration St. Paul saith, not that this ordre, which our Lorde has sett in his church, sholde only be for the rude & simple, but maketh it com(m)on for all excepting no man. (Margin: Eph. 4) For he hath ordeyned, saith he, some to be Apostles, some Prophets, some Evangelists, others to be teachers & instructors, to confirme the godly, & to labour to finishe the buylding of Christs body, till we be all broght to one consent in faith, to the knollage of the sonne of God, to a parfect man, and finally to the iust measure of a ripe Christian age. Let us well³⁶ mark that he saith not, that god hath left the scripture only, that every man sholde read it, but also that he hath erected a policie & ordre, that there sholde be some to teache, and not for one day but all the time of our life, even to the death, for that is the time of our perfection. Wherefore bretherne, let us submit our selves and leave of farthar to tempt God, seing that if we will be of the body of Christ, we most obey to this generall rule. Let no respect of worldly pollicye [p. 29] staye us, let no persuasion blynde us, but lett us fulfill in our selves that which Esaye³⁷ forwarneth. (Margin: Esay. 60) That gods children shall be as pigeons, which flye³⁸ by flocks into their doufhouse, which is the place wher the worde of God is preached, the sacraments adminstred, & prayer used. To conclude therefore Derely beloved, let every man call his conscience to counsell, & besydes these sweat allurements let us lerne to prevent our adversaries, who seking ever to obscure god's glorie, may easily

³⁵ *Troubles* has 'his' for 'the'.

³⁶ *Troubles* has 'all' for 'well'.

³⁷ *Troubles* has 'Esais'.

³⁸ *Troubles* has 'flee' for 'flye'.

cavell at this dissipation. And wolde God³⁹ the sclander were not all redye, to our great grief, in sondrie places scatered, in so much that in England many take occasion to remain in their filth: & some thinke they may dissemble, till⁴⁰ a church be confirmed. Perceyving that this our scatering augmenteth the grief of persecution; & so through our negligence we losse them for whom Christ dyed. Consider bretherne, it is gods cause, he requireth you, it is your duetie, necessitie urgeth, tyme willeth, your father speaketh, children must obey, our enemyes are diligent, & the adversarye is at hand. Almighty god graunt for his sonnes sake, y(a)t we may rightely ponder the matter, follow our calling, serve the torne, heare the speaker, walke in obedience, & resist our enemies. We desire you all, take this in good part, seing we have writen nothing but what charitie dyd endyte, & the which⁴¹ we trust & wishe you wolde have done to us in case like. From Franckfurd this 2o August, An(n)o 1554⁴².

Michael Gill John Mackbray John Bendall
John Staunton Will(iam) Whittingham Thomas Wood
Will(iam) Hamon Will(iam) Williams⁴³

³⁹ *Troubles* has 'woulde to God'.

⁴⁰ *Troubles* has 'untill'.

⁴¹ *Troubles* has 'that which'.

⁴² *Troubles* adds 'Your lovyng brethern'.

⁴³ *Troubles* has the signatures in a different order and does not include John Bendall.