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A
P E R S U A S I V E ✓
T O
C O N F O R M I T Y,

Address'd to the

Q U A K E R S.



By J. R O G E R S, D. D.

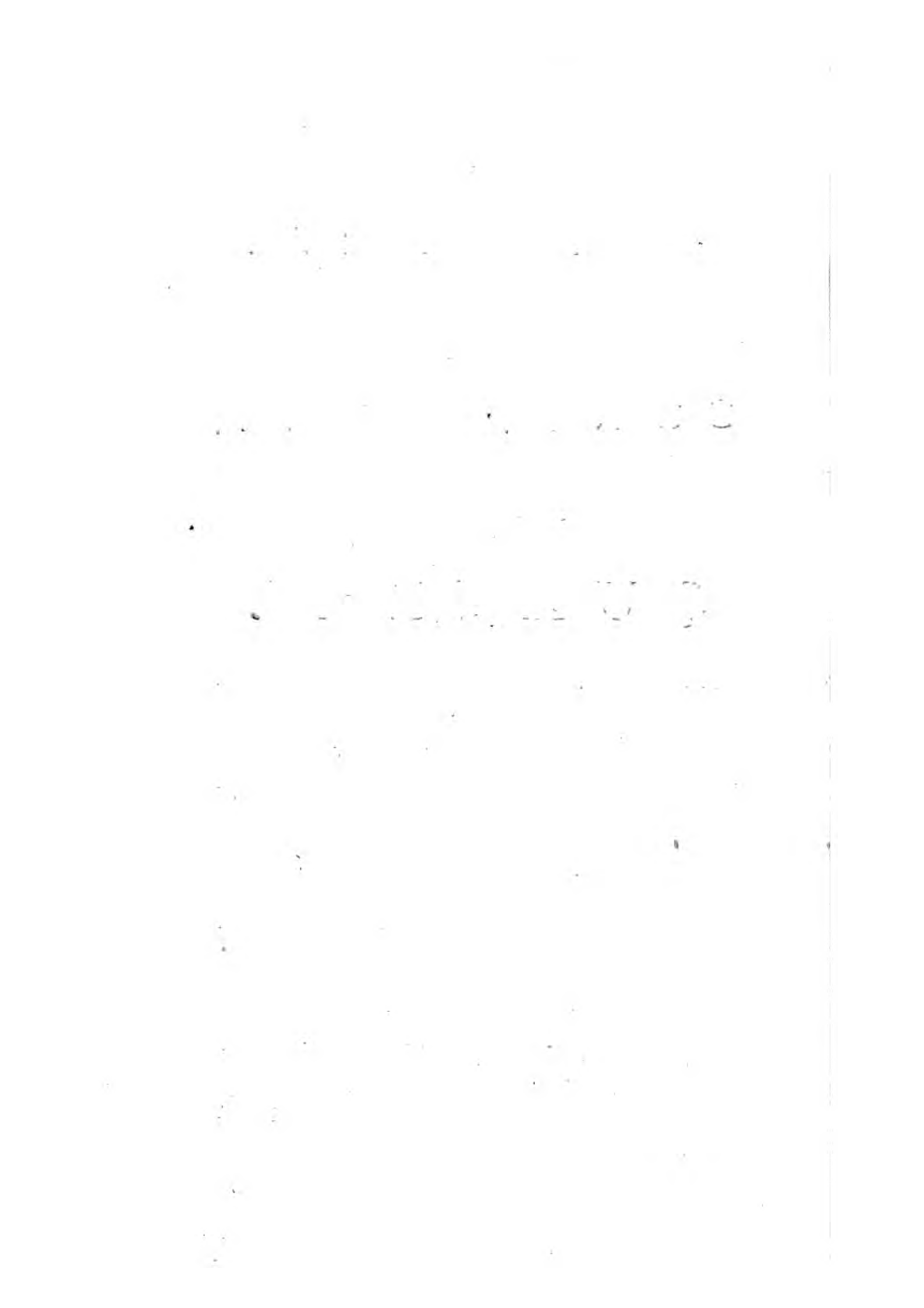
Late Vicar of *St. Giles's Cripplegate*, *Sub-Dean*
and *Canon of Wells*, and *Chaplain in*
Ordinary to HIS MAJESTY.

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A
P E R S U A S I V E
T O
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Address'd to the Q U A K E R S.

My Good F R I E N D,

I Have for some time been press'd in Spirit to offer you my Thoughts concerning your Religion, and I trust I am moved by God to do it. The Conscience of my own Duty, and my sincere Affection to you, will not suffer me to be silent, where I think your Salvation concerned: And what I have to say, I chuse rather to lay before you in writing, than by personal Conversation, because it will be in your Power more attentively to consider it. If what I suggest to you be the Truth, may God Almighty by his Spirit open your Heart to receive it. If I am mistaken, may the same Spirit enable you to shew me my Mistake; for I hope I am, and always shall be,

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equally prepared to acknowledge an Error, as to defend the Truth.

I assure myself you acknowledge the Scriptures to be the Word of God, the proper Rule and Measure of our Duty as Christians. We are told — *they are able to make men wise unto salvation*^a — ; and neither you nor I need desire to be wiser. All the Differences among Christians I take to be about the Meaning of these holy Writings. Some things in them are so plain and easy, that no Man who reads or hears them in a Language which he understands, can miss the Sense of them: But there are also *many things hard to be understood, which they who are unlearned and unstable, wrest to their own destruction*^b. And if in the Days of the Apostle *Peter* there was reason for this Complaint, when the Language in which the Scriptures were written was generally understood, the Customs and Practices referr'd to in them known by all Men, and the Ways of speaking were of common and familiar Use; many more Places must be difficult to us, who are removed above 1600 Years from that Age, and the Danger to the *Unlearned* and *Unstable* must be much greater of *wresting them to their destruction*. The first Inquiry therefore necessary

^a 2. Tim. iii. 15.

^b 2 Pet. iii. 16.

sary to all Christians is, by what Means they may arrive at the true Sense of the holy Scriptures. For it is not a thing of little Moment, whether we understand them aright or not, since we are plainly told, that they who wrest them, do it to their own Destruction. Now the first and principal Means of understanding the Scriptures, is the inward Assistance of God's Holy Spirit, opening and enlightening our Minds: And this our Church teaches all her Members devoutly to ask of God. But we must observe, that the Spirit works ordinarily by outward Means. So *Faith*, we are told, *comes by hearing*^c. The Spirit sanctifies and blesses the outward Means of Hearing to the begetting of Faith. In like manner in conveying his other Graces, he concurs with, and assists other outward Means, and renders them effectual to the enlightening our Minds, the restraining our Passions, and the building us up in the Knowledge and Practice of our holy Religion.

The outward Means of understanding the holy Scriptures are manifestly the same by which we must understand any other ancient Book. They who have Capacity for it, must consult the original Languages in which they were written, acquaint themselves with the
Ways

^c Rom. x. 17.

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Ways of speaking then obtaining in Use, and with the Customs and Practices referr'd to in them; and above all, inform themselves how they were understood by those who were either immediately instructed by the Apostles themselves, or lived so near their Time, that they cannot reasonably be presumed ignorant of the Doctrines they taught, or the Practices consequent to them. But for those who have not Learning to read the Scriptures in the *Greek* and *Hebrew* in which they were written, the only possible Means of acquainting themselves with the Import of them, is to read or hear them in Translations in some Language which they do understand; in which they must unavoidably depend on the Skill and Fidelity of the Translators. And if the Sense of any Places in such Translations be difficult, depending on the Knowledge of certain Customs and Practices then used, or the like, the Wit of Man can devise no Way, by which Persons not qualify'd with such Learning and Knowledge as is necessary to ascertain the Sense of such Places, can ever understand them, but consulting those whom they may reasonably presume to be so qualify'd. These (according to Mens several Capacities) are the outward Means of understanding the Import and Sense of the holy Scriptures; and with a diligent and faithful
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Use of these Means, the Holy Spirit, if sincerely prayed for, will assuredly concur, and lead us by them into all necessary Truths.

I think I cou'd clearly prove, that no Man has now any Grounds to expect in himself, or to acknowledge in another, any farther Guidance of the Spirit for the understanding the Scriptures, than his Blessing and Assistance in the Use of such ordinary Means as are in his Power. But I am persuaded, that if you carefully consider your own Conduct in this Matter, you will find Reasons to convince you of this great Truth. For ask yourself only, why you receive the *English* Bible in your Hands as the holy Scriptures. Is it not because you believe the Translators were qualify'd by their Learning for the Work, acted honestly, apply'd themselves to the proper Means, and had such a Measure of God's Assistance in the Use of those Means, as enabled them to give you a true Translation? Shou'd an ignorant and unlearned Man, who knows nothing of the original *Greek* and *Hebrew*, come with Pretensions of the Spirit, and offer you another Translation, quite contrary to this, I have too good an Opinion of your Understanding, to think you wou'd receive it. But why wou'd you reject it? Wou'd not this be your plain Reason for it, because you knew he was not able to
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use the outward Means necessary to such a Work?

We will go on a little farther. — There are in the Translation in your Hands many Places of dubious Meaning, so far at least as to be variously disputed among Christians. Now, consider, how was it you came to be persuaded of that Sense in which you at present understand these disputed Places? Was it not because you were taught it by some Person, or read it in some Author (suppose Mr. *Barclay*) whom you believed qualify'd to explain them to you? Perhaps you will say, that you are persuaded Mr. *Barclay* (or whoever else was your Teacher in this Case) had the Spirit, and therefore you believe him: But if he gives you Arguments and Reasons for the Sense in which he interprets these Scriptures; then it is plain, you do not receive this Sense upon the Authority of his Inspiration, but in Consequence of these Arguments and Reasons. And if the same had been offer'd you by any other Person not inspir'd, they wou'd, or ought to have had the same Effect on you. If these Arguments and Reasons are taken from the Signification of the original Words, from the Records of primitive Practice, or other Parts of Knowledge which are out of your Reach, (and from such Mr. *Barclay* often argues) then indeed you receive
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the Sense which you embrace upon Mr. *Barclay's* Authority; but not upon the Authority of his Inspiration, but of his Learning, Knowledge, &c.—and if any other Person, of whose Knowledge and Honesty you had the same Opinion, had propos'd these Arguments to you, you wou'd have made the same Inferences from them; and if you believ'd Mr. *Barclay* had not Learning to know what he affirms in these Cases, I cannot suppose you wou'd credit his Testimony. In plain truth, *John*, if you seriously examine what pass'es in your own Mind, you will perceive that in your present Persuasion concerning the Sense of Scripture, you are led and guided by the Authority of Men, as much as any Person of our Profession of the same Station and Capacity with yourself. They and you read the Scriptures in our Translation; for the Faithfulness of which both equally depend on the Translators, and cannot indeed do otherwise. And in the Points upon which you differ, they follow partly their own Perceptions of the Sense of Scripture, and partly the Interpretations of the Guides and Pastors of our Church: You likewise collect some things from Scripture yourselves; but if you examine your own Persuasions, and the Grounds of them, you will find you much

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oftener follow some Book or Person by whom you are or have been instructed. Now whether You or They are deceived, either in your own Conclusions, or in those you receive from the Authority of your Guides, it concerns both attentively to consider. It is our Duty, you know, to *try all things*, as well as to *hold fast that which is good*. Without such Trial indeed we cannot be well assured that what we hold is good. And the Rule by which we must judge in this Trial, must be the Holy Scriptures: for in them only is the Covenant of the Gospel proposed to us. Without them we must have been ignorant of the Doctrine of the Christian Religion, and shou'd scarcely have known that Jesus Christ had come into the World. And in applying this Rule, the Nature of the Thing (as I observed) requires us to use such outward Means, as are necessary to the understanding other ancient Books; and we may with firm Assurance rely on God, that his Spirit will accompany us in a diligent and faithful Use of these Means.

To this Trial I invite you: And as to the Assistance I offer you in making it, I pretend not to compare myself with any other Persons, whose Guidance you may have followed. By the Grace of God I am what I am. I desire only
only

address'd to the QUAKERS. II

only to be rank'd with the meanest of Christ's Servants. All I intreat of you is, to believe me an honest Man, your sincere Friend, and who wou'd not, to gain the whole World, knowingly mislead you. Consider what I lay before you without Prejudice or Partiality; and pray earnestly to God, that he wou'd lead you by his Spirit, and shew you which is *the Way, the Truth, and the Life.*

The first thing I wou'd observe to you from the Scriptures is, the Union which they require among Christians. Thus our Lord prays, that *all who shou'd believe in him might be one*^d. And accordingly the first Christians, we read, *were all of one heart and of one mind*^e. And how passionately do the Apostles exhort their Converts? — *By the name of the Lord Jesus, that they all speak the same things; that there be no divisions among them; that they be perfectly join'd together in the same mind, and the same judgment*^f. And in another Place, — *§ If there be any consolation in Christ, if any comfort of love, if any fellowship of the Spirit, if any bowels and mercies, fulfil ye my joy; be ye like minded, having the same love, being of one accord, of one*

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mind:

^d John xvii. 20, 21.

^e Acts iv. 32.

^f 1 Cor. i. 10.

[§] Philip. ii. 1, 2, 3.

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mind: Let nothing be done thro' strife or vain-glory, but in lowliness of mind let each esteem other better than themselves. And a little after, — Do all things without murmuring or disputing ^h.

I presume I need not observe to you, that these Scriptures require not only an *inward Union* of Love and Charity, but also an *outward Union* in Worship and the Offices of Religion; because I conclude from your own Practice that you so understand them. Only you confine the Union they prescribe, to be among those of your own Persuasion. But remember, that this Duty is enjoin'd on all Christians; on all who shou'd believe on the Name of Christ. All Christians throughout the whole World are bound, as Occasion offers itself, to communicate with each other; and more especially with that Part of Christ's Church within which they dwell and reside. One Reason there is, and only one, which will justify a Separation; and that is, when we cannot continue in Union without complying with something which the Laws of God forbid. It is now about a Man's Age, since the unhappy Separation that is between us began. You went out from us, and not we from you; and it infinitely

^h Philip. ii. 14.

nately concerns you to examine seriously the Grounds of your Departure. If you cou'd not continue in Union with us without offending against some Law of God, then are you innocent, and the Guilt of the Separation lies upon us, who have forced you to it. Let us then put the Case upon this Issue, and consider attentively the Things in Dispute between us.

In the Articles of Christian Faith, as deliver'd in the Apostles Creed, I hope we agree. And as to that Point concerning the Necessity of the Holy Ghost's Assistance, and the Measure in which we are encouraged by the Gospel to expect it, I am verily persuaded, that when we come to understand one another, we mean the same thing; and have only used ourselves to different Ways of expressing ourselves about it. Read but the Prayers in our Liturgy, and then judge yourself, whether it be possible for Words more fully to express the Necessity of being assisted by the Spirit; or whether there be any Measure of his Graces, necessary to Christians, which we are not there taught ardently to request of God. And as to those lesser Things, your using different Habits of Cloathing, and peculiar Ways of speaking in your Forms of Address, and the like, I confess I look upon them as mere Trifles. But be
there

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there more or less in them, they cannot be a just Reason of your Separation from us; because you may retain all these things, and yet continue in Communion with us. And as to your Scruple about taking an Oath, though I think you mistaken, yet if you are so persuaded, act accordingly: But remember, that our Church (though she teaches the Lawfulness of Oaths) yet neither obliges you, in your Station, to take an Oath, nor requires you to subscribe to the Lawfulness of taking one, as a Condition of Communion. And the Indulgence of the Government in receiving your Affirmation instead of an Oath, you will be as much entitled to in our Church, as out of it: And therefore I look upon these things as no way concerning the Question between us.

But the Points upon which we really and materially differ, I take to be these:

1. Concerning an outward stated Ministry.
2. The two Sacraments, Baptism and the Lord's Supper.

These you wholly reject, and we retain, and insist on as perpetual Institutions of the Christian Religion.

Now,

Now, as to an outward Ministry, (if I understand you rightly) you acknowledge the Necessity of outward Teaching the Doctrines of the Gospel; and that *none can teach except he be sent*ⁱ. But concerning the Mission or sending necessary to this Office, we differ. You suppose that no Person is any otherwise to be separated or set apart for this Office, than as he is inwardly called by the Holy Ghost; and that this Call is to be manifested to other Christians, by his Gifts and Abilities for this Office. We contend that this inward Call, Gifts and Abilities, are to be tried and examined by Persons appointed for that Purpose in the Church; and that no Man ought (ordinarily) to take upon him this Office, or be acknowledged in it by other Christians, but He who is thus Tried and Approved, and, by the *Imposition of Hands*, appointed or *ordained* to it. I say, *Ordinarily*; because we acknowledge, as much as you do, that if any Person be immediately call'd and sent by God, and can give such Evidences of his Calling and Mission, as by the Rules of the Gospel we are bound to admit, it is our Duty to receive and acknowledge him in that Character. But because we are often forewarned, that *false Teachers and false Prophets* shou'd come, all pretending the
Name

ⁱ Rom. x. 15.

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Name and Mission of Christ; so gifted and powerful, *that if it were possible they shou'd deceive even the Elect*^k: and are commanded to *try and examine the spirits*^l, before we receive them; and are told likewise, that this Trial is exceeding difficult; *for, as Satan transforms himself into an angel of light, so likewise his ministers wou'd transform themselves into the likeness of the ministers of Christ*^m; from these Considerations we think ourselves obliged to be exceedingly cautious how we admit any such extraordinary Calls, lest we be *led away by the cunning craftiness of those who lie in wait to deceive*ⁿ. And what better Method can be taken for the Trial of such Pretensions, than that every Person, before he is admitted in the Character of a publick Teacher, shou'd be sifted and examin'd by wise and grave Men, whose Lives have been set apart to the Study of the holy Scriptures, the proper Rule by which all Spirits and all Doctrines are to be tried? Now consider, what Security you have in your Teachers equal to this. You will say, that the Gifts which appear in them, and the Edification and Improvement you receive from them, testify to you that they speak from
God:

^k Matth. xxiv. 24. Mark xiii. 22.

^l 1 John iv. 1.

^m 2 Cor. 11. 13, 14, 15.

ⁿ Ephes. iv. 14.

God: But remember, that there are as powerful Preachers among the Papists, and their People profess to be as much edify'd by them, as you can do by yours. Nay, the *Turks* themselves have most powerful Teachers, who speak to them in the Name of God, and profess the immediate Call and Guidance of his Spirit, and may appeal to the same Proof of it that you do, (namely) — their powerful Gifts, and the Impression they make on their Hearers. How then can you distinguish a Spirit of Truth from a Spirit of Error by these Proofs, which may be, and in these Cases are, pleaded as strongly for Error, as they can be for Truth?

But let us hear what the Scripture saith of the Appointment of Teachers and Ministers in the Church. Of the Mission of the Apostles by Christ, there is, I think, no Dispute between us. When, by their Preaching, *the number of the disciples was multiplied*°, they instituted the Order of Deacons by the *Imposition of Hands*. And that these were not only *Ministers of Tables* to distribute the publick Alms of the Church, but also *Ministers of the Word*, is plain from the Example of *Stephen* and *Philip*. Of the first Institution of Presbyters or
C Elders,

° Acts vi. 6.

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Elders, we have not so particular an Account. But when we come to the Eleventh Chapter of the *Acts*, we read that there were Elders in the Church of *Jerusalem*^p; and then after we are told, *Paul and Barnabas ordained Elders in every Church*^q, where they had planted the Gospel in a former Journey. *Titus* is commanded to do the same in *Crete*^r: And *Timothy* is largely directed in the Qualifications and Office of *Bishops* and *Deacons*^s; is required to *lay hands suddenly on no man*^t: And his own Gifts are, in one place, said to be conferr'd on him *by the laying on the hands of the Presbytery*^u; and, in another place, by *Paul's hands*^w. That the Elders mention'd in Scripture were not merely Persons of greater Age than others, but Persons distinguish'd by Office and Authority in the Church, is very evident. For thus *Paul* tells the Elders at *Ephesus*, that the *Holy Ghost had made them Overseers over the flock*^x. Some Elders are said to *rule well*; and therefore to be *worthy of double honour, especially if they labour'd in the word and doctrine*^y. And to these *Rulers* all inferior Christians are required to *submit themselves, and obey them, as those*

^p Verse 30.

^q Acts xiv. 23.

^r Tit. i. 5.

^s 1 Tim. iii.

^t 1 Tim. v. 22.

^u 1 Tim. iv. 14.

^w 2 Tim. i. 6.

^x Acts xx. 28.

^y 1 Tim. v. 17.

those who watch'd for their souls, and must give an account to God^z. When the *Revelations*, one of the latest Books of Scripture, was written, the Church was better settled and ordered than it cou'd be at the first Plantation; and there we find the seven Epistles of the Spirit directed to the Angels of the seven Churches in the *Lesser Asia*^a, who were manifestly Persons to whom the Government of those Churches was committed; for otherwise, why were they accountable for the Misbehaviours of those Churches? In truth, they were the Bishops of those Churches, and the Names of several of them are transmitted to us by the early Writers of the Church. If there be any Doubt concerning the Meaning of any of those Scriptures I have referr'd to, in Proof of a standing Ministry of several Orders settled by the Apostles in the Churches, that Doubt must surely be removed from any one who reads the Writings of *Clement* and *Ignatius*, Men who were personally taught by the Apostles themselves; were *Fellow-labourers*^b with them, cou'd neither be ignorant of their Institutions, nor can be suspected of misreporting them to us. And we have clear Proof from Age to Age, that the Three Orders of the Ministry

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which

^z Heb. xiii. 17.

^a Rev. ii.

^b Philip. iv. 3.

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which we retain, were continued quite thro' the Christian Church, (not a single Sect excepted) down to *Calvin's* Reformation at *Geneva*, who abolish'd one of them (namely) the Order of Bishops, in that Church. But a total Rejection of all outward Distinction of Orders in the Church, was never own'd or attempted by any who were call'd Christians, 'till the Anabaptists arose in *Germany* about 150 Years since; whose wicked Actions, if you know their History, I am sure you abhor. That Christ, or, which to us is all one, his Apostles did institute an outward stated Ministry to be continued down successively, by an outward Ordinance, in the Church, we have every jot as much Proof, as we have that the Books of Scripture were written by those holy Persons whose Names they bear. If you have read the Book I left in your Hands, you cannot want more Evidence on this Head.

But let us go on, and consider the Sacrament of BAPTISM.

Our Blessed Lord, soon after his calling his Disciples, sent them forth to convert the *Jews*, to whom, as he tells us, he was specially and
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in the first Place sent, and directed them to baptize those whom they converted. This appears from the Report that is made of their executing that Commission, *John* iv. 2. Our Lord then entering into a Conference with *Nicodemus*, who came with an Inclination to be his Disciple, declares to him the first Conditions of it; — *except a man or, (as it ought to be translated) ANY ONE be born of WATER, and of the Spirit, he cannot enter into the kingdom of God*^c. These Words of Christ declare so plainly the Necessity of being regenerated by *Water*, as well as by the Spirit, that I cannot imagine how the Force of them can be avoided. When he gave his final Charge to his Apostles, and enlarged their Commission to go and TEACH (or *disciple*) *all nations*, he commands them to use this Ordinance, *baptizing them in the name of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost*^d. If there can be any Doubt of the Meaning of this Scripture, let us see how his Apostles understood him. When the Multitude, upon the Preaching of *Peter*, were pricked in their heart, and cried out *what shall we do*, *Peter* tells them, — *Repent and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ, for the remission of sins, and ye shall*

^c *John* iii. 5.

^d *Matt.* xxviii. 19.

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shall receive the gift of the Holy Ghost^e. This outward Ordinance, you see, was prescribed to them, as the Means of obtaining the Forgiveness of their Sins, and the Baptism of the Spirit. When *Philip* had converted the Eunuch, he *went down into the water and baptized him*^f. And when *Peter* preached to *Cornelius* and those with him, we read that the *Holy Ghost fell on them while they heard the word*^g; but tho' they were already baptized with the Spirit, yet he commands them to be baptized with *Water*^h. Thus also when *Lydia* was converted, *she was baptized and her household*ⁱ. The same we read of the *Taylor*,—*he was baptized and all his*^k. So also *Ananias* exhorted *Paul* to *arise and be baptized, and wash away his sins*^l. We see then how the Apostles understood the Lord; they baptized all their Converts with *Water*, and declare this Ordinance to be the prescribed Means of obtaining *remission of sins, and the gifts of the Holy Ghost*^m. And the Church which followed after them constantly retain'd this Ordinance, and taught the Necessity of it to Salvation. I confess, I am at a Loss to think by what Reasons you can

^e Acts ii. 37, 38.

^f Acts viii. 38.

^g Acts x. 44.

^h Acts x. 47.

ⁱ Acts xvi. 15.

^k Acts xvi. 33.

^l Acts xxii. 16.

^m Acts ii. 38.

can satisfy yourself in rejecting an Ordinance so plainly testify'd to in Scripture. Was it not instituted by Christ? You cannot deny it. Did he limit the Use of it, so that it shou'd oblige one Age of the Church, but not succeeding Ages? In what Scripture do you find this Doctrine? Did any of the Churches planted by the Apostles think themselves excused from observing this Ordinance? No, not one. Nay, I take upon me to assert to you, that there is not among the Christian Writers for the first four hundred Years, one Man who understands those Words of our Saviour——(*Except a man be born of water and the Spirit, he cannot enter into the kingdom of Godⁿ — and those other — He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved^o —*) in any other Sense, than as declaring the Necessity of *Water Baptism* to Salvation. Now if this be the true intended Sense of Christ's Words (and I as firmly believe it to be so, as I do that Christ spoke those Words): If this, I say, be the very Doctrine of the Scripture, consider, I beseech you, in what Condition you and yours are. Suppose that, in the last Event of things, we in our Persuasion shou'd prove to be mistaken; the worst of our Case will be only this, that
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ⁿ Joh iii. 5.

^o Mark xvi. 16.

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we shall have done more than we need have done, and used an Ordinance without which we might have been saved: But if you are mistaken, you are lost and undone for ever.—
O *John*! I cannot but tremble for you while I write this. These Words of the Lord are assuredly a Part of that Rule by which he will judge Mankind at the last Day. Remember that you are accountable not only for yourself, but your Children too. And if Christ shall ask you, Did I not in plain Words declare to you——*Except a man be born of water and the Spirit, he cannot enter into the kingdom of God?* Did I not pronounce, *He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved?* Did not the Practice of my Apostles sufficiently manifest my Meaning to you? And did not my whole Church, in all Ages, and in all Places throughout all the Earth, agree in testifying this Doctrine to you? What will your Children be able to answer to this, -but——That their Father told them Baptism was a needless thing, they need not trouble themselves about it? And what will you be able to say, but that your Father, or some Person whom you thought had the Spirit, taught you the same? *John*, the discerning a Spirit of Truth from a Spirit of Error, a real from a pretended or fancied

ci'd Inspiration, is many times very difficult. The safest Rule we can follow, is rather to judge of the Inspiration of the Man by the Truth of his Doctrine, than of the Truth of the Doctrine by the supposed Inspiration of the Teacher. If a Man teaches me nothing but the plain Truth of Scripture, though I happen to think him inspired when he is not, that Error will not hurt me: But if I receive a Doctrine contrary to holy Scripture, upon a Supposition that the Teacher is inspired, and happen to be mistaken, that Error will be fatal to me. For though a Prophet, a Worker of Miracles, nay, an *Angel from Heaven*^p, shou'd teach any thing contrary to the Scriptures, I am commanded not to receive him. Consider this seriously, and the Lord give you Understanding.

That the Sacrament of the Lord's Supper was an Institution of Christ appears plainly from Three of the Evangelists, *Matthew, Mark, and Luke*. That this Ordinance was not prescribed only to the Persons then present (the Apostles) is evident from *St. Paul*, when he mentions the Use of it among the *Corinthians*. He blames indeed some Irregularities

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larities

^p Galat. i. 8.

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larities prevailing among them in receiving it, but speaks of it as an Ordinance of perpetual Obligation, and to remain in Force 'till *Christ's coming again*⁹. From the constant Use of it, he argues against the eating or drinking things offer'd to Idols: — *Ye cannot drink the cup of the Lord, and the cup of devils; ye cannot be partakers of the Lord's table, and the table of devils*^r. — He declares it to be an outward Token and Pledge of their inward spiritual Union with Christ, and one another. — *The cup of blessing which we bless, is it not the communion of the blood of Christ? The bread which we break, is it not the communion of the body of Christ? For we being many are one bread, and one body; for we are all partakers of that one bread*^s. And in another place he affirms the same both of Baptism and this Ordinance: — *For by one Spirit we are all baptized into one body, — and have been all made to drink into one Spirit*^t. It is, I think, impossible for any one to read the tenth and eleventh Chapters of this Epistle to the *Corinthians*, without perceiving that he speaks of this Ordinance as then obtaining in the Practice of all Christians, as a Means of Grace, and a Pledge of their Union with

⁹ 1 Cor. xi. 26.

^r 1 Cor. x. 21.

^s 1 Cor. x. 16, 17.

^t 1 Cor. xii. 13.

with Christ and one another, and as enjoin'd by the Institution of Christ, which he there recites; and we have undeniable Evidence, that it was continued in all succeeding Ages of the Church. What Christ instituted, Christ only can abolish. You cannot deny that Christ instituted this Ordinance; and it concerns you seriously to consider, how it is proved to you that Christ has abolish'd it. For any Man to do this, is assuming the Authority of Christ, and taking his Kingdom from him.

You will say, perhaps, that they are the inward spiritual Acts of the Mind and Soul, supposed to accompany Men in the Participation of these Ordinances, which render them approved to God; and therefore the outward Works of being baptized with Water, and eating Bread and drinking Wine, are of little Consideration. Now we acknowledge, that the inward Graces of the Soul, Faith, Repentance, Charity, &c. are what principally recommend us to God; and if these Graces are wanting, the outward Works of Baptism, or the Lord's Supper, will profit us nothing. All this we profess, exhort, and contend for as earnestly as you can do. But then we remember at the same time, that Christ instituted and prescribed these outward Ordinances, and has

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promised that the inward Graces of the Spirit shall accompany us in a due and faithful Use of them.

Neither can it seem strange that God shou'd lay Strefs on such outward Actions, in their Nature neither good nor evil, when we consider that in all his Dispensations to Mankind he has done the same. What was it he made the Test of *Adam's* Obedience in *Paradise*, but the eating a Fruit? An Action in itself perfectly indifferent, and from which, if God had not forbidden it, it wou'd have been Superstition to have abstain'd. When he deliver'd the Law to the *Jews*, he prescribed a vast Multitude of outward Observances. And tho' he frequently taught them by his Prophets, that it was the inward Purity, the Circumcision and the Offering of the Heart, which he principally regarded; yet shou'd a *Jew* have pretended upon these Reasons to dispense with Circumcision or the Passover; shou'd he have argued, that he cou'd circumcise his Heart without Hands, and thankfully remember the Deliverance out of *Egypt* without eating the Passover, can we think he wou'd have been excused before God? Our Lord has left us a very clear Determination of this Case. The weightier Matters of the Law, he tells us, are the

the inward Graces of the Soul, *Faith, Judgment, and Mercy*; *these ought principally to be done*^u. But at the same time he resolves, that even the most minute outward Observances enjoin'd by God, even *the titbing mint, anise, and cumin*, ought not to be left undone. The Gospel has retrenched that vast Number of outward Observances enjoin'd by the Law; but still those few which God has there prescribed, he as strictly requires to be observed, as he did that Multitude under the Law.

Christ, we know, though he was spiritual in a Degree that never Man was, *even the Holy One of God*^w, yet went to *John* and received his Baptism. And it deserves our Notice, that the Holy Ghost, immediately upon his coming out of the Water, descended upon him^x, and first witnessed his Mission. But the Reason he gives for his submitting to this Ordinance is most remarkable—*For thus it becometh us to fulfil all Righteousness*^y. — Did it become Christ, *whom the Father sanctify'd and sent into the world*^z, *who had the Spirit without measure*^a, to fulfil the Righteousness of an outward Ordinance; and shall any of his

^u Matth. xxiii. 23.

^x Matth. iii. 13, 16.

^z John x. 36.

^w Mark i. 24.

^y Matth. iii. 15.

^a John iii. 34.

his Followers be too spiritual to comply with such Ordinances as he himself instituted?

I desire your Attention to one Scripture more concerning the Sacrament of the Lord's Supper. The Gospel of St. *John* was written the last of the Books of Scripture; for which Reason this Evangelist omits many things which the other Gospels had recited, but recites also many things which they had omitted; and particularly a pretty long Discourse of Christ's, in which he manifestly refers to this Sacrament. He there declares — *Except ye eat the flesh of the Son of Man, and drink his blood, ye have no life in you. — Who so eateth my flesh, and drinketh my blood, hath eternal life, and I will raise him up at the last day. He that eateth my flesh, and drinketh my blood, dwelleth in me, and I in him* ^c. — This Sacrament of the Lord's Supper not being yet instituted, his Disciples, as well as others, were at a Loss how to understand him. Had this Sacrament been instituted, they wou'd presently have apprehended his Meaning. Our Lord indeed tells us these *Words were Spirit and Life* ^d, (that is) they were to be understood in a spiritual Sense, and not in that carnal Sense in which his Hearers took them. The Flesh and
Blood

^c John vi. 53, 54, 56.

^d Verse 63.

Blood of Christ were to be spiritually eaten and drank by an inward Application of Faith; but the outward Elements of Bread and Wine were to be eaten and drank in a proper natural Sense. And when Christ came afterwards to institute this Sacrament, it appears plainly that they were so eaten and drank; and the following Practice of the Church, under the Direction of the Apostles, shews evidently that none of them understood him any otherwise.

In all the ancient Sacrifices, when some select Parts were offer'd upon the Altar, the Remainder was dressed and eaten in a festival Manner; and they only who were Partakers of this Feast were reputed to have any Interest in the Propitiation of the Sacrifice. But the Sacrifice which Christ offer'd, was his Flesh and Blood upon the Cross: And it being abhorrent to Nature, and in itself impossible, that his Followers shou'd eat that very Sacrifice which he offer'd, he appointed Bread and Wine to be eaten and drank instead of it; which, if received with those inward Graces and Dispositions of Heart which he requires, shou'd as effectually convey to us the Benefits of that Sacrifice which he offer'd, as the eating the old Sacrifices under the Law entitled the
Partakers

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Partakers to the Benefits of them. And in this Sense the Bread shou'd be verily and indeed (that is) to all Intents and Purposes his Body, and the Wine his Blood, which were offer'd for us. When this Ordinance is consider'd in this, its proper, Light, I believe every one who reads those Words of Christ above rehearsed, will in his first Thought refer them to it. They cannot indeed without manifest Force and Violence be understood otherwise. Now if Christ did there really mean eating his Flesh and drinking his Blood, as exhibited in this Sacrament, consider how dreadful is their Case who refuse or neglect it. *Except we thus eat his Flesh, and drink his Blood, we have no Life in us; we dwell not in Christ, neither Christ in us.*

I presume not to say, that God cannot, or will not, save any without the Use of these Ordinances: But this I will say, they are the ordinary Pledges and Seals of the Gospel Covenant, and I wou'd not for ten thousand Worlds be without them. Where they cannot be had, I doubt not but God will receive the true Believer without them: But where they are wilfully rejected by Men, I fear their Case will be far otherwise; and they will be reputed to *do despite to the Spirit of grace, and to count the blood*

blood of the covenant wherewith we are sanctify'd, an unboly thing ^e. God has enjoin'd these outward Ordinances, as the distinguishing Service of Christians. Moral Duties he demands from Heathens, as well as from us, so far as they are directed by that natural Law *written on the hearts of all men* ^f; but in these Ordinances we worship peculiarly as Christians. And though these outward Works have not in their Nature any more Tendency to sanctify the Soul than any other outward Actions, yet God can annex his free Gifts and Graces to what Conditions he pleases. In the Gospel he has plainly appointed these Ordinances as Means of Grace, whereby we obtain Remission of Sins, and the Gift of the Holy Ghost; and shall Man dispute the Case with him, and tell him he will have his Graces without using the Means he has appointed? These inward Graces themselves are indeed of principal Consideration as the *End*; but these outward Ordinances require also our Regard, as the prescribed *Means* of attaining that *End*. In short, both are commanded by the Lord; and *what he hath join'd together, let not Man presume to put asunder.*

E

And

^e Heb. x. 29.

^f Rom. ii. 15.

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And now, *John*, let me beseech you to pause a little, and consider, whether, when you depart from our Church on account of these Ordinances, you do not also depart from Christ who appointed them, from his Apostles who used and taught them, and from all Christians in all Ages who acknowledg'd and retain'd them. Believe me, that I have no Interest or Motive to offer these things to you, but my Concern for your Soul. I have consider'd the Christian Religion attentively, and I hope impartially; and if I were convinced, that by abiding in this Church, whereof I am an unworthy Member, I endanger'd my Salvation, no worldly Considerations shou'd prevail with me to continue in it an Hour. But I am firmly persuaded, upon a careful Examination, that this Church is the nearest in Doctrine and Constitution to those primitive Churches, pure as they came from the Hands of the Apostles, of any now in being through the whole Christian World.

It wou'd be an unspeakable Consolation to me, if I cou'd so far prevail on you, that we might *walk together in the house of God as friends*: But all I can do, is to lay before you what appears to me the *Truth of God as it is in Christ*; and whether you will hear, or whether

ther you will forbear, I shall have the Satisfaction of discharging my Conscience towards you. And when you and I shall appear before the Judgment-seat of Christ, you will bear me Testimony that I have written these things unto you. In the mean time, I shall not cease to pray for you, that God wou'd take from you all Blindness, Prejudice, and Hardness of Heart, and open your Eyes, that you may see the things which belong to your Peace.

The Grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, and the Love of God, and the Fellowship of the Holy Ghost, be with you always. Amen.

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