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Hear the Church

In 3 parts

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G. Nos. Grantham

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Hear the Church.

OR, AN

APPEAL

TO THE

Mother of us All.

BEING

An EPISTLE to all the Baptised Believers in *England*;
exhorting them to Stedfastness in the Truth, ac-
cording to the SCRIPTURES.

Together With some farther Considerations of seven Que-
ries, sent to the Baptized Believers in *Lincolnshire*, concer-
ning the Judge of Controversies in Matters of Religion.

In Three PARTS.

The Second Edition, Corrected and Enlarged.

By THOMAS GRANTHAM.

*And they shall turn away their Ears from the Truth, and shall be turned
into Fables. 2 Tim. 4. 4.*

*But I will shew thee that which is noted in the Scripture of Truth, and
there is none that holdeth with me in these things but Michael your
Prince. Dan. 10. 21.*

L O N D O N, Printed in the Year, 1688.





TO THE READER.

THere is nothing, which Men sincerely Religious, do more heartily desire, than that all Men were so too; and because they are fully satisfied that they are in that very Way which most truly leads to Life, they therefore strive that all may know it and walk in it.

And truly this is my Case, my Heart's Desire and Prayer to God for all Men is, that they may be saved. And as I believe it hath pleased God to shew me the Path of Life, I cannot but do my best to shew it to others; for as some by their Labours, have been helpful to me, so I hope mine may be helpful to others.

When I call the Primitive Christian Church at Jerusalem, the Mother of us All, I allude to that place, Gal. 4. 26. Interpreters (so far as I have observed) take Jerusalem there, for the Gospel Catholick Church; now this Church had its Beginning, and this Beginning was at Jerusalem; and because in the Progress of Christianity in the World, for near one thousand seven hundred Years, there has abundance of Errors crept in,

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and much Truth in the ancient Simplicity of it, has been rejected, I think it highly rational, that (all prejudice being laid apart) Men should seek, with the greatest diligence, for their greatest Security, into the State of Christ's Gospel-Church, as by himself established; for whatsoever has not been planted by our Heavenly Father, is nigh to its being rooted up.

God Almighty direct us all, is the hearty Prayer of
thy Friend,

THO. GRANTHAM.

Let the Reader further take notice, that these Papers were originally written upon several Occasions, else some things often repeated would have been otherwise. Let thy Discretion bear with this.

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The First P A R T.

Containing, by way of Preface, a particular consideration of the State of the first Christian Church at Jerusalem, and the Reasonableness of appealing to Her, as The Mother of us All.

IT is evident to all such as have conversed with the Histories of the Ages, which have been since the coming of our Lord, to make known and establish all things in the Kingdom of Grace, in the first Church at *Jerusalem*; that there hath been great striving among the Christian Churches for some Honour and Prerogative above the rest. Sometimes the Church at *Alexandria*, sometimes the Church at *Constantinople*, and especially the Church at *Rome*, pressing very hard for Precedence of Honour, and Preheminence of Power; few minding the poor afflicted Church at *Jerusalem*, the true Mother of all true Christian Churches; when yet the Holy Ghost hath left a high Commendation upon those who do follow Her, both in the effectual Reception of the Gospel, *not as the Word of such or such a Man*, (tho preached by *Apostles*) *but as it is in truth the Word of God*, 1 Theff. 2. 13, 14. and also (not in persecuting, but) *in suffering like things of their Country-men*, as they did of the *Jews*. And we desire, and hope that there may be yet all due consideration had by all Christians in these days, of the Heavenly Frame and Holy Walking of that *MO-
THER-CHURCH*.

Unto

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Unto whom was committed, in the first place, the Principles of the Oracles of God; unto whom our dearest Lord was a personal Minister, and did actually Dispence to, and Communicate with them, in the Divine Mysteries or Ordinances of the Christian Religion; upon whom was poured the most excellent Gifts and Graces of the Holy Spirit of Promise. It was this Church, from whom (according to the Prophets) the Law of Christ should first go forth, *Isa. 2. 3. Mich. 4. 1, 2.* Here was the House of the Lord established in the top of the Mountains, and exalted above the Hills, that all Nations might flow unto it: an Honour not given to other Churches, *1 Cor. 14. 36.* What, came the Word of God out from you? No, this was the Glory of another, For out of Zion shall go forth the Law, and the Word of the Lord from Jerusalem. Which by special Order from Christ was fulfilled, when he gave Commandment to his Apostles, that Repentance and Remission of Sins should be preached in his Name, in all Nations, beginning at Jerusalem, *Luke 24. 47.* And here it was that the Spirit gave utterance unto the Apostles, to preach in all Languages, that then some of all Nations (who were at that very time at Jerusalem) might hear from thence the joyful Sound of the Gospel, and consequently, keep the same Holy Doctrine in all Ages and Nations, as it was there delivered, and confirmed by divers Signs and Miracles, and Gifts of the Holy Ghost, *Mat. 28. 19, 20. Heb. 2. 4. Act. 2.*

Forasmuch then, as all Churches, in all Ages and Nations, are indispensably bound to follow this Church, in the Observation of all things whatsoever Christ commanded them, *Mat. 28. 29, 30.* we hold our selves concern'd at this time, to declare our unfeigned Assent unto the Truth of the Gospel, as it was here delivered; and our humble Resolution to keep the Ordinances of Christ, as they were here practised, (not doubting but the same was received in all Churches at the first) being confident of this very thing, that a safer way cannot be found for the security of our Souls, from the manifold Errors, which since the plantation of this Church, have been obtruded upon the Consciences of Men, in most parts of the Christian Nations.

To the intent then that we may avoid Error, and cleave to Truth, we shall consider particularly (though very briefly) the Frame of this Heavenly Building, in respect of her Foundation, her Form of Government, and the Way of her Worship, in order to her Perfection. And First,

We find her Foundation-Principles to consist in six Particulars; to wit,

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REPENTANCE from Dead Works, and OF FAITH towards God. The Doctrine OF BAPTISMS, and OF LAYING ON OF HANDS, and of RESURRECTION OF THE DEAD, and of ETERNAL JUDGMENT, Heb. 6. 1, 2. called also, the beginning of the Word of Christ; which Articles are therefore called the Foundation, because of the Relation they have to Christ, who is a Foundation to his Church, as held forth in his own Doctrine, and other Foundations than Christ so held forth, can no Man lay.

Of such importance are these Sacred Principles, that we find the Ancient Christians used to call them the *Christian Catechism*. Chrysostom's Testimony is this; *That all these are Fundamental Articles; that is, that we ought to repent from Dead Works, to be baptised into the Faith of Christ, and be made worthy of the Gift of the Spirit, who is given by imposition of Hands; and we are to be taught the Mysteries of the Resurrection and Eternal Judgment. This Catechism, saith he, is perfect.* And indeed in the whole New Testament, we meet not with such an excellent Epitome of the Christian Doctrine as in this place, which was written to this *Mother-Church*.

'Tis true, we have some mention of a *Form of Doctrine* delivered to the believing *Romans*: And *Timothy* is commanded to hold fast the *Form of sound Words*, which he had heard of *St. Paul*; Christ is said to be the Apostle and High Priest of *our Profession*, the Author and Finisher of *our Faith*, we are willed to contend for the *Faith* once delivered to the Saints. But none of these places do shew us, as the Text under consideration, *what this Form of Doctrine, this Form of sound Words, this Profession, and this Faith was*, in respect of the Composition of the Principles and Fundamentality of them; nor can there any thing be assigned, that is so properly the Analogy or Rule of Faith, as these Principles of Catechism.

Happy had it been, if all Christian Churches had held fast this Catechism, though no more had ever been composed; Unity in the Truth would have been better maintained by this one, than by so many as are now extant. And sure this being of Divine Composure and Authority, the Principles of the *Oracles of God*, the *Beginning of the Word of Christ*, must needs outweigh all others, being but of Human Composition. To begin with the first Principle of this Church, let us consider,

1. *Repentance from Dead Works.*

We are first to consider why Repentance is put in the first place, even before Faith; sure it is because no unrepenting Sinner can have the

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the Faith of Justification; therefore this Principle of the Christian Faith must follow Repentance. There is indeed a Faith (which we may call the Faith of Mankind) to believe there is a God, that will both punish Sinners, and reward the Righteous, and this Faith must needs precede Repentance, *Heb. 11. 6.*

This Repentance, as it was a Principle of this *Mother-Church*, comprehends three things, a true Sense of Sin, in the exceeding sinfulness of it; in which respect it is said, *They were pricked at the heart, and cried out, or said, Men and Brethren, what shall we do?* *Act. 2. 37.* which is accompanied with Godly Sorrow, and with Amendment of Life, without which, Repentance is rather to be repented of, than to be esteemed any part of the Foundation of Christian Religion; *Repent ye therefore, and be converted, that your Sins may be blotted out.* *Act. 3. 19.* Without which Repentance, there is no Remission. *Luk. 13. 5.* *Except ye repent, ye shall all perish,* saith our Saviour. How blessed had it been, if this Doctrine had been preached, and Men brought to the Obedience of it, before they had been admitted to Membership in the Church of Christ? The not keeping to this Rule, has filled all National Churches with unregenerate, unconverted Persons, to the Scandal of the Christian Religion.

2. Of Faith towards God in this Mother-Church.

The Excellency of the Faith of this *Mother-Church*, appeared in these things: *That they gladly received the Word of the Gospel of their Salvation.* *Act. 2. 40.* To the illumination of their Souls, and the expelling the darkness of Error and Unbelief; by this Faith they had their *Hearts sprinkled from an evil Conscience*, and their Confidence in God had a great Recompence of Reward, in the Love and Expectation of which, they willingly endured a great Fight of Afflictions, whilst they were made a *Gazing-stock*, both by Reproaches, and suffering the spoiling of their Goods with joyfulness; and were willingly Companions with, and charitably compassionate towards those that were in Bonds for Righteousness sake, working the Work of God, ministering to the Saints, labouring in Love: all which are Arguments of true and lively Faith. *Heb. 6. 10, 11. Heb. 10. 32, 33, 34, 35.*

He that reads and considers this Excellent Epistle, written to this *Mother-Church*, wherein we may be sure no new Doctrine is delivered, but the same corroborated which they had received, shall find that the true Knowledge and Belief of Christ was amongst them, in respect

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of his Divinity, *Chap. 1.* in respect of his Humanity. *Chap. 2.* in respect of Priestly Office and Sacrifice, with all other Offices to which he was appointed of God, in the residue of the Epistle, of which we cannot now speak particularly.

3. *Of the Doctrine of Baptisms in this Church.*

The Lord Christ had fully taught the Guides of this *Mother-Church* the *Doctrine of Baptisms* both by Word and Example; and thereby had informed them of a three-fold Baptism. The first delivered by Precept; himself making the People Disciples, by teaching them to repent and believe the Gospel, and then appointing his Disciples to dip them in the River, in which respect it is said that Jesus made and dipped (or Batized) more Disciples than *John*, *Mat. 4. 17. John 4. 1. & 3. 22.* His own Example being an unquestionable Rule for the manner of Baptizing, he being dipped of *John* into Jordan, (as the *Greek* hath it) *Mark 1. 9. and then coming up out of the Water.* And of this whole Church it is said, their Hearts were sprinkled from an evil Conscience, and their Bodies washed with pure Water. For Baptismal Water is therefore pure, because it is sanctified for our Religious use, both by the Person of Christ, and by the Word of God. And of this Church, was first required, that *every one of them* should repent, and then be Baptised; and of them it is also said, that *they that gladly received the Word*, preached by *St. Peter*, were baptised, *Act. 2. 38, 41.*

They were also instructed concerning the Baptism of the Holy Spirit; it being the Promise of the Father made to all the called of the Lord, *Act. 2. 39. Gal. 3. 14. & 4. 6. Rom. 8. 9.* and was particularly applied to them, and poured upon them in the way of Faith and Obedience.

To be willing to be Baptised with Afflictions for Christ and the Gospelsake, they were also taught by our Blessed Saviour, in his Discourse with some of his Disciples, and by his own Sufferings, *Luke 12. 30.* of which they were also partakers, *Heb. 10. 32.* as also all that will live godly in Christ Jesus must expect the same. And it would be considered by what Rule any Man can take upon him to make Baptism the *first Principle*, seeing Christ himself has made it the *third Principle*? and by what Rule any Man can call Sprinkling, Baptising? Dare they speak as they act? that is, dare they say, I sprinkle thee in the Name of the Father? &c. Would not their Conscience fly in their Face if they should speak? And yet, behold, they prevaricate in action, and lye in expression in that which they call

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call their Baptism ; God will surely send the proudest Prevaricators in this case a *Quo warranto* for their presumptuous dealing herein.

4. Of the Laying on of Hands in this Church.

There are two great Blessings belong to all true Christians, Remission of Sin, and the Gift of the Holy Spirit ; the first is conigned to them in Sacred Baptism, the second in Prayer, with the Laying on of Hands, in which way this *Mother-Church* received this Blessing, as is evident from the Enumeration and Order of the Principles of her Catechism ; and also from this Testimony, *that great Grace was upon them all*, Act. 4. 33. As also in that it is expressly said, That this Church continued stedfastly in Hands ; and from this Church this Doctrine of Prayer with Laying on of Hands ; and from this Church this Doctrine and Holy Practice was carried by the Apostles to *Samaria*, Acts 8. 14. for it is not to be imagined they would there innovate a practical Principle, which had not first been taught in the Church at *Jerusalem*. But God bearing witness to this Service of Prayer, and Laying on of Hands at *Samaria*, with the same Blessing of the Holy Spirit, fore-received at *Jerusalem*, confirms it as an acceptable and needful Service for all Churches. And accordingly it was received in the Times next succeeding the Apostles days, as many Witnesses testify, amongst whom *Tertullian* thus ; *Dehinc manus imponitur, &c.* After Baptism the Hand is imposed by Blessing, calling and invoking the Holy Spirit. *Tunc ille Sanctissimus, &c.* Then that most Holy Spirit most willingly descends from the Father upon the Bodies which are cleansed [meaning in Baptism] and blessed.

5. Of the Resurrection of the Dead, taught and believed in this Mother-Church.

In this Church it was where the Apostle gave witness with great Power of the Resurrection of the Lord Jesus, Act. 17. 31. in whose Resurrection assurance, yea very full assurance is given to all Men, that there shall be a Resurrection of the Dead, both of the Just and Unjust, Act. 1. 3. It was here that our Saviour shewed himself alive after he had been dead, by infallible Proofs, being seen of his Disciples forty days, conversing with them of the Things concerning his Church and Kingdom, Mat. 27. 52, 53. It was here that many dead Bodies of the Saints did arise, and came out of their Graves, and went into Jerusalem, and appeared to many, after Christ was risen ;

risen; which was a full proof, that the Resurrection is of the same numerical Bodies which are laid in the Graves, disrobed only of Mortality and all Imperfections. And this is that Resurrection of the Dead here called a Principle of Christ's Doctrine, and of the Foundation of this Mother-Church.

6. Of the Eternal Judgment believed by this Church.

It was to the Guides of this Church to whom our Saviour first made known this great Privilege, that they should *sit on Thrones judging the twelve Tribes of Israel*, at that time when he should *sit upon the Throne of his Glory*, Mat. 19. 28. who also is appointed of God to be the *Judge of Quick and Dead*, Act. 10. 42. which great Article is here recounted among the Principles of Catechism, Heb. 6. 2. and called the *Eternal Judgment*, not only for that it is the last Judgment, but because the Effects of it shall be perpetual, the pains to be imposed in this Sentence of Judgment shall be of eternal duration to all wicked Men, who have contemned the Gospel of their Salvation, and judged themselves unworthy of *Eternal Life*, even that Life which then shall be given to Eternity, to all such as have held fast the beginning of their Confidence, and the hope of this their rejoicing stedfast unto the end, Heb. 3. 14. As therefore the Tares are gathered and burnt in the Fire; so shall it be in the end of the World. The Son of Man shall send forth his Angels, and they shall gather out of his Kingdom all things that offend, and them that do Iniquity: And shall cast them into a Furnace of Fire; there shall be weeping and gnashing of Teeth. Then shall the Righteous shine forth as the Sun in the Kingdom of their Father. Who hath ears to hear, let him hear, Mat. 13. 40, 41, 42, 43. Lo, the Eternal Judgment taught by Christ's own Mouth; let all Men be admonished to prepare for this Judgment, for the coming of the Lord draws nigh.

Of the farther Order and Manner of Worship used in this Mother-Church

This did especially consist in frequently assembling themselves together, to teach and preach Jesus Christ, Acts 5. 42. or for the ministering of the Word of God and Prayers, Acts 6. 4. In which we find no Liturgies, or Forms of Prayer devised or imposed by the Apostles, but these Services were performed by the aids of the Holy Spirit, which as they were given for the work of the Ministry, so 'tis evident they have a remanency in the true Church till the whole be perfected, Eph. 4. and

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and it is this Blessed Spirit which helps the Church to make *Intercession according to the will of God*, Rom. 8. 27. They were all very frequent at the Lord's Table breaking the Sacred Bread, in remembrance of the Lord Christ, giving thanks to God by him, Acts 2. 41, 47. nor needed they any *Mass-Book* or *Common-Prayer-Book*, to direct them in either: Christ's own Institution of his Holy Table, and the holy Prayer which he had taught his Disciples, with other Heavenly Rules contained in the Holy Scriptures, was abundantly sufficient, and are so still, to every Faithful Man of God [and Minister whom God and his Church hath called to that Work] to furnish him to every good work.

It is also exceeding plain that the Holy Table of the Lord is here called the breaking of Bread. And therefore, though that Holy Bread and Wine be the Body and Blood of Christ, yet they are these, in such sort, as they are also the Bread of the Lord, and the Cup of the Lord, 1 Cor. 11. 27. And forasmuch as the Apostle here, and in the next verse, does expressly call the same things, by these different titles, *the Body and the Blood*: the *Bread* and the *Cup*: we must of necessity take him to speak Figuratively in one of these, but in the latter, to wit, *Bread* and the *Cup*, we have no Figure (save that the Wine in the Cup is taken for the Cup, which is an usual form of speaking;) and therefore of necessity these Words, *Body and Blood*, must be understood to be mystically, spiritually, or figuratively in the *Bread and Wine*, and not the Bread and Wine to be mystically, spiritually, or figuratively, in the *Body and Blood* of Christ.

It is also as certain that the whole Church (*this Mother-Church*, Acts 2. 42.) did then receive both the Bread and Cup of the Lord, as that any one of them did partake of both, the whole Service being expressed by a *Synecdoche*, a part for the whole, which yet will better appear, in that this Ordinance ought to be received by every Recipient, as he is a Member of Christ, not as he is a Minister: 'Tis true, as I am a Minister I dispense this Mystery, but I receive it as a Member, saith St. Paul: *For W E being many, are one Bread, and one Body. For W E are all partakers of that one Bread.*

It was unto this Church, or the Guides of it, unto whom our Blessed Saviour delivered that Mystical Doctrine, which offended so many of his Disciples, John 6. 53. *Verily, verily, I say unto you, Except ye eat the Flesh of the Son of Man & drink his Blood, ye have no Life in you*, which yet cannot be rightly understood of a corporal eating his Flesh, and drinking his Blood, because he expressly says, *Verily, verily, I say unto you, He that believeth on me,*
hath

hath everlasting life, Verse 47. And it is certain there were many that did truly believe on him at that time, among whom *S. Peter*, and the rest that stood by him, when so many forsook him. Now these things must all be true. 1. That none of Christ's Disciples had Life in them at that time, but such as did eat the Flesh, and drink the Blood of Christ. 2. That *S. Peter* and the rest of the Faithful, had eternal Life in them at that time. 3. That the Lord's Table was not yet instituted. And therefore from these Premises it follows that our Saviour speaks not here of his Disciples now eating and drinking his Flesh and Blood at the Lord's Table, and therefore cannot with any shew of Truth or Reason, be understood of eating his Flesh, and drinking his Blood carnally, or corporally, but spiritually, even by believing in him.

Of the several Orders of Ministry in this Mother-Church.

This Church was endowed with a three-fold Order of Ministry: 1. *Messengers* or Apostles, whose work was more especially to gather, constitute, and take care for the Church in general. 2. *Elders*, whose work was especially to feed the Flock committed to them in particular. 3. *Deacons*, whose work more especially was to take care of the Poor, and to distribute the Alms of the Church to the ends for which they were given, and consequently all Churches ought to maintain this Order of Ministry, unless they can shew that God has repealed this Ministry, in part or in whole. 'Tis true, some things were pertinent to the Apostles here, which were temporary and extraordinary, which Churches in after-Ages are not to expect; but it is also true that some things were ordinary, and fixed in that Office, for the continual use of the Church, and therefore to remain for ever *viz.* Their care for all Churches, their travels and labours to plant and settle new Churches, their withstanding false Apostles, as themselves are true Apostles. Their Authority to appease strife and contention which may arise among particular Pastors and Churches, which things being demonstrated in our *Christianismus Primitivus* (to which we refer) we shall not here enlarge.

This part of the Apostolical Office, was conferred on many in the Apostles days, who were also entituled the *Angels of the Churches*, Rev. 2. 1. &c. which in English, is, Messengers of the Churches. Of this Order was *James* the Lord's Brother in this Church at *Jerusalem*, and such were *Timothy*, *Titus*, *Sylvanus*, *Andronicus* and *Junia*, with others. A Ministry as needful as any, both for the unity of Churches, and the management of the most important affairs of the Gospel, both in the Church and

and in the World, as experience may convince men if nothing else will do it. And here it were easie to bring in the full Test of the best Antiquity, but this Letter will not bear it.

Of the Discipline or Government of this Mother-Church.

1. It was unto the Guides of this Church to whom our Blessed Lord first gave Rules for the Government of his Church, *Mat. 18.* whence we learn that in cases of personal Trespasses, and sins of Infirmary or Weakness, all possible Love, Patience and Charity, should be exercised by one Christian towards another, and the Offender, *upon confession of his fault*, forgiven, unto seventy times seven Offences: so abundantly should Charity appear among the Members of Christ. But it was also in this Church where wilfull Iniquity was punished with great severity, as the Hypocrisie and Deceit of *Ananias and Saphira's*, and the rousfulness, in aspiring to a Ministry for which he was not qualified, and to which he was not called by Heaven's Donation and due vocation from the Church, without which, woful experience hath taught, the Christian Nations, that it is in vain by Money, or for Money to make Men Ministers in the Christian Church.

2. In this Church was held the first and best of General Councils, for settling the Churches in peace, when troubles did arise among themselves, by means of false Teachers, &c. And because the Churches in all Ages and Nations, may have perpetual need of such helps, it shall not be amiss that we consider the Quality and Authority of such Assemblies, lest otherwise we be abused by Usurpation and Tyranny: and first of the occasion of the calling this present Assembly, *Acts 15.*

1. This Assembly was called upon the greatest occasion that ever was, namely, the Repealing (or rather shewing the Repeal) of many Divine Ordinances, and freeing the Christian Church from their Obligation; because they were either fulfilled, or too burthenome for this Church, as indeed *St. Peter* avers, they were so heavie, that neither they nor their Fathers were able to bear them; And the endeavours of this Council was successful to the removal of them, and the settlement of the Churches in the Faith; and to the great encrease of their number, *Acts 16.* From whence we may safely conclude, that if *Moses's Ceremonies* which were from Heaven, were a hindrance to Peace and growth in the

the Christian Church, much more must all Ceremonies devised, and imposed by humane Force and Power only, be an obstruction to it. Let us therefore stand fast in the Liberty wherewith Christ hath made us free, and not be entangled in the Yoke of Bondage, whether of Legal, or other devised Ceremonies.

2. As for the Quality of the Persons, of whom this Assembly did consist, 'tis plain, they were *Messengers, Elders, and Brethren*, and these did all freely deliberate upon the Matters in question, offering their Reasons *pro & contra*; and the Dicision was made, not by the interposition of *Power Apostolical*, but by the clear evidence of Truth and Reason, to which they all agreed. The Apostles acting here as *Grave Fathers*, giving *free Audience and faithful Advice*; to which when all agreed, the conclusion was made *in all their Names*, as appears *Acts 15. 22, 23. Then pleased it the Apostles and Elders, with the whole Church, to send chosen Men of their own Company to Antioch, and wrote Letters by them after this manner; The Apostles, Elders and Brethren, send greeting unto the Brethren which are of the Gentiles, &c.* From the sweet Concord here, we suppose all Churches should do well to constitute their general Consistories of such, seeing such helps she may have still, in things ordinary to each Office, if she render not her self unworthy of them.

3. Now for the Quality and Authority of the Decrees made by this, or succeeding Assemblies, the Case is clear of it self; These were such things as seemed good to the Holy Ghost, *not that the Holy Ghost now revealed them*, but brought to remembrance what the Scriptures had said concerning them, and partly by what before that time had been shewed unto St. Peter by a certain Vision of God's accepting the Gentiles, tho not cleansed according to Legal Purification. And therefore till the Holy Ghost reverse those Decrees, they are to oblige all Churches to keep them inviolable. And in this point (as indeed in all the rest) the Baptised Churches in this Age do stand a witness against the Disorder and Disobedience of most of the Christian Nations in the World; who make no Conscience of *abstaining from Blood, &c.* tho they know the true Churches did religiously observe these Decrees for several hundreds of Years after. *Tertullian* tell us, *The Custom of Christians is to abstain from all Blood, and things strangled, so that it is not lawful for them, when they feed at their Tables, to meddle with the Blood of any Beast.*

4. It is further safely concluded from hence, that all Decrees of General Councils are so far obliging only, as the things decreed are proved to be true, and not because they are decreed in Council only; for here St. Peter proves, that Churches are free from the Obligation of Legal

Ceremonies, because they were a Burden too heavy to be born. 2. Because God had accepted them already without them. And James [the Angel of this Church] proves or confirms the same by the Scriptures; and these Arguments and Probations satisfied the Assembly. And it's certain, the things prohibited by these Decrees, were always forbidden, even to Noah and his perpetual Generations, Gen. 9. 12, &c. Nor do's this Assembly Excommunicate or Anathematize all that shall doubt of the Necessity of their Determination, but very sweetly tells the Brethren, they shall do well to comply with their Advice; for they knew that every Church had Power to punish Offenders; and to them they seem to leave that Care, and not to take the Power of any Church out of their Hands, as the manner of some is.

Of the Case of Infants: or whether they were admitted to Baptism in the Mother-Church?

In all that is said of the Plantation and Growth of this famous Church, or in that excellent Epistle, which was a long time after written to them, there is not one word to be found of any one Infant being brought to Baptism; and therefore we hold to the Negative of this Question; and it is observable, that tho here Infant-Circumcision was absolutely excluded, yet is there no Argument urged for it from their Baptism; which had been very considerable, had there been any such usage in this, or the Gentile-Churches. And because it is granted now by many, and these the most Learned too, (among whom the Papists) that there is *no Scripture for Infant Baptism*, &c. But that it stands upon the Authority of Ecclesiastical Tradition; all that we shall say to that Plea in this place is, to desire any Man to shew who delivered this thing to the Churches, and by what Authority, whether Divine or Humane? For seeing Tradition signifies a thing delivered, it is fit the Person or Persons delivering such a thing, should be known to be Persons lawfully impowered to deliver such a Tradition, before we can with safety receive it *.

* It is said of the Roman Christians, that the Light of Piety shined in their Minds, when they heard Peter; but they were not satisfied with once hearing, neither satisfied with the unwritten

Doctrine that was delivered; but earnestly besought St. Mark, (whose Gospel is now in use) that he would leave in Writing unto them the Doctrine which they had received by Preaching, &c. Euseb. Hist. l. 2. Chap. 15. We see that the Church of Rome esteemed the Gospel in Writing, above the delivery of it in Preaching, though they heard it from Peter himself. Sure they are not the same now as then, for Tradition (from whom it's hard to say) is more now to them than the Scripture. And the Scripture nothing to them, but as delivered and interpreted by Tradition. But

But how then shall Infants be saved if Baptifm belong not to them? I answer, out of the mouth of St. Peter, Verfe 11. *By the grace of our Lord Iefus Chrift they fhall be faved.* And fure a man might as well ask how can Infants be faved without Faith and Repentance, feeing it is faid, *he that believeth not, fhall be damned*: and except ye repent, ye fhall all perifh, &c. And what answer could any wife man make, fave this? The Grace of God fufficeth them, having Chrift's exprefs Word for it, that to them belongs the Kingdom of Heaven; and this he fpake of unbaptized Infants too, which is therefore fo fatisfactory that we need no other evidence. If any man fay the words which St. Peter fpake in Council, *Acts 15. 11.* are not meant of Infants, and therefore not pertinent to my purpofe. I fhall only defire him to confider, that thofe words were fpoken in oppofition to this pofition, *That without Circumcifion, after the manner of Moles, the Gentiles could not be faved*: Now we know, it was after the manner of *Moses* to circumcife Infants, and therefore doubtlefs thefe falfe Teachers did queftion the falvation of Infants dying without Circumcifion. Therefore thefe words of St. Peter, which teaches *that by the Grace of our Lord Iefus Chrift both Jew and Gentile fhall be faved*, have their clear extent to Infants as well as to any other perfons whatfoever: I fhall here only refer the Reader to what we have farther written, in a Treatife upon this Subject, entituled, *The Controverfie about Infant-Church-Membership and Baptifm, epitomized*: or to one lately written, entituled, *Presumption no Proof.*

Of the Reverence due to Saints, Angels, and to the Blessed Virgin in particular, according to the ufage of this Mother-Church.

It was in this Church where the Holy Virgin, Mother of our Lord, had her Converfation and Society, being with that felect Company, confifting of an hundred and twenty Names, *Acts 1. 15.* among whom this moft blessed Woman is exprefly named, and by whole Prefence this *Mother-Church* was honoured above all others. And here is the laft mention that is made of her in the holy Scriptures. And this honourable mention of her by name, and as the *Mother of our Lord*, (which doubtlefs calls for great Reverence in the hearts of all God's People) is all the honour that the Word of God does here confer upon her. This Church makes no Prayers to her, nor to Chrift in her Name, nor taught the fucceeding Churches to do fo; yet furely ſhe was the greateſt Saint that ever was; and if we have no ground from any direction, nor Prefi-

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dent in the Scripture to perform such Devotion to Her, we cannot with any shew of Reason, or pretence of Truth, do it to any other Creature, Saint or Angel, whatsoever.

And it is remarkable, that though this Church had occasion to make express mention of *David* in their Prayers, *Acts* 4. 25. yet do they not use his Intercession at all: But this Honour they give to Jesus Christ, that through his Name such things might be done, as might confirm the Truth against all Opposers. Nor does the Holy Ghost give any notice of the Worshipping of Angels, Saints, nor the *Holy Virgin* in particular, in that Sacred Epistle, which was sent to this Church after the death of *Blessed Mary the Mother of Jesus*; so that this *Mother-Church* seems altogether unacquainted with such Devotions: And much more may we assure our selves, they paid no such Devotion to the Images of these, or of any of them. If any affirm the contrary, we answer them in the words of *Jerom*, *Non Credimus quia non Legimus*. And with *Apollinarius*, *We dare add nothing to the perfect words of the New Testament, whereto nothing may be added; and wherefrom nothing may be taken away, by him that will lead a life agreeable to the Gospel*. Euseb. Hist. l. 5. c. 14.

Thus, Brethren, I have for your sakes (as well as others) taken a fresh view of the State of this most Primitive Church, to whose holy pattern, through the Grace of God, you have diligently laboured to conform your souls; her Principles are yours, her Government in good measure is yours; if in any thing any of you be otherwise minded, my hearts desire is, that God would speedily reveal even the same unto you, and then it is to be hoped that all well disposed, will in time see themselves concerned to adhere to the truth of your Principles, in the very Order wherein you maintain them. For as God has given to his Church but one Way; so he has given but one Heart; when therefore this unity of Heart is obtained, unity in the Truth will accompany it.

Hear

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The Second P A R T.

An EPISTLE to all the Baptised Christians in England ; Exciting them to Stedfastness in their Holy Profession, under their various Trials, and great Afflictions.

BRETHREN,

AS it hath pleased God to exercise you many years with various Tryals and Afflictions, for your Faithfulness to the Christian Religion (in respect of the *Restoration* of it to its ancient Purity) both in the Form and Power of it, wherein you have laboured hitherto, and have not fainted, but by the Grace of God have attained to some degree in that behalf, above what hath as yet been attained by the generality of your Country-Men, for which you owe the greatest Thankfulness to Almighty God. And having (as I verily believe) laid a right Foundation for a true Church-State, you are indispenfibly obliged to go on unto perfection, as the first Churches, which were built upon the same Foundation, were exprefly required and exhorted, *Heb. 6. 1, 2, 3.*

In which Holy Profession, being by the Grace of God, one with you, and also called to the Ministry and Office of a Messenger of your Churches [which I mention, because it is the most despised Office amongst all Christians, as it seems to have been in the Apostles days, *1 Cor. 4. 9.*] do hold it my Duty, at this time, to endeavour to strengthen you (in what I way) in your Holy Profession ; as also to call

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upon such as have been shaken in mind by the violence of those Temptations which have befallen them in common with their Brethren.

For as it is a fearful thing to fall into the hands of the living God, (as those undoubtedly shall, who draw back, from the Truth they have once embraced, unto Perdition) so I am very confident, that for any to fall from the Truth, as it is professed by the Baptized Churches, is the most dangerous of all other, they being indeed the nearest to the Truth, in the Pristine Order and Simplicity of it, of all sorts of Persons, who own the Honorable Appellation of Christian. For,

What sort of Christians can with any Confidence look upon, or bring themselves close to the Rules of St. Paul's Catechism, * *Heb. 6. 1, 2.* (as the Ancients used to call it) except the Baptized Churches? To say nothing of others, can they of the present *Roman Catholick-Church*, in any wise square themselves, or justify their present Church-State by the Rule of those Sacred Principles, in the simplicity of them? No, these Principles of Christ's Doctrine, will in no wise be concordant with the Catechism of the present *Roman Church*, seeing a Doctor of their own hath told us, that if the Scriptures must be our Rule, &c. they must all cross the Cudgels to the Anabaptists †; which is a plain giving up the Victory to the Baptized Churches, unless a better Form of Doctrine can be assigned than this is, which can never be. Yea, so plain and pressing is this place for us, from the true Institution of the

* The Principles of the Doctrine of Christ, Repentance, Faith, Doctrine of Baptisms, Laying on of Hands, Resurrection of the Dead, Eternal Judgment.

Christ, as received in the Power and Order of these Principles, becomes a Foundation to his Church, in which respect the Principles are here called the Foundation also.

† Dr. Tho. Bale's End to Controversy.

Ancient Christian Religion, that the Rhemists seems to be under no small difficulty how to express themselves about it: For thus they speak upon the Text, *Heb. 6. 1, 2.* We see hereby (say they) what the first grounds of Christian Institution, or Catechism, were in the Primitive Church, and that there was ever a necessary Instruction and Belief of certain Points, had by Word of Mouth and Tradition, before Men came to the Scriptures, which could not treat of things so particularly as was requisite for the teaching of all necessary Grounds. Among these Points were the twelve Articles contained in the Apostles Creed; The Doctrine of Penance before Baptism; the Manner and Necessity of Baptism; the Sacrament of Imposition of Hands after Baptism, called Confirmation; the Articles of the Resurrection, Judgment, and such-like: without which things

things first laid, if one should be sent to pick his Faith out of the Scriptures, there would be mad Rule quickly.

1. It's highly observable from hence, that the first Grounds and Principles of *our Churches* (which indeed are no other than what men read, *Heb. 6. 1, 2.*) are openly acknowledged, by our most Potent Opposites, to be the same which were in the *Primitive Church*, received for the first Grounds and Institutions of *Christianity, or Christian Institution and Catechism*. That in the *Primitive Church*, these Grounds were held in the very Order now observed by the Baptized Churches; particularly, *Repentance before Baptism, and Imposition of Hands after Baptism*. Sure this is a full Testimony, that the Institution of the Baptized Churches (now wrongfully called Anabaptists) *and theirs only*, is truly Apostolical. Whilst all the *Pedobaptists* in the World (among whom the Papists) have quite subverted this Order, giving their supposed Baptism before Repentance, and that unto Persons that are not capable of Repentance.

2. They tell us *there was a necessary Instruction and Belief of certain Points had by Word of Mouth and Tradition, before men came to the Scripture*. Admit this to be so, in respect of such parts of the Holy Scriptures as were then unwritten, when the Apostles first preached the Gospel; yet it is certainly false, in respect of such Books of Scripture as were then in being; for it's evident that our Blessed Saviour propounded the Text of *Scripture, Luke 4. 17, 18, 19.* and thence preached to the People, and commanded his Hearers to search the *Scriptures, John 5. 29.* He did not send his Hearers to *Tradition, as the Papists do*. No, verily, he rejected the Traditions of the Elders of the Jewish Church, and appeals to the Scripture *Matth. 15. Mark 7.*

The great Apostle of the Jews, *St. Peter*, even then when he was filled with the Holy Ghost, *Acts 2. 17.* preached from, and notably confirms his Doctrine by the Scriptures, *Act. 2.* not by Tradition. And *Philip, Acts 8. 35.* began at the same Scripture which the *Eunuch* read, and preached to him Jesus, without making any use of *Tradition*. *Apollo* being mighty in the Scriptures (not in *Tradition*) convinced the Jews, shewing (not by *Tradition*) but by the Scriptures, that Jesus is the Christ. So did the great Apostle of the Gentiles, *St. Paul, Acts 28. 23.* Persuading men concerning Jesus, out of the Law and the Prophets (not out of *Tradition*) from Morning to Evening; and the best sort of *St. Paul's*
Hearers,

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Hearers, searched the Scriptures daily, (not Tradition) to see whether the things spoken by him were so.

3. Nor can the Papists tell us what one Point of *Necessary Instruction* or Belief was delivered by Word of Mouth, which is not now contained in the Holy Scripture; if otherwise, let them assign some *necessary Point of Faith or Instruction*, such, as without which, we cannot know and serve God truly and fully, and be saved eternally, which is not contained in the Holy Scriptures. But as this will hardly be attempted; so let me exhort you, Brethren, to beware of all manner of Principles and Doctrines, which have any tendency to weaken or invalidate the Authority and Sufficiency of the Scriptures, which the Apostle avers to be of that sufficiency (even before all the Books of Sacred Scriptures were extant) as to *furnish the Man of God thoroughly to every good Work*. And then certainly, he who is in all Points of Faith and Instruction, a good Christian, according to the Doctrine contained in the Holy Scriptures, will be out of the reach of any just reprehension, though he know nothing of the unwritten Tradition, so much pretended and admired by the Papists, or others.

Being thus secur'd in your Principles, from the very concession of your Enemies, and by the Authority of the best and most Sacred Antiquity, even the Holy Scriptures, you have no cause to fear the most important difficulties, wherewith possibly we may be tried in these days. And that we may the better see how the case stands between the *Baptists and the Papists*, with respect to the two great Ordinances of Christ, to wit, *Holy Baptism*, and the Holy Table of our Lord Jesus Christ; we will here take a View of the one, and of the other, in a distinct Column by it self, the better to discern their Disparity.

The

The Manner of Baptism among the Baptized Believers, commonly called Anabaptists.

Baptist.

THE Messenger or Elder being attired in comely Raiment, not much different from the rest of his Brethren, first, *Mark 16. 15.* Preaches the Gospel to every Creature that is capable and willing to hear, and when by hearing *Rom. 10. 17.* they have received Faith, the Minister explains the Doctrine of Repentance from dead Works, and of Faith towards God, for the further Illumination of the Disciples understanding, in the knowledge of *Joh. 17. 3.* the only true God, and our Lord Jesus Christ, that they may obtain Eternal Life.

Acts 2. 38. The Minister does open the Doctrine of Repentance in three parts especially, i. e. as it consists in a due sense or knowledge of the sinfulness of sin

The Manner of Baptism among the Papists, commonly called Roman Catholicks; taken out of the Roman Ritual, by a Learned Hand translated into English.

Papist.

AFTER many preparatory Prescriptions, the Priest being dressed in a Purple Robe, calls the Infant to be Baptised by his Name, and saith, *What askest thou of the Church of God?* the God-fathers answer, *Faith.* The Priest saith again, *What shalt thou get by Faith?* The God-father replies, *Eternal Life.* Then adds the Priest, *If therefore thou wilt enter into Life, keep the Commandments: Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy Heart, and thy Neighbour as thy Self.*

Next, the Priest blows three gentle Puffs upon the Infant's Face, and saith, *Go out of him thou unclean Spirit, and give place to the Holy Ghost the Comforter.* Then with his Thumb he makes the Sign of the Cross on the Infant's Forehead and Breast, saying, *Receive the Sign of the Cross, both in thy Forehead and in thy Heart. Take the Faith of the Heavenly Precept, and be thy Manners such as thou mayst now become the Temple of God.*

Then

Baptist.

Papist.

Tu. 2.
12. sin: In true Sorrow for sin committed, especially against Almighty God. The necessity of forsaking the Conversation of sin, *and to walk righteously, soberly, and godly in this present Life.*

Mat. 28.
19, 20. The Doctrine of Faith is explained concerning the Object, in respect of the God-head, the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost, into whose Name the Party is to be baptized, and especially concerning Christ crucified, buried, and risen again, and therewith is shewed, that in Baptism we are to die unto Sin, to be buried with him in Baptism, to rise to a Holy Life, and so to put on the Lord Jesus Christ in Baptism, as to be born of Water and of the Spirit through the Word.

1 Cor. 2.
2. The Minister does open to the Party to be Baptised, the whole Doctrine of Baptisms; First, That of Water, which is the Baptism of Repentance for the Remission of sins, in respect of the Power

Then follows a Prayer, *that God would always protect this his Elect one (calling him by his Name) that is signed with the Sign of the Cross.*

Then laying his Hand upon the Child's Head, he comes to the Benediction of Salt, of which this is the Form.

I exorcise or conjure thee, O thou Creature of Salt, in the Name of God the Father Almighty ✠, in the Name of our Lord Jesus Christ ✠, and in the Power of the Holy Ghost ✠, I conjure thee by the living God ✠, By the true God ✠, By the Holy God ✠, By the God ✠, which created thee for the safeguard of Mankind, and hath ordained that thou shouldst be consecrated by his Servants to the People, entering into the Faith, that in the Name of the Holy Trinity, thou shouldst be made a wholesome Sacrament for the driving away the Enemy. Moreover, we pray thee, O Lord, our God, that in sanctifying, thou wouldst sanctifie ✠ this Creature of Salt, and in blessing, thou wouldst bless it ✠, that it may be to all that receive it, a perfect Medicine, remaining in their Bowels, in the Name of the same Jesus Christ our Lord, who is about to come to judge the Quick, and the Dead, and the World by Fire. Amen.

Then

Baptist.

Papist.

Mat. 28. Power by which it is com-
18. manded, the extent of it, to
Acts 2. every repenting Sinner; the
28. & end of it, to be a Picdg of
22. 16. the washing away of Sin,
Rom. 12. and to give us admission
13. into the Church of Christ,
Heb. 10. to draw near to God in
22. Prayer, with full assu-
rance, having the Heart
sprinkled from an evil
Conscience, by Faith in
the Blood of Christ, and
our Bodies washed with
pure Water, even the
Water of the Baptifimal
Covenant, called the wash-
ing of Regeneration.

2. That of the Holy
Spirit, the Promise of the
Spirit being made to all
Acts 2. that our Lord doth call, and
38. therewith doth explain
the fourth Principle of
Christ's Doctring, Laying
Acts 8. on of Hands, with Pray-
ers, as the Means ap-
pointed of God to obtain
that Blessing, even the
Promise of the Spirit
Gal. 3. through Faith in the
14. Word of Promise.

3. The Baptifm of Af-
Ma. 20. fliction is also opened,
22. 23. that the Sufferings of
Christ (called by himself

Then the Priest putting a little
of the Hoily Salt into the Child's
Mouth, saith, *Take thou the Salt of
Wisdom, be it thy Propitiation* unto
Eternal Life. *Amen.*

Now follows another Exorcising
of the Devil, wherein he is con-
jured as before; then the Priest
signs the Infant again with his
Thumb on the Forehead, saying,
*And this Sign of the Holy ✕ which
we give to his Forehead, thou cursed
Devil, never dare thou to violate,
by the same Jesus Christ our Lord.
Amen.*

Then the Priest puts his Hand
on the Infant's Head, and makes a
Prayer in order to his Baptifm;
then puts part of his Robe upon
the Child, and brings him within
the Church, saying, *Enter thou into
the Temple of God, that thou mayst
partake with Christ in Eternal Life.
Amen.* Then follows the Apostles
Creed, and the Pater-Noster, &c.
Then follows another Exorcising,
or Conjunction of the Devil.

Then the Priest takes Spittle
out of his Mouth, and touches
therewith the Ears and Nostrils of
the Infant; when he toucheth his
Ears, he saith, *Ephapha*, be open-
ed; and touching his Nostrils, he
saith, *for a sweet smelling Savour.*
Another Conjunction follows in
these words; *Be packing, O Devil,*
D for

Baptist.

Papist.

a Baptism) may not be feared, but patiently endured, according to the Will of God. This is the Sum of the Doctrine of Baptism, taught by the Baptised Churches.

The 5th and 6th Principles of Christ's Doctrine, are likewise particularly opened, concerning the Resurrection of the Dead, and chiefly of Christ's being raised Bodily from the Dead, as the most sure Pledg that the Dead shall be raised Bodily: and the eternal Judgment, in which every Man shall receive according to the Deeds done in the Body, whether good or bad.

To all which the Party to be Baptised, declares his assent, in the best manner he can; shewing also his sense of Sin, and sorrow for it, his purpose to live holily; his Faith in Christ his Saviour the only Son of God; and that it is his desire, to be Baptised according to the Will of God. And then the Minister, with the Congregation, or Persons present

for the Judgment of God is at hand.

Then the Priest asks the Infant, Whether he renounces the Devil and all his Works, and all his Pumps? in three Questions, and the God-fathers answer distinctly to them. Then the Priest dips his Thumb in holy Oil, and anointing the Infant with it on his Breast and betwixt his Shoulders in the figure of a \times saying, *I anoint thee with the Oil of Salvation in Christ Jesus our Lord, that thou mayest obtain Eternal Life.* Amen.

Then the Priest puts off his Purple Robe, and puts on another of White, and asks three Questions out of the Creed, and receives the God-fathers Answers; then asks this question, *Whether the Infant will be baptised?* and receiving the God-fathers answers to that, *He pours Water thrice upon the Child's Head*, and reciteth over it our Saviour's Form of Baptism, doing it each time at the naming of the three Persons.

And now comes the Chrysm, or holy Ointment, in which dipping his Thumb, and anointing the Infant on the Crown of the Head, in the figure of a \times , He thus prayeth; *O God Omnipotent, the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who hath regenerated thee of Water and the Holy Ghost, and who hath given thee*